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Date of commentary: 3/12/17

Date of original content (Approximate): March, 2013

Format: Event application / E-mail

Subject (Approximate): Application, acceptance, judgment, assent, profession

Participants: 1-5

Part (if Applicable): 2 of 3

Synopsis: The material is the third of a three-part annotated series on an application to a Higher Education Residence Life event named "STARS College" in 2013. The last application question is a query on my leadership style, and what I hope to accomplish through attendance. I respond by suggesting that the effectiveness of a leadership role depends primarily on personal willingness to lead by example, forge meaningful relationships with team-members, and make personal sacrifices where necessary.

### ~ Start of Original Content ~

#### **Third application question:**

***Describe your leadership style. What do you believe are the most important characteristics of a leader? Why? What do you hope to gain/learn by participating in STARS College?***

I hold myself to leading by example at all times. I place a very high emphasis on mutual respect and understanding in all of my interactions. I never ask another person to do something that I am unwilling to do. I place myself in the shoes of others as far as I can, regardless of their position in relation to me. My leadership style is to continually encourage, support, and facilitate the people that depend on me.<sup>1</sup>

I believe that a leader must be patient, and slow to judge or assume. A leader must be reasonable, empathetic, and kind. A leader must know how to balance authority with camaraderie. A leader should consider the manner in which their actions influence the "big picture." A leader must be careful and diligent with the management and application of resources.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> There are some that believe that leadership roles are most effective through might or intimidation. Such persons will attempt in varying degrees to influence those that depend on them through fear. One of several problems with this mentality is the purposeful suppression of the group they hold authority over. This kind of style will always be plagued by fear, uncertainty, instability, and inefficiencies. If the suppressed group chooses not to endure this leadership style, by sabotaging it, withdrawing from it, or performing within minimum expectations, the authority figure necessarily loses all force of control.

A leadership style based on self-expectations, mutual trust, and support is likely to withstand conventional setbacks. It is unlikely that a group will abandon a leader that regularly proves they are unwilling to abandon without due reason. Meaningful, enduring cooperation depends on individual dedication to good conduct, observed or not. It is unnecessary to hold a formal authoritative title to forge these kinds of relationships.

A leader must necessarily be patient and slow to judge and assume, in order to best understand a situation and how best to respond to it. A leader should be reasonable, empathetic and kind, to appropriately support and understand the needs of the people they lead. The leader should learn to exert their authority only when necessary, and focus primarily on role modeling, to avoid instigation and cultivate respect, which prevents many issues before they arise. A leader should understand how their actions and expenditures influence the well-being of those they lead, to best guide the organization towards its mission and vision.<sup>3</sup>

From participating in STARS College, I hope to learn organizational techniques that I can apply in my current endeavors as a Resident Assistant, and future endeavors in Residence Life. I hope to better understand how the Residence Life organization at my University interacts with Residence Life as a whole. I believe I can personally grow from interactions with others at STARS, by sharing in their unique experiences, skill-sets, and personalities. I welcome the opportunity STARS College will provide to advance my personal and professional mission to become a well-rounded leader.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> "Do not look to discover other men's ruling principles, but look to what nature leads you to do. Every being ought to do what is according to its constitution and all other acts ought to be committed for the sake of others."

– Marcus Aurelius, Book VII, 55

<sup>3</sup> "One ought to use clothing and shoes in exactly the same way as armor, that is, for the protection of the body and not for display. How much more commendable than living in luxury it is to help many people? How much nobler than spending money for sticks and stones to spend it on men? How much more profitable than surrounding oneself with a great house it is to make many friends by cheerfully doing good?"

– Musonius Rufus, Fragment XIX

<sup>4</sup> From the very beginning, I established to myself that all conventional benefits I would gain from the event would be dedicated to benefiting others in some way. The methodology and any future titles would serve as tools to implement Stoic philosophy. To think of them in any other way would ascribe undue value to them.