Leadership Development Plan – part 2

Leadership, Vision, Mission, Values and Growth

David Kelly

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**Vision**

My vision is to re-invent myself in the next few years. I will build on what I have accomplished so far in my career but improve certain areas of my life. I have come up with several goals and aspirations for myself. I will be looking to start a new career into either management, software engineering or teaching. Or it could be a combination of all three. I would like to work in a job or business that is more rewarding and not just for the big money. Some examples might be to become a Chik Fil A owner/operator and lead a business or work for a non-profit organization such as Salvation Army or the Red Cross.

Here is my timeline:

* Now and 2 years out:
  + Stay in good shape by continually exercising.
  + Get my MS degree.
  + Get a part-time position as a substitute teacher to see if teaching is in my future.
  + Study “Emotion Intelligence”
  + Continue to volunteer to practice my skills and help others
* 2- 5 years out: work in a leadership role at a company that is a non-profit or has a meaningful mission such as helping and serving people. I might consider teaching full-time at a college or high-school. I would also consider a combination of software engineer and management. My son and daughter will graduate from college at the same time I am planning to get my MS degree. We thought about going into business together. She may even be able to be a Chik Fil A owner/operator and then I would work for her, who knows.
* 5-10 years out: retire but stay busy with part-time work. I could spend more time coaching or teaching. One dream I have is to start an Upward Sports league for youth. I also want to do more traveling and take my family to Europe.
* 20 years out: continue to be a leader in the community by being involved with various positions such as coaching, being on committees and also do more traveling. If we have grandchildren, I would want to be more involved with them. As long as my strength holds up, I will continue to keep busy and not just sit and rot. Why set goals out so far? I use Colonel Sanders as an inspiration to continue working and doing productive things in life. At the age of 65, Sanders started KFC [4]. When most people slow down at ages from 60-80, Sanders picked it up and didn’t think the future belongs to the young. He lived until he was 90. A neighbor down the street retired from Boeing and while changing a light bulb, fell off the ladder and died. We do not know how much time the good Lord will give us. We should live like today is the last.

**Mission**

Become a great leader to be able to inspire and motivate young people to grow into people with values of strong character which is a strong moral or ethical quality. Also, to have integrity which means being honest, trustworthy, and reliable. I would like to set these examples by helping other people and to treat others more important than myself. I also can show good examples by following laws, paying taxes and being honest about transactions at stores when you get too much back. I embrace and follow what MLK Jr said about his desire for his children to be judged based on the content of character and not by the color of their skin. I can do this by volunteering with youth of all races and treating them fairly and without bias.

To connect with youth and others, I am planning to refine in myself the skill of improved emotional intelligence. There are several books written on the subject. One in particular is written by Daniel Goleman. He stated on his web site that “By teaching people to tune in to their emotions with intelligence and to expand their circles of caring, we can transform organizations from the inside out and make a positive difference in our world” [2]. This is very inspiring. I recently took an online test by the Mind Tools Content Team. The test name is “How Emotionally Intelligent Are You?” [1]. My score was 40/75 which meant that my emotional intelligence level was OK but at the lower end. I must increase this score to become a great manager.

According to the assessment “How Good Are Your Leadership Skills”, I scored low in that category. To increase this score, I need to connect with people by collaborating more. As an introvert, I like working alone because it challenges me and gives me satisfaction to complete a task. There is a time to work alone and a time to work with a team. Striking a balance is important.

While working at Alaska Airlines in the last 2 years, I worked with a guy named Vipul. He was a very smooth communicator when talking through difficult scenarios. He would be able to take a difficult subject such as “why we were one week late on a project” and explain it with such empathy and confidence. He would start out by saying something like “I know you all were expecting the project to be done by last Friday. I understand that this might be shocking for you to know that we will need to have more time to finish to create the high quality that you deserve”. The team would say YES that makes sense and he could change the minds of the team members and managers. He was able to connect with people in a way that I could not. I didn’t know it at the time but I believe Vipul was very strong in emotional intelligence. This is a good example for me to follow to build my emotional intelligence.

According to the Communication Styles assessment, I ranked highest as a people person. I really enjoyed coaching basketball so I can understand that rank. It takes a ton of teamwork to make plays work in basketball. I enjoyed talking to and learning about others and their families. A team can be more productive as a whole but it is important to stress an individual contributor model as part of a team. Each person on the team needs to do their part to stay fit, eat right, work on individual skills and then apply those to the team for a team’s successful outcome.

**Goals and aspirations**

* Goal 1: Get a MS Degree in Software Engineering.

The reason that this goal is important to me is because I have experienced some short comings in knowledge of deeper technical areas. Over my career, I have felt that I was not technically savvy enough while working with some other colleagues. This is somewhat due to the fact that my bachelor degree was in computer science but with more of a business minor or information systems. I chose the business minor since I was not very good with math. However, I did feel that the degree I received was a good fit me at the time and something that I could accomplish. I am very thankful for achieving that degree. The MS degree should fill in some holes with learning advanced algorithms, leadership and communication, project management, architecture and other 500 level classes. Completing this would be a great accomplishment to have going into the next several years. I could leverage what I am learning in my classes to help me become the best possible version of myself.

* Goal 2: Become a better leader by continually learning about people

I don’t believe that I am a natural born leader but I have been in leadership roles and have succeed and failed. After taking this course I can see where I need to improve. I believe some of what I am lacking is knowledge of how to lead properly. Leading properly requires a plan and to identify what type of leader to strive for. I believe the best fit for me is to become a servant leader. The reasons are that I believe that we should love our neighbor as ourself as it says in the Bible (Mark 12:31). While I was a basketball coach in Upward Sports, I experienced what it meant to put others before yourself. This league was all about the kids. I coached my daughters and youth girls grades 1-6. It was not a competitive league even though we kept score and kept standings. This league had goals such as making it a big deal when a player made their first basket or dribbled down the floor and made a pass. For me it was very rewarding to see the improvement in each player. We also celebrated good techniques and success with players from not only our team but the other teams in the league. I enjoy seeing growth in others and coaching them in day-to-day interactions. I believe that this experience in coaching will translate over to business.

* Goal 3: Become a stronger software engineer by getting more knowledge

I want to be able to interview for companies like Google, Microsoft, Amazon or Facebook. By taking classes such as algorithms, I should more easily pass a complex interview. Even though I would want to pass these interviews, I still would not want to commit to the stress and rigor a job like this would offer. I would like to apply my advance degree to a more rewarding career in working with people. I still enjoy building things like web sites and have a desire to continue doing this for the next several years.

* Goal 4: Become a better team member at work or in groups at church by putting others first.

I want to be able to have better engagement with others in groups. I believe I can do this by embracing and learning about Emotional Intelligence. This term caught my attention in a Ted talk from Matt Beeton [3]. Matt suggested that the X factor for great leaders is not IQ but emotional intelligence. Also, I should try and ask more questions about others. People feel good when you talk about them.

Other goals:

* Start running more and eventually run 5k’s. This is to encourage my daughter as she is in cross country and track as a junior in high school. I will need to be in good shape to handle the rigors of completing these goals into the future.
* Get a part-time position as a substitute teacher to see if teaching is in my future. My sister suggested that I become a teacher. Other colleagues have said I should git it a try. I have some experience in teaching and coaching. I was a volunteer at Hazen high school for html and JavaScript.
* Read the book “Emotion Intelligence” by Daniel Goleman. I have purchased the book and will start reading it during this semester and hope to finish it over the Christmas holiday.
* Continue my work as the Home Owners Association president. I have been applying these principals to that position using diversity and inclusion for several minorities in our neighborhood. I can see how it affects them in a positive way.

**Conclusion**

The road ahead is full of excitement for starting something new and for strengthening my current life. The only thing stopping me is myself. I need to move forward with boldness and confidence. I will first gain confidence by getting my MS degree and learning new techniques to work with and manage people. For me to make this transition into a new career into management or other new adventure, I have some work to do. I will need to work on emotional intelligence to be able to connect with people better. I also need to show passion in whatever I do in the future. Next, I need to keep the vision of continually learning and growing. With emotional intelligence, passion and a vision, I should be in good shape to take on a new career. This would also help me in my side goals such as coaching and even traveling with my family and friends.

**Assessments and comments**

**16 Personalities**

My results are Defender (ISFJ). From 16 Personalities web site: “A Defender (ISFJ) is someone with the Introverted, Observant, Feeling, and Judging personality traits. These people tend to be warm and unassuming in their own steady way. They’re efficient and responsible, giving careful attention to practical details in their daily lives”.

Some observations: “Defenders need to know when to say no and stand up for themselves if they are to maintain their confidence and enthusiasm”. This statement characterized me at my last job. I should have left the company 3 years ago after the last re-org when I saw that I was not a good fit for the new group. I stayed on because of the “golden hand cuffs” of benefits. I paid the price and got fired instead. In the future I need to recognize when things in life need to be shifted or worked on. I should not wait until it’s too late to make changes.

I am not sure I understand how I fit into the judging personality trait but I need to look into that issue.

**StrengthsFinder**

Top 5 Themes:

1. Achiever – “People who are especially talented in the Achiever theme have a great deal of stamina and work hard. They take great satisfaction from being busy and productive”.

I am a person that works hard to get a project completed and will stay up late until it is done. I have done this for years as a software developer and I have done it alone. What has frustrated me in the past several years as a Full Time Employee, is that there is much more red-tape. I couldn’t use the same approach and just code. Now I needed to collaborate with the team and work with others. That is not something I prefer to do but I know that I need to work toward collaborating more.

1. Belief – “People who are especially talented in the Belief theme have certain core values that are unchanging. Out of these values emerges a defined purpose for their life”.

I do have strong beliefs and operate with integrity. I recently got pulled over for going 49 in a 35. I actually believe instead of thinking I got caught, I believe that I was doing wrong and should pay for it. I paid the $169 and went to traffic school. The ticket will not go on my record so I was fortunate.

1. Learner – “People who are especially talented in the Learner theme have a great desire to learn and want to continuously improve. In particular, the process of learning, rather than the outcome, excites them”.

A few weeks ago, I was signed up for four classes at WSU for the fall. I immediately realized that it was a heavy load. I dropped two class and I now am down to two. What dawned on me was that instead of fast tracking my master’s degree, I should slow it down and actually learn something and enjoy it! I tend get in over my head on things in life. I pushed to get a Sr. Software Engineer job at my last company. I was then expected to raise my productivity to match that and all of a sudden, my work load and responsibility increased tremendously. I operate this way because of my competitive nature. If someone says it can’t be done, I will try it. I like to take risks but calculated ones. I want to live life to the fullest. A balance to this is to stop and smell the roses.

1. Responsibility – “People who are especially talented in the Responsibility theme take psychological ownership of what they say they will do. They are committed to stable values such as honesty and loyalty”.

I like to be on time and get things done by the deadline. The problem is at time where someone in my family does not have the same ideas about getting places on time and it will frustrate me. I need to learn to be more patient in trying to be on time to events or church. Sometimes driving separately is the answer, other times just go with it.

1. Maximizer – “People who are especially talented in the Maximizer theme focus on strengths as a way to stimulate personal and group excellence. They seek to transform something strong into something superb”.

Two of my tasks at my last job were “show more leadership” and “make the team better”. Sometimes I felt that my manager was giving me the impossible tasks. I had to think outside of the box and try to interpret how to accomplish these tasks. It was hard for me to do this since it required me to look at others to improve them and not myself. How could I control other people? I had to look beyond my desires to be number one and how to help others become the best they could be. It was hard to do but when it worked, the team was better for it.

**What’s Your Leadership Style?**

My style is HARMONIZER with Supplemental style: COLLABORATOR and PRODUCER.

I picked Harmonizer since it seemed to fit the best. I like the empathetic aspect since we are all human and can have tough days. I like the team-building aspect. When I graduated from college after getting my 4-year degree, I became a camp counselor. I had a new cabin of boys each week. Sometimes I got elementary age, jr. high or high school ages. The boys were all very different and I needed to somehow get them integrated with each other. I learned that the best way to integrate them was to challenge another cabin in a game of ultimate Frisby or flag football. We did this on the first day of camp. The boys were high-fiving each other when a great catch was made. Win or lose, the group of boys were now integrated. I could do my cabin talks, go on hikes and even do lip-syncs. This helped to break the ice and then each boy on my team was part of something important.

As a Harmonizer, I like to fill gaps to make the team better. I did this when I was 16 working at Burger King. I was a team lead and it was my job to help an area out when overloaded. The areas were fry’s, drinks, burgers and broiler. I enjoyed that task.

For Producer: I like to clean. I get thrills out of taking something dirty and making it shine.

I also enjoy coaching. I first got a chance to be a coach about 10 years ago. It was very much a learning on the job position when the league asked for Dads to coach. I coached my daughter’s 6th grade team. I enjoyed doing that for 5 years. Some of my weak spots were that I didn’t understand basketball from a player’s perspective since I did not play in my youth. To overcome this, I studied the details of playing the game. I can translate that learned experience to studying team members and their lives.

**How Good Are Your Leadership Skills?**

I like this quote: “Successful leaders tend to have certain traits. Two keys’ areas of personal growth and development are fundamental to leadership success: self-confidence and a positive attitude”.

I like to think of myself as someone who is self-confident and has a positive attitude – a glass half full kind of guy. However, I need to be careful of complaining when things don’t go my way. I have been guilty of office gossip. As a manager or leader, I must avoid doing this since it could undermine the team and company.

I am happy to see a high score in positive attitude and outlook – 9/10.

My emotional intelligence score is low – 5/10. It could be that since I am an introvert, I need to work on communication skills. I can communicate fine in small groups. Once the group gets up to 8 or more, I basically shut down and don’t talk. I have had this problem since my youth. I am afraid of what I say could be judged or ask a dumb question. One way I have overcome this is to come prepared to the meeting. It hasn’t always worked but is a step in the right direction.

**Clifton Strengths Finder**

My top 5 themes of the Clifton Strengths Finder assessment are Achiever, Belief, Learner, Responsibility and Maximizer.

Achiever: As I reflect back over my results, I have a drive to achieve the things on my list. I have detailed out all of my tasks for my classes using the calendar. I check each item off as I complete it. Some days where I don’t have any class work, I will go outside and do yard or house maintenance. I will pull weeds or paint trim or clean the gutters. I then add the items to my calendar so I can check them off.

Belief: I will need to take my goals and plans to the next level if I want to succeed in other areas. I need to believe that I can work the goals. I will use my faith and belief in God to give me strength to accomplish whatever I set out to do.

Learner: I am finding that I enjoy learning new things. I was able to video tape my mother-in-law’s funeral. I have a Canon T7i camera. I purchased a new 64 gig memory card, an external microphone, a standalone led lamp and a new tripod. I have very little experience in videotaping but I read the book and online web sites to figure out how to do it. The video came out amazing and saved us a lot of money.

Responsibility: While working at Uber Eats, I received a call that a customer did not receive their fries in their order. When I picked up the order from the restaurant, I could not see into the bag since it was sealed. The customer was begging me to go back and get the fries but I could not since the order was completed by the Uber app. I felt pretty bad and responsible for it. I now need to take more responsibility to check the order carefully by asking the restaurant worker to verify the order. This was plaguing me for a while but now I have a plan of action to prevent it from happening again.

Maximizer: I am at a cross roads where I need to decide in the next 2 years what to do. Should I continue on to get a Master’s degree in Software Engineering or Financial Planning? Or should I start a business, continue in school or both. If I start a business in Software Engineering, I could get some income coming in. I also could continue to do side jobs like Uber Eats.

As I am looking at the Maximizer strength, I see that it describes me in the way of taking something and making it better. I also need to find something where my talents are appreciated. That is, my hard work ethic, integrity, responsibility, learning and achieving.

* Ardell Stress Test (results in the appendix)

My score for the Ardell Wellness stress test was 55. This looks like a good score since I am getting more stabilized after a stressful start to the semester. My high scores were marriage, capacity to have fun, spirituality, impact to others, life skills, confidence, achievement and parenting. I need to continually work on keeping these items to the top of my priority list. I would like to cultivate deeper friendships outside my family. I gave present job and school a lower score since I have recently started these items. I hope that each will improve as we come to the end of the year.

* Life Change Stress Test

I have a score of 193 for the life change stress test. My mother-in-law passed away suddenly last August. Just before that I got fired at my job, got on unemployment and started WSU. A lot of big events occurred with a lot of changes happening very quickly. A year ago, I would have been less than 50. My stressed peaked on Aug 23 when I started school and was in Palm Springs cleaning out my mother-in-law’s apartment. That was not a very good way to start WSU. I could barely get organized and even concentrate on a card table when it was very hot! Now, I feel much less stress by getting into the groove of college, working part time and planning my future for the next 2 years.

* PerceivedStressScale Assessment:

My score was 11 and fit pretty close to the mean for my age (11.9). It is interesting that young people 18-29 have the highest levels in the age category. This might be due to having to make a lot of decisions while young. Dating, marriage, friends, poor eating habits, college and low-end jobs add a lot of possible change and stress to your life. The older you get, the less stress you have according to the scores. This may be due to more stable life with family, career and being established in your community and with yourself. Also, when you get closer to retirement, your stress level seems to goes down. That is my feeling as I get closer also. For my family, being debt-free and having peace of where you are going when you die can also lower stress.

* **Communication Styles Assessment**
  + My scores are as follows:
    - Style1 Action: 7
    - Style2 Process: 12
    - Style3 People: 14
    - Style4 Idea: 7

**SWOT matrix**

* Strengths:
  + I’m amazed at how fast I can build software once I know the tools and business rules. It’s enjoyable!
  + I am a jack of all trades. I need to become a master of better communication.
  + My attention to detail is good.
  + Good with finances and book keeping.
  + Can communicate technical complexities to business leaders by demoing or explaining it in their language
  + While working at Burger King when I was 16, I was the faster person that could bag fries. I then became a lead in the back room.
  + When working at the Puyallup fair, I enjoyed selling pies and coffee to customers.
  + I was a good basketball coach for 5 years working with girl’s youth teams.
* Weaknesses:
  + Perception should be improved. I need to sell myself better by pointing out my successes.
  + I need to stay positive even when things look bleak.
  + I need to avoid office gossip.
  + I know too much of older technology which could age me.
  + My language needs to be updated with inclusive language which acknowledges and validates an individual’s identities.
  + I need to cultivate new relationships with others and managers.
  + Bias needs to be checked to make sure you do not apply it to you friends, family, employees or associates.
* Opportunities:
  + Spend more time preparing for meetings so I can be more involved in discussions
  + Try to show a positive attitude when working in teams.
  + Work on my communication to update it with the culture and inclusive language.
  + Improve my score in emotional intelligence.
    - Empathize with others – acknowledge a person’s feelings, ask questions, don’t judge
    - Use active listening skills – use nonverbal cues, brief affirmations
    - Use Self-management – handle your emotions, stay positive
    - Be self-aware – know what you are feeling and what you think
* Threats:
  + Since I am experienced on using older technology, I need to continue to learn new tech.
  + Update the language I speak, speak more empathetically – have more emotion intelligence.
  + My age is working against me. I need to continue to keep a high level of energy by keeping fit and eating right.
  + Thinking that I cannot keep up with the youth. I will follow what Colon Sanders said and did in his life.

**References**

[1] By the Mind Tools Content Team. *How emotionally intelligent are you?: Boosting your people skills*. Retrieved September 21, 2021, from <https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/ei-quiz.htm>

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[3] Matt Beeton, TEDxOxbridge. (n.d.). *What do all great leaders have in common*. Retrieved September 21, 2021, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KgmKNKM0i1g&t=149s&ab_channel=TEDxTalks>.

[4] Michel Seid, Colonel Sanders and the Kentucky Fried Chicken Story <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/colonel-sanders-bio-kentucky-fried-chicken-story-1350966>

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David Kelly

**Typing my name above serves as my signature**