

Leadership Praxis

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Introduction

Throughout this course, we have learned about multiple leadership approaches through Peter Northouse's (2016) book, *Leadership Theory and Practice*. I took this course hoping to improve my leadership knowledge so that I can develop my knowledge into new skills and new abilities. Throughout these past couple of months, we have covered many approaches of leadership which have helped shaped my perspective on leadership. In this paper, I will share my new definition of leadership as well as highlight three of the leadership approaches covered in this course. I will also share how I believe I will connect these methods to my professional career.

Definition of Leadership

At the beginning of this course, I found leadership to be a challenging topic to define. There is no standard definition of leadership. From this course, I now define leadership as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve one goal” (Northouse, 2016, p. 6). In other words, an individual must continually take different approaches in order to influence their followers to achieve an end goal, or goals. I believe the individual demonstrating true leadership is someone who is authentic, ethical, servant-hearted, and emotionally intelligent.

Authentic Leadership

The authentic leadership approach is a concept that both conflicts and resonates with the status quo of a leader (Faircloth, 2017). It conflicts as most see leaders as someone who is strong and not weak. A leader who is authentic is transparent about their strengths and weaknesses. This approach resonates with the leader's followers as it allows the leader to connect with their

followers in regards to having weaknesses. Transparency is being open and allowing your followers to understand your values and philosophy. In Lomenick's (2015) book, *H3 Leadership*, Lomenick encourages his readers not to be a perfect leader but instead to be an authentic one.

One way a leader can be authentic is to analyze information objectively and explores their other ideas before making a decision (Northouse, 2016). This is known as a "balanced processing" (Northouse, 2016). The leader listens to their own thoughts and listens to the thoughts of others. This is an example of authentic leadership as the leader is asking for other perspectives. An authentic leader is open to hear suggestions from their followers. This means acknowledging when you do not know the answers to situations. I feel like this is an action most would view as weak when it comes to leadership. In other cultures, this would be seen as someone being a weak leader, while through authentic leadership, this approach allows others to speak in and share their wealth of knowledge. This in turn creates an atmosphere where followers feel valued and important. It creates an atmosphere where followers start to have a positive psychological approach to their job (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008). People don't become leaders because they know everything; they become leaders because they know how to find the answers and how to solve the issues (Lomenick, 2015).

As a professional, I need to adapt the authentic leadership approach by being true to who I am, sticking to my values, and being okay with not being perfect. Being honest and intentional with my followers will result in them having a better attitude as well as improve their performance. An example of this is to check in and see how they are doing. I feel like in this day and age, we are too focused on the processes and not focused enough on others (Northouse, 2016). We've stopped being intentional.

Ethical Leadership

In my opinion, ethical leadership overlaps with the authentic leadership approach. They both involve showing respect towards their followers. “Respect means that the leader listens closely to followers, is empathic, and is tolerant of opposing points of view” (Northouse, 2016, p. 342). Ethical leadership is showing “integrity, social responsibility, fairness, and willingness to think through the consequences of one’s actions” (Hoch, Bommer, Dulebohn, & Wu, 2018, p. 506). As a leader, it is my responsibility to be empathetic and treat everyone equally.

As a Talent Acquisition Coordinator, it is my duty to act ethically based on federal laws like Title IV, ADA, and ADEA. When educating my hiring managers about the federal laws, I must present the information in a way that helps them understand that these are ethical guidelines that we must follow to prevent any form of discrimination.

In the future, I will use the ethical leadership approach to help me lead my followers by thinking through the consequences of my team’s actions. Whether we are dealing with an employee relations issues or a hiring procedure, I will educate my followers in a way that will help prevent any unnecessary consequences from happening.

Servant Leadership

Lomenick (2015) states in his book, *H3 Leadership*, that “the best leaders devote almost all of their energy to inspiring and enabling others” (p. 26). Servant leadership is the approach where the leader supports their team in a service-like manner. Two dimensions of servant leadership stand out to me. They are “helping followers grow and succeed” and “empowering” others (Northouse, 2016).

Servant leaders have the potential to help their followers grow and succeed by influencing their behavior as well as their well-being. A servant leader brings out the full

potential of followers by concentrating on helping them meet their personal goals (Liden, Wayne, Meuser, Hu, Wu, & Liao, 2015). This leadership approach motivates followers because the leader supports them in successfully meeting their goals. Servant leaders also empower their followers by providing them positive work experiences. This can be done by making the followers' work more interesting or more meaningful (Lapointe & Vandenberghe, 2018). An example of making the followers' work more interesting could mean providing them a free lunch if they complete a goal within a specific timeframe. An example of helping followers' see how their work is meaningful is to provide them with opportunities to see how their work plays a bigger part than they see on a daily basis. I recently encountered this a few months ago when our managers allowed us to attend an event that the University holds for the students. This allowed me to remember that the purpose of my job is to help hire the best who will then influence the students' education.

Overall, this approach stuck out to me the most out of the three as it reminded me of the importance of serving others and showing them respect. As a Human Resources professional, it is my responsibility to provide my clients with great customer service. This means understanding their needs and putting theirs in front of mine. It also means staying determined to making the process as simple as possible for them.

As a future leader, it would be my job to lead my followers towards their personal goals as well as the goals of the organization. Incorporating the servant leadership approach would mean leading my followers to help them meet their personal career goals while completing the goals assigned to us from the organization. Helping my followers complete their personal career goals will bring them satisfaction and help them improve their knowledge, skills, and abilities. This would then impact my team and help us grow stronger.

Conclusion

In conclusion, these three approaches help leaders be transparent, respectful, and empowering towards their followers. This helps the followers feel connected and motivated within their roles, which affects their efficiency and effectiveness to complete the goals set ahead.

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