

FINAL PAPER: Leadership Action Plan

The purpose of this project is to assist you in building a personal practice of leadership. It uses two "best-practice" processes for leadership development, namely action learning (learning by doing) and journaling.

Select a two-week period. During this time, I'd like you to:

- Take one new learning from this class and practice it every day. Some examples include:

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- A new daily morning routine and/or evening ritual. Use this time to prime yourself for a good day, or reflect on the success or shortcomings of your day before sleep.
- Mindfulness meditation practice. Find a quiet place to spend 10-20 minutes a day focusing on your breath. Letting your thoughts come, and go, without attachment.
- Practice active listening with every conversation you have. Listen with the intent to hear and understand the other person. Focus on their message, make good eye contact, paraphrase what they say. If your mind wanders, regain focus and bring it back to the conversation.
- Each day, practice mindfulness and curiosity in your daily activities. Pay attention to your surroundings, practice situational awareness. Observe all of the details of your life, in the moment. Do this when you eat, prepare a meal, or doing a task. Create "flow" moments. Connect with your breath several times a day to bring "here and now" presence as often as possible.
- Practice inquiry and advocacy to build your ability to see through others eyes. Empathize with everyone you can (in-person or virtual); especially those who share a different viewpoint, lifestyle or culture. We are all part of the human race and are connected. Tap into that connectedness.
- Choose something not listed above. A topic of your choice that you want to work on.
- Each morning or evening "review" your actions and results from the previous day. Write a few notes each day about what you did, your results, what you learned, and what your plan is for the next day. (This is journaling. Deconstruct your thoughts and emotions. It will also help you compile your paper at the end!)

Write a short paper (3-5 pages).

- Prior to the start of your two weeks, describe the learning from this class you decided to practice for these two weeks and how you intended to implement it. **Write this section before you start.** It is your master plan.
- At the conclusion of the two weeks
 - Describe what you learned during this two-week period about the leadership practice you adopted. I encourage you to include notes from your evening reflections to illustrate what you learned. Describe your experience with the prescribed learning process (e.g., How did it work for you? What have you learned about the process of learning?)
 - Lastly, conclude your paper with a paragraph describing how you would like to continue to develop your ability to lead.

Your success will not be gauged by how well you follow your master plan, but rather how adaptive and generative you were, i.e., how much you experimented and learned through the process, generating results that could not have been seen beforehand. Allow yourself to be surprised!