Leadership Portfolio

Sydney T. Inger

James Madison University

HON 300: Gender and Leadership

Professor Amelia Underwood

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What Does Leadership Mean to Me?

## Leadership at the Beginning of the Course

As of this moment, at the end of August, I think I have a narrow view of what leadership really means. I have been told many times throughout the past that I am a natural born leader. If I had to define what a leader was, I would start by saying that it was someone who encouraged others towards a common goal or in helping others. As a kid, I started a program called "Kids Feeding Kids." I would organize, with the help of my mom, food drives that would benefit Island Harvest. After a while, the food drives were organized so often that I was able to split the proceeds between Island Harvest and the United Jewish Association. Additionally, after Hurricane Sandy, I collected approximately 85 boxes of food and clothing that I was able to split between the two locations along with the Inn, a local homeless shelter.

However, as I got older and I learned more and more about how Island Harvest functioned, I became disappointed in what I had discovered. That lead me to switch to donating the proceeds to Vet Mart, a local food pantry benefitting those who served our country.

Many described these actions of those who were leaders. But honestly when I reflect back, it just feels like it was what I was meant to do. I genuinely feel like I was meant to help those who are less fortunate than I am. Whether that be collecting food and clothing for those in need or in my future career as a social worker and lawyer ensuring youth are safe.

As of right now, I believe a leader listens to the people they are serving. I believe that leaders also listen to those who are helping them work towards their cause. Furthermore, I believe that it is important to never give up and continuously work towards your goal and always aim higher.

Leadership at the End of the Course
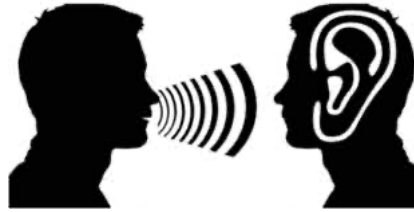
After completing the course, learning more about the types of leadership. I have been able to narrow what I believe leadership is. I selected the above pictures for specific reasons. Each image shows essential traits of a great leader. Throughout history, there have been countless influential people, each possessing every traits I have depicted above. In the end, the core of what I believe leadership is has not changed. My perception on what it takes to be a good, effective, and efficient leader has evolved and matured as a result of taking this course.

Personal Leadership Philosophy

What are the basic tenets of my leadership philosophy?

I chose this image because it describes a few of the essential components of my leadership philosophy.

This image describes the types of communication that are absolutely needed as a leader. Additionally, these skills are the most important in being a leader.

Community has always been something I really strive to make happen in every situation I hold a leadership role in. I believe that community allows everyone to feel comfortable in their environment.

How did I arrive at this philosophy? What people, places, events, etc. influenced the components?

Past teachers and professors as well as current professors have been a major influence on my leadership style. I look to scholars as leaders as they take their knowledge and help younger, curious minds learn and become enriched by their expertise.

At the age of eight, I began running food drives for my community. I chose this image because the food drive I ran after Hurricane Sandy was one of the most influential things to happen in my life. It was with this experience that I knew assisting my community in any capacity was my calling.

After coming out at 14, I started to become extremely involved in the LGBTQIAP+ community. Specifically, I designed my research and my major around working to find resolutions to systemic biases against the LGBTQIAP+ in multiple areas. For example, for my senior thesis, I am looking at how systemic bias impacts LGBTQIAP+ youth in the foster care and adoption system.

What role do my personal values play in my philosophy?

My personal values play an integral role in the components of my leadership philosophy. Morals and values that I possess are held to a high standard. They are not something I am willing to budge on. That said, my morals and values heavily influence what I believe a great leader should encompass.

What role does gender play in my leadership style?

Gender plays an important role in my leadership style. As an individual who identifies as female, I understand what it is like to move through life as a minority in patriarchal nation. This allows me to have an advantage in being able to know how folks may feel best included. Additionally, as someone who identifies within multiple minorities, I understand what it like to feel uncomfortable in an environment because of my identity. As a leader who empathizes with that, I am able to take my perspective and apply it to fighting against systemic bias.

How has my experience in this course influenced my philosophy?

This course has taught me more than I ever could have imagined. I am so thankful to have taken this course. My philosophy at the beginning of the course was being able to recognize a good leader. After this semester, I am able to name the elements I wish to see in a leader and that I wish to possess as a leader. Additionally, I am able to name leadership styles based on how a leader commands their space. Overall, learning from others and the readings allowed me to have an amazing experience in the course which also enhanced my leadership philosophy.

Class Reflection Pieces

Piece 1: Week 4 Discussion Post

Gender roles in workplace leadership have made a shift in recent years. Eagly and Carli opened up my eyes when they exclaimed, "[w]ith progress toward equal opportunity the barriers that women now encounter no longer take the form of an exclusionary wall or a rigid ceiling at a particular level" (2007). I was still under the assumption that women's barrier to leadership positions was considered the glass ceiling. However, it has become increasingly evident as society evolves women are entering the workforce and leadership positions in stride.

But, how true is it? Women are taking an increasing amount of leadership positions in business. I am questioning how genuine companies are when the jobs are being offered. For example, "[s]ometimes companies award executive titles to women just to give the appearance of diversity" (Eagly & Carli, 2007). This makes me extremely frustrated. Successful, hardworking women work all of their lives to achieve leadership roles in their field but sometimes companies take advantage of that and use it as a diversity tactic. Furthermore, employers also try and claim

that the reason they do not have women in high leadership positions is due "to the lack of women in the executive pipeline…[however,] the executive pipeline can no longer be described as devoid of women" (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Meanwhile, many women are becoming highly educated in turn making up more of the workforce. Women in business leadership positions is steadily on the rise. There is still much more work to be done but we are on a road that only goes up. In conclusion, I thoroughly agree with Billing and Alvesson's statement: "[t]here is no difference between male and female leaders—only between people…" (2000). Everyone's potential is based on hard-work and dedication not gender.

Reasoning for Selecting Piece:

I selected this piece for a multitude of reasons. This piece reflects my skill as a writer and scholar. Additionally, this piece showcases my passions on bringing equality to minorities. Throughout the preceding, I was pondering whether major corporations with females in leadership were genuine. As the semester progressed, I began to understand the intricacies of how women climb the ladder of leadership. Again, the potential for someone to be a phenomenal leader is based on their work ethic and leadership style not their gender.

Piece 2: Week 6 Discussion Post

Authentic leadership is my personal belief on how a leader should be. Brown and Trevino stated that "[a]uthentic leaders are 'individuals who are deeply aware of how they think and behave and are perceived by others as being aware of their own and others' values/moral perspective, knowledge, and strengths; aware of the context in which they operate; and who are confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, and high on moral character'" (2006). Often, when

dealing with projects, I find myself thinking about what option will benefit the most amount of people. As I continue to think about my future career, I acknowledge that I will be under many high-pressure situations. This will allow me to ensure that I keep my values especially since "…moral intense situations will enhance the relationship between ethical contexts and ethical leadership" (Brown, M. E., & Trevino, L. K, 2006). Additionally, when I think about my future as a leader in my field and ensuring the safety of youth across the country, I know this is my purpose in life.

As a person who best fits the authentic leadership style, George, Sims, McLean, and Mayer said it best when they exclaimed: "[a]uthentic leaders demonstrate a passion for their purpose, practice their values consistently, and leaders demonstrate a passion for their purpose, practice their values consistently, and lead with their hearts as well as their heads" (164). Helping the youth of tomorrow is my calling and my passion. By having a "steady and confident presence" I know I will be able to help the children in whichever county I practice social work and/or law in child social services (George, B., Sims, P., McLean, A. N., Mayer, D., 2007). My values greatly influence my leadership style connecting me to the authentic leadership model.

Reasoning for Selecting Piece:

I selected this piece as a way to display my leadership style. This piece allowed me to understand how I feel about leadership styles as a whole. Specifically, I was able to apply traits I felt are essential to leadership and give the concept a name. The most essential component of leadership are passion and purpose. I learned a great deal from this two-week span of readings.

Piece 3: Week 15 Discussion Post

Gender inequity is a global issue. We see it globally in "segregation policies [that] are not "official," [however,] they place restrictions on the deployment and ultimately on training and promotion opportunities for women" (Metcalfe, 2006). What good does this do societies globally? Additionally, Metcalfe disclosed that women were passed over or were limited on "support for professional academic qualifications" because of their gender (2006). This is absolutely enraging! Why do males believe they have the right to suppress females in the business, education, or political worlds? We as a society need to step up and change from a culture that look at ""I" versus "we" and become one that looks at all humans equality (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010).

On the home front, we as a country have a lot of work to do. Sandberg explicitly states, "Gender should neither magnify nor excuse rude or dismissive treatment" (Sandberg, 2013). Their statement encompasses that fact that both men and women's behavior are not excused when they are treating others poorly. Equally important, women should not turn their backs or treat other women poorly. Sandberg also alluded "that once a woman achieves success, particularly in a gender-biased context, her capacity to see gender discrimination is reduced" (Sandberg, 2013). This is not okay! We cannot just look the other way once we climb the ladder. Like Sandberg stated, "It's up to us to end the self-fulfilling belief that 'women can't do this, women can't do that'" (Sandberg, 2013). We must do more as a society to attempt to balance out the power shift of the country. Wolfers and Stevenson have a great start to their idea of a "new gender gap"—measured by well-being rather than wages—is to close the leadership gap: to elect a woman president and 50 women senators; to ensure that women are equally represented in the ranks of corporate executives and judicial leaders" (Slaughter, 2012). While this is a start, we

must not forget about those in minority populations who are unrepresented such as transgender, non-binary, gender non-conforming folks, as well as people of color, and diverse ethnic backgrounds. When we include them in our plans to level the playing field, then, and only then, will the country start to see true equity.

Reasoning for Selecting Piece:

I selected the above piece for many reasons. One of the reasons for my selection is due to this discussion board being a component of what I study on a daily basis. As a part of my research focus, gender inequality is something I know a lot about. Additionally, I am passionate about bringing awareness to the issue and suggesting ways that folks can get involved to break systemic biases. Overall, I was able to showcase my knowledge and learn from my classmates perspectives through this discussion.

Piece 4: Leadership Immersion Activity

Leadership Immersion Activity

Sydney T. Inger

James Madison University

HON 300: Advanced Special Topics in Honors-Gender and Leadership

Professor Amelia F. Underwood

September 23, 2020

Leadership is extremely crucial in creating change. I am looking forward to working in the fields of social work and law. To be a true leader in those areas, I need to be well versed in a multitude of areas. In this particular assignment, I will be exploring in more detail aspects such as race and gender.

I picked *Disclosure* due to its extreme relevance to social justice issues present day. This documentary will allow me to expand my worldview on perspectives such as race and gender. While I do study an abundance about the LGBTQIAP+ community, this documentary primary focuses on transgender, queer, people of color. I identify as a white, cisgender, lesbian. Therefore, I am hoping to gain insight on the struggles that this community has faced in terms of gender identity and race and has bravely persevered through. Additionally, I hope to better understand how to support them as a community and individuals.

Throughout the documentary, I had an array of emotions. I found primarily that I was outraged for them at the continuous misrepresentation that trans folks are experiencing in the media. Even if the representation is well intended, like the *L Word*, it may not always have the result that truly helps the trans community. However, even misrepresentation is important. This is due to the fact that approximately 80% of individuals have stated that they do not know a transgender individual (Feder, 2020). Therefore, media is used as a tool for education and representation of a minority. Additionally, there were many instances in which I felt my body relaxed and become overcome by goosebumps or emotion. Predominately, the previous occurred when actors, actresses, writers, producers, historians, and activists described their realizations of being a transgender individual and how it connected with seeing transgender folks in the media. Lastly, a feeling that stood out to me throughout the documentary was the intenseness of transgender folks' fear and worry surrounding disclosure and discovery. Each and every

individual, who was interviewed, bodies tensed up when asked about their period of disclosure and coming out. I remember the fear and worry surrounding my coming out but I do not believe it amounts to nearly half of what transgender folks experience. I am grateful for this experience. I believe it did align with what I thought I would gain from this experience. I was able to gain some amazing insight into how I can be a better leader.

Watching this documentary is life changing. *Disclosure* will greatly help my leadership practice. It has allowed me to learn that in my profession I need to speak up for transgender, queer, and non-binary folks. Hearing the incredible folks in the documentary really put into perspective how much more work I have to do as a leader. In terms of my leadership practice I will need to ensure that I am learning and growing with the trans community. I need to make sure that I am a strong ally of the transgender community.

Watching this documentary was transformative for my perspective. It allowed me to realize that I know an exuberant amount more in the LGB areas. I also recognized that I need to actively work harder to learn more about the transgender community. Additionally, I need to become more active as an ally of the community. By doing this, I will be able to be a better leader and activist for the LGBTQIAP+ community as a whole.

In conjunction to what I have stated above, there are many ways I can incorporate what I learned from this documentary into my future practice. Specifically, I can work closely with those who are in charge of shaping policy to ensure that trans folks needs are being met to their fullest. Furthermore, I can fight both personally and politically to ensure that transgender folks' voices and interests are being heard but also that they are being taken to heart when policy is being created. In a smaller setting, I can work with local communities to ensure the safety of all persons regardless of gender identity and sexual orientation.

I learned an immense amount about expanding my leadership practice as it pertains to gender identity and race. In the fields of social work and law, it is about representing the people you are serving and ensuring that their voices are being heard and protected. *Disclosure* allowed me to gain some insight into how I can create change in the above areas. A major component of my leadership practice will be about listening to those around me and learning from their unique perspectives.

<div align="center">References</div>

Feder, S. (Director). (January 27, 2020). *Disclosure: Trans lives on screen* [Film]. Field of

Vision; Bow and Arrow Entertainment; & Level Forward.

Reasoning for Selecting Piece:

I learned a multitude from this assignment. I selected this piece because it showcased my interests as a scholar and my strengths as a writer. First, the documentary *Disclosure* allowed me to understand the perspectives of people of color in the LGBTQIAP+ community. While watching the documentary, I was able to learn what I as a leader can do to help ensure that folks of color are safe while in their everyday environments. Furthermore, I learned how to use the most inclusive language when addressing and discussing folks of color in the LGBTQIAP+ community.

Piece 5: Critical Analysis Paper

Critical Analysis Paper

Sydney T. Inger

James Madison University

HON 300: Gender and Leadership

Professor Amelia Underwood

October 23, 2020

Society often defines leadership using gender stereotypes and gendered characteristics. The analysis will focus on Eagly and Carli's eighth chapter, "Do Women Lead Differently from Men?" The authors focus this chapter on the characteristics, roles, and stereotypes associated with gender in respect to leadership styles. Eagly and Carli support the above by describing leadership styles, stereotypical characteristics of leaders based on gender, and the evolution of how gender is perceived by society. This paper will dissect the gender stereotypes and gendered characteristics as described in the chapter published in 2007 compared to the more inclusive terminology and gender roles used in present day society.

Eagly and Carli explicitly established their evidence of stereotypical leadership roles. Task-oriented male leaders emphasize "behavior that accomplishes assigned tasks" (Eagly & Carli, 2007). For example, an employee may be in the midst of a family emergency. A task-oriented leader may check on the employee briefly but still insist that the deadline be met. There are both benefits and downfalls to this leadership style. Potential benefits are that the company or

business is efficient and delivers their tasks in a timely manner. However, Simon Sinek claims

probable downfalls can lead to employees believing they are outside of the company's safety

circle causing high anxiety in the office. Uneasiness can be brought home leading to high

tensions, short fuses, and violence being within the realm of possibility (2013). On the flip side,

interpersonally oriented female leaders emphasize "behavior that maintains positive

interpersonal relationships" (Eagly & Carli, 2007). To use the same example as before, an

employee is in the midst of a family emergency. Interpersonal oriented leaders will offer their

sympathies, support, and allow the employee to take some personal time, handing off tasks to co-

workers. Much like the task-oriented leadership style, the interpersonal oriented leadership style

has favorable and adverse traits. Specifically, empathy and being understanding are important

qualities for leaders to have. However, being too empathetic can be taken advantage of leading

leadership to be overwhelmed and employees slacking off. Eagly and Carli sufficiently presented

evidence to support their thesis stating women and men lead differently.

      Moreover, Eagly and Carli, composed a well written, researched, convincing chapter as

evidenced by the multitude of studies cited throughout. To demonstrate, Eagly and Carli pull

ideas from Kanter, 1977; Nieva and Gutek, 1981; and van Engen, van der Leeden, and

Williemsen, 2001 when they state "that seemingly different male and female styles are an

illusion because any difference in style is really a reflection of the typically different roles that

men and women occupy" (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Through this example, one can see that many

researchers share the opinion that gender does not impact how someone leads but has the

potential to impact the role they occupy as a result of societal influences and pressures.

      Similarly, the authors empower women and their performance as leaders. Notably, Eagly

and Carli discuss many facets in which "Expectations based on gender also influence how

leaders think about themselves." According to the content of the chapter, many women in

leadership positions describe themselves with passive, modest characteristics. For example, some

of the terms include "collaborative, flexible, inclusive, and participative" (2007). What in society

makes women believe that they must feel inferior in the workplace? Gender roles and norms

enforced by society impose ways in which females are expected to act, feel, and lead.

While Eagly and Carli did an exceptional job at describing the differences between men

and women leadership styles, there are many topics that were overlooked. Correspondingly,

there is "no basis for denying women leadership opportunities" (Eagly & Carli, 2007). However,

the authors present a one-sided argument. Eagly and Carli hardly mention the outliers of male

leaders who go above and beyond. Particularly, male leaders who use their genuine, authentic

personalities and values, as described in *The Leadership Quarterly* (Eagly, 2005). Those

individuals are the ones Eagly and Carli should have highlighted to make their argument

stronger.

In like manner, Eagly and Carli describe ways in which women feel out of place within

society. Significantly, "…men rarely have to worry about being too masculine or too feminine or

about tailoring their leadership style so that they can be taken seriously" (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

The above describes the policing of gender roles implemented throughout society. For example,

a male who is effeminate is typically presumed to be gay. Being feminine could lead the male to

have less perceived authority over his team. Additionally, women are often "negotiating two

roles: woman and leader" (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Many women in leadership often struggle with

the following give and take imposed on them by society: to be a good leader means I'm a bad

women but to be a good women means I'm a bad leader (Kanda-Olmstead, 2018). By and large,

Eagly and Carli represent females well but they do not represent the internal struggles of women within society.

Eagly and Carli do not address those who are transgender, genderqueer, gender nonconforming, and non-binary. The authors make an attempt at inclusivity when they state: "…people who defy expectations—the *male* nurse, the *female* surgeon,, the *male* secretary, the *female* CEO—attract attention" (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Be that as it may, there are not any obvious mentions of transgender, genderqueer, gender nonconforming, and non-binary folks. The above folks struggle with navigating day to day life. Adding in societal pressures that gender roles and expectations must be completed further others folks. If Eagly and Carli considered those who do not fit into the labels of male and female, their paper would become stronger and more inclusive. Folks in the transgender, genderqueer, gender nonconforming, and non-binary communities are represented in fewer numbers than women in leadership positions. It would be interesting to see scholars analyze why this occurs. Transgender, genderqueer, gender nonconforming, and non-binary folks need to be better represented and thought about when comparing males and females.

Eagly and Carli are brilliant scholars. They represent women and their struggles within leadership well. If they addressed transgender, genderqueer, gender nonconforming, and non-binary folks and the problems they face within society their work would be groundbreaking, innovative, and have immense magnitude that paves the way. After reading this piece, the world has become a better place for women, transgender, genderqueer, gender nonconforming, and non-binary folks in leadership, however, there is still much work to be done. By researching the root of the causes of discrimination and ignorance when hiring or promoting these folks, there is the potential for revolutionary change. Leadership is about authenticity, understanding,

collaboration, empathy, integrity, and values. Gender does not play a role in possessing the

above traits. Therefore, gender should not play a role in how a leader is defined, character and

values should.

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Sinek, S. (2013, December). *Why Leaders Eat Last* [Video]. TED Conferences.

https://youtu.be/ReRcHdeUG9Y

Reasoning for Selecting Piece:

I selected my critical analysis piece for a very specific reason. While I was reading Eagly

and Carli's eighth chapter, "Do Women Lead Differently from Men?" I recognized there was a

missing element. Eagly and Carli, while they are incredible writers and scholars, missed the

mark on not including minorities into their field of research. In this piece, I was able to showcase

my knowledge on how to be inclusive towards transgender, non-binary, gender non-conforming,

other genders, and folks who do not identify with a gender. Overall, this is one of my stronger

pieces of work for the course.

Personal Leadership Development Action Plan

Element 1:

- Communication with youth/clients
    - Work closely with social workers and attorneys during my field placement to gain the knowledge on how to properly do so
- Understand the complexity of pathways to hardship
    - Actively listen to the stories of clients to learn from their experiences and hardships
- Develop a method for shorthand to ensure that when I take case notes I will be focusing my attention on the client and not on writing notes
    - Ask the child welfare workers I will be in placement with if they have a method that works for them
    - Actively search google for various ways to write shorthand case notes
- Continue acquiring knowledge
    - Read journal articles, court cases, laws, statues, and bills
    - Communicate with professors and learn from their expertise
    - Stay up to date on current news and breakthroughs

Element 2:

My passions and interests lie in helping others, especially youth. I am most passionate in ensuring youth have a safe, accepting, affirming place to live as well as enough food and resources. I plan on getting involved by become a child welfare worker or family law attorney in order to ensure that children's best interests are being met. While in those positions, I plan on encouraging policy makers to make revisions to and ensure the application of non-discrimination

policies. Additionally, I hope to be able to give back monetarily and with resources to underrepresented communities in need.

Element 3:

My resource list will include:

- Shenandoah County Department of Social Services

    o Field placement opportunity—social work and family law

    o Networking opportunity with the employees

    o Gaining of knowledge though experiences with day-to-day cases

- Dr. Bryson

    o Research methods—useful for recommendations in policy implications

    o Vast knowledge of sociology—will allow me to gain a deeper understanding of how society perceives underserved communities

- Professor Myers

    o Holds the credentials I am trying to achieve—working closely with her to gain insight as to how social work and law tie together

    o Enriches my learning—consistently suggests further reading materials for being to gain a deeper understanding of various minority communities

- Graduate/Law School

    o Furthering my education will allow me to pursue a career in the field that has a large impact on youth

    o Gain knowledge on how to best go about helping youth find security in housing and food

- Scholarly and Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

- o   Allow me to gain knowledge on my topic of interest

- Court Case Opinions

  - o   This will allow for me to understand how the legal system views the policies in place

- Newly Introduced Bills, Laws, and Statues

  - o   This will allow for me to understand how the legal system views the policies in place

- Media Outlets (social media, news, articles)

  - o   This will allow me to keep up to date on current events in my field of interest

Element 4:

I plan to accomplish the following:

- Take the LSAT

- Finish Undergraduate Senior Thesis/Capstone

- Apply to Graduate/Law School

- Complete my Undergraduate Degree

- Become accepted to Graduate/Law School

- Commit to a Graduate/Law School

The above will contribute to my leadership by allowing me to gain further insight, knowledge, and perspective into my field of interest. By doing the above, I will be able to have an impact on youth throughout my career as a child welfare worker and/or family law attorney.

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       perspective on the gender labeling of leadership. *Gender, Work, and Organization*, 7(3),

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