

Leadership essay
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My senior year of highschool I was voted in to be one of the captains of our swim team. It was something I had been waiting for since freshman year. Finally I can give my input and my ideas about what we did and who we were as a team. One thing I wasn't necessarily prepared for were the challenges I faced, of course I knew going into it I would have to resolve conflicts, motivate my team and plan team bondings, but I didn't know to what extent. One article I wish I had read before becoming captain is an article titled "Solitude and Leadership" by David Deresiewicz. He addresses many things in regard to being a leader and what it really means to represent people and help show them what's best for them. It's a speech about not only what leadership is and what it looks like, he also describes what it isn't which is just as important.

To me, leadership never meant telling people what to do and being strict is scary, it was always more like trying to set an example and be respected and approachable so people feel like they can count on you. Which is still a lot to expect a person to be, especially at 17 years old. One of the hardest parts was having to direct meetings and talk to my peers like i wasn't just their friend they've known for a long time but someone they now had to have respect for in a different way. I couldn't make the same jokes or comments that i thought were funny around the whole team because some people might not feel the same way or might start to look at me differently. Now i absolutely love my team and loved getting to be their captain but i spent a decent amount of time on my own and talking to my co captain trying to figure out the best way to lead a group of teenagers who don't really want to listen to another teenager tell them what to do, and it was difficult. Building the bond of not only being a friend but someone with authority was hard, we could have fun but at the end of the day i still had to be respected. When the author writes about coming up with ideas and how the first thought is never his own, I feel like that is how I feel when trying to resolve things. It's always " how would ___ do this" instead of me figuring out the best way to handle something which definitely reflects on my lack of "training" to lead others. Unfortunately it is not something many people are taught, it just happens which is why for many, leadership isn't right. They just happened to be in the right place at the right time.

Overall, I loved being the captain of my team and being able to give them a fun season and make my last year of high school a memorable one. They taught me many valuable things that were also brought up in this essay, like learning how to think and feel on your own without caring about others. They also showed me that respect is something that is earned, not immediately given. This is something I had heard before but never experienced until I had to earn the respect of my peers as their captain and friend.