

MY VIEWS ON LEADERSHIP

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The purpose of this paper is to convey some thoughts I have as to the function of this class and its responsibilities as future leaders of the community.

We have learned a great deal in our short time together, from the workings of our political system to the operations of our varied charitable and service organizations. We have seen the need is great for volunteers and that the responsibility is now, at least partially, in our hands. Everyone feels that he or she must lend some time or leadership, but we must now ask ourselves an important question, "What exactly is the role we must now fulfill?"

I have no doubt in my mind that some members of this class will go on to be great leaders of the community. Every endeavor that you undertake will be a great success and you will receive much praise for it. Again and again you will be asked to serve and you will do so without hesitation. You will be the cream of the crop, the head of our class.

Others of us will become more specialized in our efforts. It may be church work, job related, or working with kids. No matter what area it is, we will recognize our strengths, capitalize on them, and go forth to accomplish whatever goals we have set.

Some of us will never lead, we will become the great seconds in command. Not quite ready to take the responsibility of leadership, but be willing to go to great lengths to get the job done. It takes everyone to get the project accomplished.

What I have tried to point out is that none of us will fill our leadership roles exactly alike. It makes no difference whether we are highly visible or obscure, we will do our part and can be proud of what we achieve.

We are lucky in the fact that as a group, together these days, we have an excellent base from which to start from. We have already learned what the interests and ideas of our classmates are. Many of us will one day work on some special project together. Others of us will try our hand at leadership through politics. Whatever the endeavor, it is encouraging to know that help is only a phone call away. Sometimes all it takes is a fresh idea or a different opinion, from someone who might not be directly involved, to overcome a particular obstacle that is blocking progress. I feel that it is important that we remember this point when classes have concluded and we continue with our everyday lives.

The final point I would like to discuss is power. Some of us, through our leadership roles, will acquire a great deal of power. We will be able to influence people to see things our way, and convince them to do things the way we want them done. We will also be involved with something called our ego. A little bit of power and ego can go a long way in getting the job done. The pride of doing a job well for the benefit of others is the only reward most of us need.

We can all think of examples where leadership in a sense has gone to a person's head. Their only goal in being a leader is to enhance their leadership. They become so obsessed with being the "perfect" leader that they lose sight of the original objective. It's a fine line that's hard to distinguish. When does "the good of the people" stop and "the good of myself" begin? It is a question that we may have to step back and ask ourselves from time to time. Again I think that the acquaintances made here in our leadership program offer a valuable source of help and ideas from outside the immediate scope of the problem.

In conclusion I would like to make the following remarks: The Leadership Academy has been a great jumping off place for our future as leaders. We have been introduced to some of our communities finest leaders, but we are only just beginning to learn what they have to offer us in the way of knowledge. I would encourage everyone to absorb all they can from these people so when our time comes we can use the best of ideas, past and present. Also remember that we will all operate on different levels of leadership ability. Do not get discouraged if someone else gets more noteriety or praise. Simply do your best to accomplish what you have set out to do. If you run into problems, don't worry, someone will have the solution, all you have to do is ask.