BAI3030 – Leadership Development

Journal One – Table of Contents

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| Workload Route | Pass | Number of Words | 1603 |

Please indicate contract route and the number of words in this journal in the table above:

If you are pursuing the “Pass” route you are to write about ONE (1) items from each section. If you are pursuing the “Honours” route you are to write about TWO (2) items from each. (the one exception to this is Section C – Classic Case)

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| **Section G** | Include the following item listed below | | | | | |
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# A – The Female Advantage

I’m having a tough time relating to this article. The world that Helgesen is describing isn’t one that is familiar to me. While the corporate hierarchy still exists, it doesn’t seem to be as inflexible and rigid as she believes it is.

As an example, just the other day I needed a new database created for my work. I didn’t have to ask my manager to ask his manager to forward a request down the chain of command and eventually get the work done. Instead I asked my manager for the name of a DBA that would be able to handle my request. Once I knew who would help me, I was able to contact him directly and get what I needed done.

I think technology has had a large impact on lowering the importance of the hierarchy. Now I can instantly start a Lync chat with someone I barely know and we can get things done easily. Because of this I no longer need to ask someone to ask someone and hope nothing gets lost in the conversation.

I understand that the rigid corporate hierarchy may have been a problem at some point in the past, I just don’t think it is anymore.

# B – Type Talk

My type ended up being INTJ but I was very close to being INTP. I feel like both accurately describe me. I like the problem solving aspects of INTP and the constant improvement aspect of INTJ. I think they both go together because the desire for improvement gives motivation for the problem solving.

Going into this I already did believe in the general categorization of personalities like the Meyers-Briggs test. I even put my results on my dating profile so people can quickly figure out if we will be compatible. It’s kind of like a horoscope except without the crackpot wishful thinking.

I wasn’t surprised by this too much because I have taken similar tests based on Meyers-Briggs before. It was a test called “Colouful Personalities”. I scored really high in the green personality which is closest to the INTJ and INTP types. So it’s good the tests agree with each other at least for me.

I imagine the INTP personality type would be fairly concentrated in an environment like BAIST. INTP is described as a problem solving personality that loves to think. Dealing with computers is all about using problem solving skills, so it makes sense that the technology field would naturally attract problem solving personalities.

# C – The Philosopher King

This one was really abstract. It was so abstract that it was tough to imagine the exact person that Socrates was trying to describe. I suppose I shouldn’t expect anything less from a philosopher. When I was reading it I couldn’t help but thinking that the entire argument could be boiled down to a page or two without losing anything important.

It was also only an academic exercise because the level of perfection that Socrates is talking about doesn’t exist in any person, living or dead. We all have our flaws and moments of weakness and I think that is a major problem in Socrates’ argument that he doesn’t recognize. We shouldn’t be concerned with finding the perfect person for leading but should be looking for the best person for the task at hand.

I also don’t think you can find a one-size-fits-all kind of leader. Different leaders will have different personalities which will be better adapted for different situations. A good wartime leader might be a bad peacetime leader and vice versa.

It would be interesting to talk to Socrates (in modern English!) and ask him to point out exactly who he is talking about. I wouldn’t be surprised if he was just setting up a long argument that he should be in charge. Yes it’s an ad hominem attack but it’s curious that he would spend so much time stating that only philosophers should be rulers when he just so happens to be a philosopher.

I’m not sure the famous ship example is a good one for Socrates. When he is saying that a good captain uses a high level of knowledge to navigate he is arguing for a scientist ruler, not a philosopher. Philosophers tend to use thought experiments (like the article) instead of empirical evidence (winds, stars, etc). A philosopher would prefer to write a long winded logical argument about why the ship moves the way it does while a scientist would prefer to understand the mechanics behind the boats movement. The ship captain example is an argument for empiricism, not for abstract thought.

Early on, Socrates makes the argument that “philosophers are the ones who are able to grasp what is always the same in all respects”. As if philosophers have some sort of monopoly on the truth. It’s kind of like Socrates is describing some sort of secret club where only members know what really happens. I find this to be fairly silly, you don’t have to be a philosopher to understand reality.

Most of the rest of the article is stringing together logical statements of one argument implying the other. A desire for truth implies a desire for justice and so on. While the argument is logically sound, people don’t work that way. People are perfectly capable of holding two conflicting ideas in their heads at the same time and believing them both to be true. It happens quite often without people even realizing it. The classic example is the sour grapes story. Since philosophers happen to be people, I don’t see why they would be immune to this. Cognitive dissonance is fairly basic human psychology.

# D – Dead Poets Society

What strikes me most about this movie is the similarities to The Female Advantage. In both cases, we have a courageous leader going against the norm and setting their own standards for how leadership should work. Both Helgesen and Keating are portrayed as victims of their respective times. They are too forward thinking for a world stuck in a rigid hierarchy. Both leaders would have us question conventional wisdom of how leadership should be and maybe look at different ways of doing things.

The similarities end there however. I find Keating to be much more inspiring than Helgesen. I suppose if you want to make poetry exciting you would have to be inspiring. Keatings style is very unorthodox for his environment and he ends up losing his job because of it. However he did earn the respect of his students which I suspect was one of his goals.

Keating’s motivational tactics are interesting to me. Instead of using grades as a reward for work, Keating shows the students that the work itself can be the reward. At the start of the film, the students are disinterested. When the students learn to think for themselves and to appreciate the work they do, they become passionate about what their work. We never get to know if the actual quality of their work improves but we can see a dramatic shift in the attitudes of the students.

# E – Are Leaders Born or Made Debate

Going into this debate, I was of the opinion that this shouldn’t be an either/or question. The nature versus nurture debate (which is what this really is) has been more or less resolved. I think the correct answer is some people are predisposed to certain personality traits but those traits can be changed by the environment. We don’t yet know how big of an influence either side has but it’s clear that both have some influence.

I think that’s the conclusion that we reached during the debate, but of course both sides want to “win” the argument so we would never admit that. At least that’s the conclusion I got. Both sides had to concede at some point that the other side had some arguments right.

As a side note, of course people can be developed into leaders otherwise this class (leadership development) wouldn’t exist.

# F – Jeremy

During the discussion on Cronin’s definition of a leader versus a manager, Jeremy made an interesting point. He said (paraphrasing a lot here) that managers focus on efficiency while leaders focus on innovation. I thought this was a great succinct way to summarize the definitions that Cronin gave and I agree with the statement.

A manager’s day to day activities include making sure their employees are kept busy, that they show up on time, produce quality work and have the tools they need to do their jobs. A leader’s day to day activities include setting the direction and message for the managers to convey to their employees. In other words, leaders concern themselves with high level decisions while managers are lower level.

At first I thought the difference between a manager and a leader is just a matter of scale, but I realize now that there are significant differences in the two roles.

# G – Your Personal Leadership Philosophy

My philosophy is to inspire people to be the best they can be at whatever it is they do. I think this is best accomplished by showing people that the work they do is meaningful. I know that I am at my best when I know that I am making a difference. When I feel that my work is pointless, it can be very difficult for me to motivate myself to even start it. The result is usually half-assed and not worth keeping. But when I know that what I’m doing is helping someone or is appreciated by someone else, I do much better work as a result.