

Personal Assessment

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### Introduction

As Northouse (2016) states, leadership is a process. This means that leadership is something that is continually developed by an individual. Throughout the semester, we were assigned self-assessments to help us understand how well we incorporate leadership approaches into our leadership responsibilities. Through these assessments, I was able to define my areas of strength and areas needing improvement. In this paper, I will discuss three challenges that I need to overcome in order to improve my leadership skills. These three are self-awareness, empowering others, and becoming more task driven.

### Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is a skill that I was rated low on, 15 out of 20, in the Authentic Leadership Self-Assessment Questionnaire in Northouse's (2016) book, *Leadership Theory and Practices*. Self-awareness is "a process in which individuals understand themselves, including their strengths and weaknesses, and the impact they have on others" (Northouse, 2016, p. 202). In other words, I need to develop a better understanding of myself. As a young professional, this is a challenge I am facing as I am trying to find my "niche" in Human Resources. I have only worked 4 years in a professional setting, so I am still fairly new to my surroundings and responsibilities. Even more new is my current position as a Talent Acquisition Coordinator. I am trying to figure out how to balance my relationship approach with the task approach. This is unique for each position I recruit for. For example, when discussing the hiring process with a manager, it is challenging to get every question addressed. During my conversations, I want to know what type of candidate the hiring manager desires for this position, while also trying to plan out the hiring process from start to finish. Typically, a hiring manager already has a start

date in mind and it's my job to help them understand if that goal is realistic or if we need to consider a more reasonable timeframe. Balancing the conversation between relational and pragmatic is challenging as you want the hiring manager to trust you.

A leader needs to have a sense of their self in order to fully understand how they can and should lead their followers. Part of self-awareness entails knowing when you're the right person to handle the situation and when you should hand over the task to someone else. Self-awareness can bring a person self-confidence. On the other hand, without self-awareness, a person who is too confident in themselves is egotistical. I tend to be on the side lacking self-confidence because I allow myself to over-evaluate my personal behaviors and skills. I know that there are people out there who have stronger skills and more attractive behaviors. I allow these thoughts to motivate me to continually develop myself. The challenging part is that I have a trouble of letting those thoughts lead me to be less confident in myself. The best way I can see to develop self-confidence is to recognize the things I am doing well. In the words of Lomenick, "don't try to be a perfect leader, just work on being an authentic one" (2015, p.17). I need to find value in myself and lead with authenticity.

Another challenge for me in self-awareness is to know how I impact others. This part of self-awareness overlaps with empowering others. Because I am not always confident in myself, I do not always bring confidence into my followers. Encouraging and motivating my peers can be challenging when I am lacking confidence as a leader. Without self-awareness, I cannot be self-confident. Without self-confidence, I cannot easily build up the confidence of others. As a young professional, I am still trying to figure out what my strengths are professionally. Fortunately for me, this course has allowed me to analyze my leadership approach to see what areas I am strong in as well as areas that need improvement. In order to continually develop my self-awareness, I

plan to continue exploring what my strengths are through self-assessments. I think it would also be helpful if I had others assess my strengths as well through the use of a 360-feedback model. This assessment would provide me a ‘reality check’ in what others think of me and what leadership gaps I might have that I do not notice on my own (Kets de Vries, Vriegnaud, & Florent-Treacy, 2004).

Another way I can build my self-awareness is to find a mentor and provide them with opportunities to teach me (Llopis, 2012). A mentor can help me develop myself in the professional workplace. I need a mentor who can speak truthfully into me about areas they see I’m strong and areas that I need to improve. This mentor would also need to invest time in coaching me on how to lead others well.

### **Empowering Others**

Another area I discovered that I need to develop is the approach of empowering others and creating value in the community. Both were scored through the Servant Leadership Questionnaire (Northouse, 2016). For empowering, I received a score of 20 out of 28, and a 20 out of 28 for creating value in the community. Empowering others and creating value in the community are about serving others to make things better-beginning with your team and extending to the community you and your team live in. Both of these falls within the approach of servant leadership. The authors of *Influencer: The New Science of Leading Change* (2013), believe that “the first place to look for social influence is in the mirror” (p. 155). Empowering means to provide followers the opportunity to make decisions on their own as well as be independent. This is a challenge for me as I have not experienced a supervisory role in the workplace. Empowering others also leads to building confidence in your followers, which is challenging for me because I am not fully confident in myself at times. As I mentioned earlier, I

need to first build up my self-confidence before I can push confidence and trust in others. This could be practice through the use of the self-fulfilling prophecy, or the Pygmalion effect. The self-fulfilling prophecy “states that expectations of performance can become reality because people strive to behave consistently with their perceptions of reality” (Werner & DeSimone, 2012, p.41). In other words, if I expect my followers to take the initiative to handle situations with a client, then I need to motivate and encourage them to handle such situations.

The other part of this is creating value in the community. This means showing appreciation and commitment to others outside of myself and my followers. In other words, I need to first see the value in my community in order to be motivated to create value within the community. Northouse (2016) sees this as a crucial way to connect your occupation with the surrounding community you work with. This means doing volunteer work that helps others who are in need that you aren’t necessarily connected to through your work. This is challenging in my current stage of life as I feel that my time is limited between work and graduate school. I don’t think I can easily improve this without first graduating from my graduate program; however, I do serve in my church and see the value of being a part of my community. Of course, there are several other opportunities to give back to the community. This could be through working food drives or service work with your team for the community. This can help you and your team build grow closer together as well as connect you to the community. Another way to create value in the community as a Human Resources professional is to attend job fairs for my organization. This will give me a chance to meet people around the community as well as provide guidance about open positions and the benefits of working for the organization.

### **Task Driven**

The third area of growth I need to take on is focused around the idea of being task driven. This comes from two self-assessments: Leadership Behavior Questionnaire and the Adaptive Leadership Questionnaire (Northouse, 2016). On the Leadership Behavior Questionnaire, I scored 31 out of 50 on the task specific questions. Tasks include facilitating the accomplishments of a goal (Northouse, 2016). This is a challenge for me as I don't like to use a directive approach when leading. I prefer the relationship behavior of being supportive. I need practice on handling goals with a team to develop the skills of being directive and meeting goals. I need to learn how to manage tasks in a team environment versus just my own personal tasks in order to better develop my skill set.

The Adaptive Leadership Questionnaire pointed out that I have a difficult time identifying adaptive challenges, which can turn into tasks once I am able to identify them. Adaptive challenges are problems that are not clearly defined and cannot be solved with a clear-cut answer (Dobbs, Ippolito & Charner-Laird, 2017). This means helping guide my team through changes that occur within the workplace. As mentioned earlier, I do not have experience being in a supervisory or leadership role in the workplace, so it is challenging for me to strengthen a skillset like this in my position. However, in my previous position, I led the orientation program which handled a lot of challenges. Challenges ranged from change of start dates, to last minute changes in the orientation program.

The only way I can strengthen my task-oriented behavior is on my own tasks until I am placed in a supervisory function. Until then, I will have to learn the leadership portion of this through observation of my supervisor and others who are designated with supervision.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, I feel the best approach in developing my approach to leadership is by obtaining a mentor. A mentor who is in a leadership position can provide valuable insights into their reasoning behind their decisions to meet tasks and empower others and also how they strive to seek self-awareness of their strengths and weaknesses.

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