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INTRODUCTION: GETTING EXTRAORDINARY THINGS DONE IN ORGANIZATIONS

The Student Leadership Challenge is about how student leaders *mobilize others to want to get extraordinary things done* in organizations. It's about the practices they use to transform values into actions, visions into realities, obstacles into innovations, separateness into solidarity, and risks into rewards. It's about leadership that creates the climate in which challenging opportunities are transformed into remarkable successes.

There are no shortages of challenging opportunities. Although in these extraordinary times the challenges seem only to be increasing in number and complexity, all generations confront their own serious threats and receive their own favorable circumstances. The abundance of challenges, however, is not the issue; it's how you respond to them that matters. Through your responses you have the potential to either seriously worsen or profoundly improve the world in which you live, study, and work.

The most significant contribution student leaders make is not simply to today's issues and goals but rather to the long-term development of people, communities, and institutions so they can adapt, change, prosper, and grow. The domain of leaders is the future, and leadership is not the private reserve of a few charismatic men and women. It is a process ordinary people use when they are bringing forth the best from themselves and others. When the leader in everyone is liberated, extraordinary things happen.

Leadership is a process. It is a journey, not a single destination, and the conclusion of any successful (even extraordinary) endeavor is simply the beginning point for the next adventure. Meeting the leadership challenge is a personal—and a daily—challenge for all of us. In the final analysis, leadership development is self-development. We know that if you have the will and the way to lead, you can. You have to supply the will. *The Student Leadership Challenge* will supply the way.

YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The fundamental purpose of *The Student Leadership Challenge* is to assist students—whether in a formal or official leadership position or not—in furthering their abilities to lead others to get extraordinary things done. You are capable of developing yourself as a leader far more than tradition has ever assumed possible.

***Some people make things happen,
some watch things happen, while others
wonder what has happened.***

—Gaelic proverb

Our findings from the analysis of thousands of personal-best leadership case studies challenge the myth that leadership is something that you find only at the highest levels of organizations and society. We found it everywhere. These findings also challenge the belief that leadership is reserved for only a handful of very special people. Leadership is not a gene or an inheritance. Leadership is an identifiable set of skills and abilities that are available to everyone. The “great person” theory of leadership is just plain wrong. Or, we should say, the theory that there are only a few select men and women who can lead others to greatness is just plain wrong.

Another notion that is plain wrong is that leaders come only from large, or great, or small, or breakthrough organizations, or from established economies, or from start-up companies. They come from anywhere and everywhere. We consider the male and female students in our research to be exemplary leaders, and so do those with whom they worked, even though the vast majority of them aren't known outside of their colleges or communities. They are the everyday heroes of our world. It's because there are so many—not so few—student leaders that extraordinary things get done on a regular basis, especially in extraordinary times.

The Student Leadership Challenge is written both to strengthen your abilities and to uplift your spirits. We intend it to be practical and inspirational. We also make you a promise: Everything in this book is evidence-based. Everything we write about, everything we advise is solidly based in research—our own and others'. If you engage in the practices

we describe in this book, you will improve your performance and the performance of your team. There is a catch, of course. You have to do it with commitment and consistency. Excellence in anything—whether it’s leadership, music, sports, or academics—requires disciplined practice.

Practice is the best of all instructors.

—Pubilius Syrus

This book has its origins in a research project we began over twenty-five years ago. We wanted to know what people did—from teenagers to executives to senior citizens, from the campus to the corner office, from Main Street to Tiananmen Square—when they were at their “personal best” in leading others. The personal bests were experiences in which our study respondents, in their own estimation, set their individual leadership standards of excellence. We started with an assumption that we didn’t have to interview and survey star performers or top executives in excellent companies to discover best practices. Instead, we assumed that by asking regular people to describe extraordinary leadership experiences we would find patterns of success. And we did.

We repeated this research with student leaders, and we found exactly the same thing. When they are doing their best, student leaders exhibit an identifiable set of practices, which vary little from campus to campus—whether small or large, public or private, northern or southern, rural or urban—or even from community to community and country to country. Good leadership is an understandable and universal process. Though each student leader is a unique individual, there are shared patterns to the practice of leadership. And these practices can be learned.

This book is about how college students exercise leadership at its best. The stories you will read are the real-life experiences of regular students,

***The formula for success is simple:
practice and concentration, then more
practice and more concentration.***

—Babe Didrikson Zaharias

from all walks of life—people like you—who get bigger-than-life results.* This is not a book about famous people or about people in positions of high power—although we have peppered the text with short quotations from such people in a variety of fields to give you a look at leadership through some different lenses. It’s a book about students who have the courage and spirit to make a significant difference.

One of the most dangerous and irresponsible myths about leadership is that it is the province of just a handful of people, a magical ability reserved for the unique individuals of fairy tales or science fiction novels. Leadership is not something mysterious, mystical, or ethereal that cannot be understood, learned, and practiced by ordinary people. It is a myth that only a lucky few can decipher the leadership code. You have within you the ability to accept and embrace the leadership challenge to make a difference, because it is who you are and what you do that matters.

A FIELD GUIDE FOR LEADERS

The student leaders we’ve worked with and learned from have asked us many questions about enhancing their leadership capabilities. In *The*

* Unless otherwise noted, all student stories, examples, and quotations are taken from personal interviews and correspondence or from personal-best leadership case studies written by student leaders during or shortly after their college careers. In reporting their leadership experiences, we do not specify their school or location because The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership hold true for the complete range of campus environments—large and small, private and public, urban and rural—in the United States and abroad.

Student Leadership Challenge, we offer guidance on these and other questions:

- What beliefs and values guide my actions as a leader?
- What is the source of self-confidence required to lead others?
- How do I best set an example for others?
- How do I articulate a vision of the future when things are so unpredictable?
- How do I improve my ability to get people excited?
- How do I create an environment that promotes innovation and risk?
- How do I build a cohesive and spirited team?
- How do I share power and information and still maintain accountability?
- How do I put more joy and celebration into our efforts?
- How do I improve my leadership abilities?

Think of *The Student Leadership Challenge* as a field guide to take along on your leadership journey. You begin the expedition with this chapter and the next. This introduction gives you a point of view about leadership; Chapter Two provides an overview of The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership® revealed in our research. Chapters Three through Seven explore The Five Practices in depth. We have designed each of those chapters to describe one leadership practice and explain the essential behaviors that student leaders employ to get extraordinary things done (what we refer to as The Ten Commitments of Leadership). We offer evidence from our research, and that of others, to support the practices and commitments, recount actual case examples of real students who demonstrate each practice, and prescribe specific recommendations on what you can do to make each practice your own and to continue your development as a leader.

It's what you learn after you know it all that counts.

—John Wooden

Along the way we suggest steps to take, alone or with others, to build specific skills in becoming a better leader. Each of our suggestions is a "small win." Whether the focus is your own learning or the development of your constituents you can take immediate action on every one of the recommendations. They require little or no budget; they don't need any elaborate or extensive discussions, consensus among peers, or approval of some professor, faculty advisor, or college administrator. They just require your personal commitment and discipline.

The closing chapter sounds a call to action, a call to everyone to accept personal responsibility to be a role model for leadership. Among the recurring lessons from the research is this: leadership is everyone's business, and the first place to look for leadership is within yourself. The closing chapter asks you to consider the difference you want to make, the legacy you want to leave. And when you read to the very end of this book, the secret to success in life will be revealed.

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THE FIVE PRACTICES OF EXEMPLARY LEADERSHIP

As we've conducted research on personal-best leadership experiences over the years, we've discovered countless examples of how student leaders mobilize others to get extraordinary things done in virtually every arena of organized activity. We've found them in student government, fraternities and sororities, dorms and residential learning communities, collegiate and intramural sports, multicultural centers, ROTC, campus ministry, student unions, community service, clubs, and classroom projects. Student leaders reside in every campus, in every city and every

country, in every position and every place. They're employees, volunteers, classmates, teammates; they're women and men, young and old, of every creed and nationality. Leadership knows no racial or religious bounds, no ethnic or cultural borders. Exemplary leadership can be found everywhere you look.

From our analysis of thousands of personal-best leadership experiences, we've discovered that people who guide others along pioneering journeys follow rather similar paths. Though each experience we examined was unique in expression, all the cases followed remarkably similar patterns of action in a wide range of settings. We've forged these common practices into a model of leadership, and we offer it here as guidance for students as they attempt to keep their own bearings as leaders and steer others toward peak achievements.

As we looked deeper into the dynamic process of leadership, through case analyses and survey questionnaires, we uncovered five practices common to students' personal-best leadership experiences. When getting extraordinary things done in organizations, student leaders engage in these Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership:

- Model the Way
- Inspire a Shared Vision
- Challenge the Process
- Enable Others to Act
- Encourage the Heart

The Five Practices—which we preview in this chapter and then discuss in depth in Chapters Three through Seven—aren't the private property of the students we studied or of a few select shining stars. Leadership is not about personality; it's about behavior. The Five Practices are available to anyone who accepts the leadership challenge. And they're also not

the accident of a particular time; as the most recent research confirms, they're just as relevant today as they have been in the past.

MODEL THE WAY

Titles are granted, but it's your behavior that wins you respect. As Neil Kucera told us, "Leadership is mostly the model you provide for your peers in how you behave." When his service organization accepted responsibility for working with a group of at-risk adolescents, he explained that "we seldom told the kids how to behave—we simply showed them an example, and it was contagious. The kids were always watching us, studying how we acted, looking up to us, and wanting to mimic our behavior." This sentiment was shared across all the cases that we collected. Exemplary student leaders know that if they want to gain commitment and reach the highest standards, they must be models of the behavior they expect of others. Leaders *model the way*.

To effectively model the behavior they expect of others, student leaders must first be clear about their own guiding principles. They must *clarify values*. Jason Ting explained that when he was elected president of his student organization, "I had to figure out for myself, and within myself, what I thought was important and why. Then I needed to make certain that what I was doing was consistent with these values and standards." Student leaders like Jason must dig deep inside to figure out their values, and then they must clearly and distinctly give voice to them. As the personal-best stories illustrate, student leaders are supposed to stand up for their beliefs, so they'd better have some beliefs to stand up for. But it's not just the leaders' values that are important. Leaders aren't just representing themselves. They speak and act on behalf of a larger community. They must build agreement around common principles and common ideals.

Eloquent speeches about common values, however, aren't nearly enough. Deeds are far more important than words when others want to determine how serious you really are about what you say. Words and deeds must be consistent. Exemplary student leaders *set the example* through daily actions that demonstrate they are deeply committed to their beliefs. "I would never ask my teammates to do something I wouldn't be willing to do myself," Wesley Lord reported. "They knew that if I asked them for something that I would be willing to do the same if they asked me." Mark Almassy echoed this same insight. As captain of the volleyball team, he said, "I always showed up early to practice and often-times stayed late. There was nothing I wasn't willing to do. I was not too good to mop the floor or too cool to shout words of encouragement to a freshman." Student leaders understand that actions speak louder than words, and, as Mark puts it, "I made sure to show people what to do rather than tell them what to do."

We must become the change we want to see.

—Mahatma Gandhi

The personal-best projects we heard about were all distinguished by relentless effort, steadfastness, competence, and attention to detail. We were also struck by how the actions that student leaders took to set an example were often simple things. Sure, they had plans, but the examples they gave were not about elaborate designs. They were about the power of spending time with someone, of working side by side with colleagues, of sharing a laugh or even a tear, of telling stories that made values come alive, of being highly visible during times of uncertainty, and of asking questions to get people to think about values and priorities. Model the Way is about earning the right and the respect to lead through direct involvement and action. Students follow first the person, then the plan.

INSPIRE A SHARED VISION

When students described to us their personal-best leadership experiences, they told of times when they imagined an exciting, highly attractive future for their group, team, or organization. They had visions and dreams of what *could* be. They had absolute and total personal belief in those dreams, and they were confident in their abilities to make extraordinary things happen. Every project, every organization, every social movement begins with a dream. The dream or vision is the force that invents the future. Leaders *inspire a shared vision*. As John Irby explained from his own personal-best leadership experience, "Inspiring others to envision their success and giving them an image of what that would look like injects drive and determination into those around you."

The very essence of leadership is [that] you have a vision. It's got to be a vision you articulate clearly and forcefully on every occasion.

You can't blow an uncertain trumpet.

—Theodore Hesburgh

Student leaders gaze across the horizon of time, imagining the attractive opportunities that are in store for the time when they and their constituents arrive at a distant destination. They *envision the future*, the exciting and ennobling possibilities ahead. They have a desire to make something happen, to change the way things are, to create something that no one else has ever created before. In some ways, student leaders live their lives backward. They see pictures in their mind's eye of what the results will look like even before they've started their project, much as an architect draws a blueprint or an engineer builds a model. Their clear image of the future pulls them forward. Yet visions seen only by leaders

are insufficient to create an organized movement or a significant change on a campus or in the community. A person with no constituents is not a leader, and people will not follow until they accept a vision as their own. Leaders cannot command commitment, they can only inspire it.

Student leaders have to *enlist others* in a common vision. To enlist people in a vision, you must get to know your constituents and speak their language. People must believe that you understand their needs and have their interests at heart. Leadership is a dialogue, not a monologue. To enlist support, you must have intimate knowledge of people's dreams, hopes, aspirations, and values.

What may begin as "my" vision emerges as "our" vision. This is precisely what Zeebah Aleshi learned when serving as first chair in her school's wind ensemble band. When their band director suffered a sudden illness and was gone for months, the majority of the band members grew apathetic toward music and practicing. Zeebah said she wasn't about to sit back and watch her fellow band members fling away what they had once been passionate about: "I talked with each of them and showed them how our band was not just important to me; it was important to all of us and the school. I made them realize they were throwing away their love and passion for music. I helped them find the reason why they were sitting in the band seats and why they were here; we were all here to create music; music so beautiful that would cause our friends, parents, and teacher to have tears rolling down their cheeks. Music was not our only passion, but it was part of who we were, and together we could accomplish so much more."

Student leaders breathe life into the hopes and dreams of others and enable them to see the exciting possibilities that the future holds. They forge a unity of purpose by showing constituents how the dream is for the common good. Leaders stir the fire of passion in others by expressing enthusiasm for the compelling vision of their group. Whatever the

venue, and without exception, the students we've studied reported that they were incredibly enthusiastic about their personal-best projects. Their own enthusiasm was catching; it spread from them to their constituents. Belief in the vision and enthusiasm for it are the sparks that ignite the flame of inspiration.

CHALLENGE THE PROCESS

Every single personal-best leadership case involved some kind of challenge. The challenge might have been turning around a losing season or failed rush program, starting a new club, designing an honor code, re-vamping residential hall policies, constructing an invigorating campaign to get adolescents to join an environmental program, winning a case competition, or launching a new program, product, or service. Whatever the challenge, all the personal-best experiences involved a departure from the status quo. Not one student claimed to have achieved a personal best by keeping things the same. All leaders *challenge the process*.

The work of student leaders is change, and they are always on the lookout for ways that things could be better than they are; they don't sit idly by waiting for fate or fortune to smile on them. "Luck" or "being in the right place at the right time" may play a role in the specific opportunities leaders embrace, but those who lead others to greatness seek and accept challenge. In describing her personal-best leadership experience, Patricia Hua told us, "No one else seemed willing to try and make our idea work, because everyone thought that the chances of success were too slim and hence not worth the time and energy. But I thought that we could do something that had never been done before. It was always *possible*." Patricia was constantly looking around for ways to improve their team, finding ways to stay current about what others were doing, and taking the initiative to try new things.

Leaders are pioneers. They are willing to step out into the unknown. They *search for opportunities to innovate, grow, and improve*. But student leaders aren't the only creators or originators of new products, services, or processes. In fact, it's more likely that they're not; innovation comes more from listening than from telling. Student leaders have to constantly be looking outside of themselves and their organizations for new and innovative programs, processes, and services. "The process of trial and error gave me a new perspective on what is required to be a successful leader," is how Allison Avon explained it. With this new perspective, she can offer this advice: "When the process challenges you . . . challenge back! That's simply the only way that things are going to get any better."

When it comes to innovation, the major contributions of student leaders are to create a climate for experimentation, recognize good ideas, support those ideas, and be willing to challenge the system to get new programs, processes, services, and systems adopted. It might be more accurate, then, to say that leaders aren't the inventors as much as they are the early patrons and adopters of innovation.

***Innovation distinguishes between
a leader and a follower.***

—Steve Jobs

Student leaders know well that innovation and change involve *experimenting and taking risks*. Despite the inevitability of mistakes and failures, they proceed anyway. One way of dealing with the potential risks and failures of experimentation is to approach change through incremental steps and small wins. Little victories, when piled on top of each other, build confidence that even the biggest challenges can be met. In

the process, commitment to the long-term future is strengthened. Not everyone is equally comfortable with risk and uncertainty. You must pay attention to the capacity of your constituents to take control of challenging situations and become fully committed to change. You can't exhort people to take risks if they don't also feel safe.

***The trouble is, if you don't risk
anything, you risk even more.***

—Erica Jong

It would be ridiculous to assert that those who fail over and over again eventually succeed as leaders. Success in any endeavor isn't a process of simply buying enough lottery tickets. The key that unlocks the door to opportunity is learning. So many student leaders, like Allison Avon, told us that "leaders are constantly learning from their errors and failures." Life is the leader's laboratory, and exemplary leaders use it to conduct as many experiments as possible. *Try, fail, and learn. Try, fail, and learn. Try, fail, and learn.* That's the leader's mantra. Student leaders are learners. You need to learn from your failures as well as your successes and to make it possible for others to do the same.

ENABLE OTHERS TO ACT

Grand dreams don't become significant realities through the actions of a single person. It requires a team effort. It requires solid trust and strong relationships. It requires deep competence and cool confidence. It requires group collaboration and individual accountability. To get extraordinary things done in organizations, student leaders have to *enable others to act*.

**Keep away from people who belittle
your ambitions. Small people always do that,
but the really great make you feel
that you, too, can become great.**

—Mark Twain

Student leaders *foster collaboration* and build trust. This sense of teamwork goes far beyond a small circle of constituents or close confidants. You need to engage all those who must make the project work—and, in some way, all who must live with the results. Francesca Battaglia learned this the hard way, but learn it she did. Like so many student leaders, she told us, “I used to believe that ‘if you want something done right, do it yourself.’ I found out the hard way that this is just impossible to do. One day I was ready to just give up the position because I could no longer handle all of the work. My advisor noticed that I was overwhelmed, and she turned to me and said three magic words: *Use your committee!* The best piece of advice I would pass along about being an effective leader is that it is OK to rely on others to get the job done.”

Student leaders make it possible for others to do good work. They know that those who are expected to produce the results must feel a sense of personal power and ownership. They understand that the command-and-control techniques of traditional management no longer apply. Instead, student leaders work to make people feel strong, capable, and committed. You enable others to act not by hoarding the power you have but by giving it away. Student leaders *strengthen others*. By this we mean they help everyone develop the capacity to deliver on the promises they make. As Kim Wizer learned working with her sorority sisters: “We involved everyone in the chapter, rather than just the executive officers.” She made sure to seek out the opinions of all her sorority sisters and used

these discussions not only to build up their capabilities but also to educate and update her own information and perspective. Kim realized that when people are trusted and have more discretion, more authority, and more information, they’re much more likely to use their energies to produce extraordinary results.

**You may be deceived if you trust
too much, but you will live in torment
if you do not trust enough.**

—Frank Crane

In the stories and cases students shared, they proudly discussed teamwork, trust, and empowerment as essential elements of their efforts. Constituents neither perform at their best nor stick around for very long if you make them feel weak, dependent, or alienated. But when you help people feel strong and capable—as if they can do more than they ever thought possible—they’ll give it their all and exceed their own expectations. Authentic leadership is founded on trust, and the more people trust their leader—and each other—the more they take risks, make changes, and keep organizations and movements alive. Through that relationship, leaders turn their constituents into leaders themselves.

ENCOURAGE THE HEART

The climb to the top is arduous and long. People become exhausted, frustrated, and disenchanted. They’re often tempted to give up. Student leaders *encourage the heart* of their constituents to carry on. Genuine acts of caring uplift the spirit and draw people forward. In his personal-best leadership experience, Ken Campos told us, he had shared the feelings of being underappreciated and undervalued along with many of his coworkers, so

when he became the shift supervisor he took many steps to turn around this attitude. “I would constantly extol and commend them for their actions, and more important, I tried to make it clear that we were making a difference as a team,” he told us. “I looked for ways to make our work fun, and whenever anyone did something special, we all stopped to give that person a high-five or a chorus of ‘way-to-go’ chants.”

Recognizing contributions can be one-to-one or with many people. It can come from dramatic gestures or simple actions. Kristen Cornell, as captain of her volleyball team, said she “found that encouraging my teammates was one of the easiest and most beneficial things I could do to make the team better.” Extending this insight, David Braverman, in changing the culture within his residence hall, observed, “Showing that you care about someone is a simple yet overlooked quality of a leader.” It’s part of the leader’s job to show appreciation for people’s contributions and to create a culture of *celebrating values and victories*.

In the cases we’ve collected there are countless examples of individual recognition and group celebration. They range from handwritten thank-you notes, face-to-face tributes, and personally mixed CDs to serenades, marching bands, and firework displays. Student leaders make sure that the people they are working with are recognized for their contributions, because they want to provide a climate in which everyone feels cared about and genuinely appreciated.

Flatter me, and I may not believe you.

Criticize me, and I may not like you.

Ignore me, and I may not forgive you.

Encourage me—and I may not forget you.

—William Arthur Ward

Recognition and celebration aren’t about fun and games, though there is a lot of fun and there are a lot of games when student leaders encourage the hearts of their constituents. Neither are they about pretentious ceremonies designed to create some phony sense of camaraderie. Encouragement is a curiously serious business. By celebrating people’s accomplishments visibly and in group settings, student leaders create and sustain a team spirit. By basing celebrations on the accomplishment of key values and milestones, they sustain focus and enhance motivation. When striving to bring about dramatic change of any kind—whether it is making an 180-degree turnaround, recovering from disaster, or starting up a new program—you must make certain that people see the benefit of behavior that’s aligned with your group’s goals and values. Realize that celebrations and rituals, when done with authenticity and from the heart, build a strong sense of collective identity and community spirit that can carry a group through turbulent and difficult moments.

Embedded in The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership are behaviors that serve as the basis for learning to lead. We call these The Ten Commitments of Leadership (see Table 2.1). The Student Leadership Practices Inventory (SLPI) described in the Appendix further translates The Five Practices into behavioral statements so that students can assess their skills and use this feedback to improve their leadership abilities.

LEADERSHIP IS EVERYONE’S BUSINESS

After analyzing thousands of personal-best leadership experiences from student leaders around the globe, an additional insight emerges: *leadership is everyone’s business*. Leadership is not about position or rank; rather, it is about a process that can be understood, grasped, and learned. Leadership, just like any other skill in life, can be strengthened through coaching and practice. But no amount of coaching or practice can make

2.1

TABLE 2.1 THE FIVE PRACTICES AND TEN COMMITMENTS OF LEADERSHIP.

Model the Way	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clarify values by finding your voice and affirming shared ideals. 2. Set the example by aligning actions and shared values.
Inspire a Shared Vision	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Envision the future by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities. 4. Enlist others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations.
Challenge the Process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Search for opportunities by seizing the initiative and by looking outward for innovative ways to improve. 6. Experiment and take risks by constantly generating small wins and learning from experience.
Enable Others to Act	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Foster collaboration by building trust and facilitating relationships. 8. Strengthen others by increasing self-determination and developing competence.
Encourage the Heart	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Recognize contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence. 10. Celebrate the values and victories by creating a spirit of community.

much of a difference if you don't care about doing better for yourself as well as for others. Leadership development is fundamentally self-development, and it begins with an exploration of your inner territory.

Here are some steps to start your leadership development journey.

I. MY PERSONAL-BEST EXPERIENCE OF LEADERSHIP

With leadership, as with many things in life, experience can be the best teacher. We learn what to do by trying it ourselves or by watching others. The problem is that not all of what's done or observed is effective or appropriate behavior. So it's important to base our leadership practices on the best of what people do or see—those times when people perform at their best as leaders or when we observe others at their best.

This assignment is designed to get you to focus on *your* personal-best leadership experience. You may be discussing this experience with a few others, so it's important that you complete this brief task prior to that conversation. Writing this case study about your own personal-best leadership experience can take anywhere from fifteen minutes to an hour, so please set aside adequate time for both reflection and expression.

1. Recall a time when you did your *very best* as a leader. Think about a time when you set your *individual standard of excellence* as a leader. It's a time when you *excelled*. Your leadership experience can be in school; in a classroom, club, or team; in the community, a religious group, or a sports team; or in the workplace. It can be one that you are presently involved with or one you were involved with some time in the past; in the public or private sector; as an appointed, selected, or "emerged" leader; for pay or as a volunteer. Write a very brief identifying description of that experience in the following space so you can give everyone an understanding of the context. For example: When did this occur? Who was involved? What challenges did you face?

2. Thinking about the case you just selected, what are the five to seven actions you took as a leader that made a difference? That is, what specifically would you say you did as a leader that mobilized your group or organization to get extraordinary things done?

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.
- f.
- g.

3. What were the two or three major lessons that you learned *about leadership* from this experience? That is, if you were going to give someone else advice about being a leader, based on your own experience, what would you tell that person?

- a.
- b.
- c.

II. A LEADER I HAVE FOLLOWED

Your personal experiences with individuals you consider to be leaders have much to teach you about the difference that people can make in your life. You learn about leadership as you have experiences with people you admire as leaders and observe how they bring out the best in you and others.

Take a moment to think about a time when you *willingly* followed the direction of someone you admired and respected as a leader. (For

many students this person is one of their teachers, coaches, or relatives.) Answer the following questions:

1. What was the situation (the project, program, or activity) in which you were involved with this person?

2. How did this person make you feel? What are the three or four words you would use to describe how you felt when you were involved with this person and how this person made you feel about yourself?

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

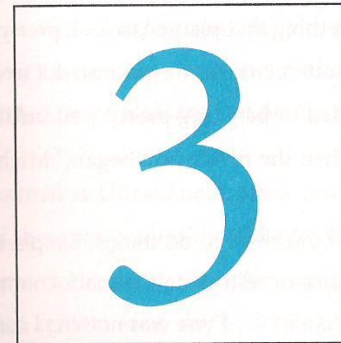
3. What five to seven leadership actions did this person take to get you and others to want to perform at your best? Think about what this individual did as a leader that you admired and respected, and what specifically they did as a leader that mobilized your group or organization to get extraordinary things done.

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.
- f.
- g.

III. OTHER INDIVIDUALS WHOM I ADMIRE AS LEADERS, AND WHY

You have interacted with many individuals over the course of your life. Some have had considerable influence on you, others much less. Think about people you know who you would say are leaders. They don't have to be anyone that anybody else would know, and they don't need to be perfect role models.

1. Think of at least three people and make notes to yourself in the space below. What was their relationship to you? What was the context in which you knew or interacted with this person? What was it about this person and his or her actions that made you think of the person as a leader?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
2. Looking over your notes about these three individuals, what five to seven key observations would you make about what the people you admire as leaders *do*? Be prepared to discuss your conclusions with others.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
 - f.
 - g.



MODEL THE WAY

Michael Gibler was ecstatic when he was hired at Ultrazone, a laser tag arena and arcade that is nearly a landmark in his town.

It seemed like the perfect job for me. . . . The people there were relaxed, kind, motivated, and really seemed to enjoy their work. The pay was lower than other jobs I had been offered, but the scheduling was flexible and the commute was short so I could walk to work. Like I said, it was near perfect.

And so it was for the first six months. Michael learned quickly, stayed energetic, and made friends with his coworkers. At his first performance review he was told he was a good example for the rest of the employees. Not long after, when a couple of assistant managers left, the general manager offered him a promotion to one of those vacancies. "I was thrilled,"