My Personal Leadership Analysis

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Introduction

 Throughout this eventful semester, I’ve acquired a substantial amount of information in regard to knowing how to effectively lead and make managerial decisions that benefit others, myself and the health care organization in which I would choose to reside in. Several concepts were presented in this course and each hold great value in relation to the development of one’s professional self. These concepts are *integrity*, *cherishing ambiguity*, *valuing diversity*, *considering multiple perspectives*, *unveiling one’s potential*, *the pursuit of knowledge*, *reflective learning and life experience*, *catering to the emotional self*, and *caring for one’s self*. Each of the nine concepts I’ve identified are components of a successful and transformational leader, which in turn, “develops a strong vision and well-articulated philosophy, professional practice model, and strategic and quality plans in leading nursing services” (Luzinski 1). As I discuss my personal leadership analysis, I hope to reveal how each new and practicing nurse is a leader and has the potential to be a transformational leader in their profession, as well as myself, and how I will use the nine leadership concepts in my nursing vocation to assist me in my quest to becoming a transformational leader.

**Integrity**

 The ability to uphold one’s moral compass and trustworthiness in the presence of opposition is a great quality to possess. With integrity stemming from an individual’s character, it creates an atmosphere of trust that attracts followers who will aspire to such positive leadership. As nurses, it is imperative that we promote and maintain our integrity with every encounter we have with our patients. Doing so will yield respect and foster good rapport, which is essential to the nurse-client relationship. It would also set a gold standard for those in our midst to strive towards because honesty is a characteristic that individuals’ value and should be especially noted in those individuals who are in leadership positions. It is with certainty that, “Nursing is a principled patient-centered profession that routinely stands on high moral ground” (Freda 1). Therefore, “We know who we are, and what we stand for” (Freda 1), and throughout my life and nursing career, I intend on illustrating consciously and unconsciously the behaviors of honesty, trust and my strong moral principles to convey that integrity extends beyond our personal lives and should be manifested in all that we do.

**Cherishing Ambiguity**

 Appreciating ambiguity is not an easy concept to attain nor comprehend in regard to leadership; however, it is of great importance because it shapes transformational leaders. Overall, the nursing field is full of ambiguous circumstances, which is why it behooves us as nurses to adapt and become acquainted with the nature of our profession. Ambiguity fosters the emergence of transformational leaders, who are individuals that are highly needed in health care organizations, because it creates a sense of mindfulness and tenacity that is necessary to combat various issues that tend to occur. Nurses who can manage themselves during times of ambiguity are, “leaders with high mindfulness [who] [are] more likely to build capacity and resilience in organization members through understanding, coaching and purposeful engagement” (Chesley and Wylson 1). With that being said, learning to embrace ambiguity through thorough assessment of a situation and using all elements of the nursing process along with critical thinking to help guide each step of the way, can provide a newfound acceptance of uncertainty due to it permitting creativity in the leadership aspect. As a new nurse, I plan on welcoming an ambiguous environment with open arms because it will aid me in building my individual and nursing character, as well as ameliorate my critical thinking skills due to the complexities that can be produced from such environment(s).

**Valuing Diversity**

 Acceptance and appreciation of diversity in every aspect is a fundamental quality that is essential to good leadership. Each individual brings forth experiences, ideas and even appearances that can have monumental value to the team in which they belong to. In my aspiration to becoming a transformational leader, it is imperative that I am at all times culturally sensitive and aware of my beliefs and others. Living in the United States, New York City to be exact, has exposed me to so many different cultures that I feel confident in my ability to lead a culturally diverse team of healthcare professionals. Also, “the population of the United States is increasingly becoming more diverse in a multitude of ways” (Ryan 2), which further conveys that valuing diversity is an important part of American society and ultimately, our healthcare. Demonstrating this value for diversity begins with good nursing leadership and should be further enforced by staff members who continue to maintain its needed presence in the workforce.

 Leaders who incorporate diversity in their area of work may face minute instances of barriers to care in their workplace and yield better patient outcomes. This is because a broad team of nurses with different cultural backgrounds can address multiple patient needs. For instance, having staff members who speak several languages due their unique cultural backgrounds enable patients to have greater access to health care professionals who can address their individual cultural needs; this is because familiarity may be found due to having a wide range of diversity present. In my nursing practice, I hope to continue to acknowledge and display how valuable diversity is to our society because it can transform those around us, which can also birth the surge of transformational leaders.

**Considering Multiple Perspectives**

 To be a competent nurse, whether new or seasoned, an individual has to be willing to listen and consider multiple viewpoints from others. To make such an effort is a step towards transformational leadership and shows that having a democratic style to an individual’s choice of leadership can be quite beneficial. By including team members, staff or other disciplines into one’s nursing assessment after data is collected can better attain positive patient outcomes. Being a transformational leader means that allowing others to have a voice in matters is crucial because considering their findings and perspectives is vital before coming to a sound resolution.

 From ever since, I’ve always valued feedback from others before I make any rash decisions. I believe that people’s voices matter and can make a huge difference, for the better or worse. Considering multiple perspectives broadens the variety of possibilities and strengthens one’s assessment findings because two or more eyes are always better than one. When I begin practicing as a registered nurse in a health care facility, I feel self-assured that I will be able to function as a transformational leader who takes into account the viewpoints of my fellow colleagues and embraces their perspectives when coming to a definite decision. However, acquiring the skill of being able to filter out unnecessary details from one’s feedback will be a bit of challenge because not everyone would agree that some instead of all of their contributions will be used. Working on my ability to talk through to individuals during an exchange of information is a task I will strive towards in my career. I commend and admire health care organizations who integrate team decision-making in their respected facilities and wish to be a part of those care delivery systems because it demonstrates that every member is a valuable member to the team and contributes to their ultimate outcomes, which guides their policies and practices.

**Unveiling One’s Potential**

 The discovery of one’s true potential is a beautiful process. The ability to unlock one’s purpose requires belief in one’s own self and proper mentorship, which can take many forms. Even people who have lots of life experience may still require much more encounters in life to fully get to their place of calling. Being a transformational leader means that you not only uncover your potential, but you help others to attain their full potential too. Transformational leadership is, “transcending leadership that is dynamic leadership in the sense that leaders throw themselves into a relationship with followers who feel elevated by it and become more active themselves” (Luzinski 1). With that being said, having good leadership and proper mentorship can invoke better versions of all persons and that achievement is truly remarkable.

 Throughout my life and to this very day, I continue to search for my purpose relentlessly. I have always known my calling to be in the health care field and more specifically, maternity nursing. Therefore, continuing my education and working diligently towards being a Women’s Health Nurse Practitioner is such a motivation for me on a daily basis. It has been a joy to come so far in my career and personal life because as a young child, I saw my mother reap many fruits from her labor in the face of constant adversities, and her resilience has taught and given me so much inner strength. Being the first generation of American from a strong Caribbean background has made me value the opportunities I’ve been given in my life overtime. My family was always supportive of my dreams and instilled deeply in me my drive for success. My mother, who has been a registered nurse for over 20 years, has always been my number one mentor. She always believed and saw special qualities within me when my own eyes couldn’t see it for myself. I am constantly grateful for her life and presence because her profound nursing knowledge, expertise and work ethics have been the backbones of my success in nursing school and the sole reason why I feel I am slowly yet surely approaching my life purpose and potential. In my future nursing career, I hope to mentor and encourage other nurses to find themselves in their career of choice and provide them with the necessary support that my mother was able to bestow unto me.

**The Pursuit of Knowledge**

 Embarking on a nursing career means to journey through life learning something new every step of the way. My nursing school experience gave me a sense of what life-long learning entails, but I believe to truly grasp the concept is when I begin practicing as nurse at a healthcare facility. An atmosphere that involves constant learning through continuous education is admirable because it conveys the importance of preparing and being knowledgeable to changes that can readily occur. Nurses should always express a willingness to learn because it safeguards our nursing practice by staying up-to-date with new medical findings/research and helps us to better our skills for more complex patient populations that may come forth in the near future.

 Practicing based on evidence-based nursing research is a cause/movement I support because knowing why and what we do, as well as its effects on the patients we, as nurses, care for is of utmost importance. As a transformational leader, encouraging staff members to practice delivering nursing care through the use of evidence-based research is a must because using methods grandfathered into nursing with no true health benefit to clients can be ineffective or even detrimental to their health. Practicing nursing care methods with no research to support its use can lower patient care outcomes and reduce the quality of care to patients, which is unfortunate and unfair. Therefore, when I begin practicing as a nurse and working towards becoming a transformational leader on my unit, I hope to not only be able to perform excellent nursing care, but also be able to explain why I chose to use the method of care that I’ve chosen and its evidence-based research source that supports its use. When I worked alongside my nurse manager this semester and I saw how she diligently worked towards educating mothers of newborns about the benefits of breastfeeding through evidence-based research, I realized how strong her argument was and how compliant some mothers would become. This was due to her ability to factually support what she had found most healthy for both mothers and their babies; it made me eager to practice nursing in a similar manner to hers.

**Reflective Learning and Life Experience**

 To get through life’s journey with the acquisition of knowledge and wisdom, one must be willing to face trials and have errors which generates experience. Learning for everyone is unique and provides opportunities to reflect upon and use to better outcomes for other situations that may arise in the future. Experience grants knowledge and knowledge is power, however, reflective learning ties everything together.

 As an aspiring transformational leader, it is incumbent on my behalf to exemplify reflective learning in my practice as a nurse. Reflective learning permits, “…professional development [which] generates a process of transformation and growth” (Fernandez-Pena 1). This in turn promotes, “the process of engaging the self in attentive, critical, exploratory and iterative interactions with one’s thoughts and actions, and their underlying conceptual frame, with a view to changing them and a view on the change itself” (Fernandez-Pena 1). This phenomenon is substantial because similar to the concept of the pursuit of knowledge, an individual must strive to gain experience through appropriate use of teamwork and constant learning, which can also be done through reflective learning. In my profession, I look forward to working on a unit where I can use reflective learning to derive new strategies and improvements so my coworkers and I can share our experiences and reflect on what works and what does not in the workplace.

**Catering to The Emotional Self**

 Catering to the emotional self is paramount because our emotions are an inevitable part of being human. Our emotions drive a lot of our daily behaviors so it is important to stay in tune with how we feel about situations we may face and how we cope with it. According to WHO, health is defined as, “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (WHO 1948), therefore, it is in our best interest to put aside time in our lives to foster the growth and nurturement of our emotional selves because it plays a significant part in our overall health, whether we believe so or not.

 Learning about emotional intelligence this semester has deepened my understanding of the emotional self and how to manage and care for mine. As nurses, we need to be aware of how we emotionally process and react to things in our environment. Transformational leaders are leaders who are very emotionally intelligent because they view difficult circumstances as a means of attaining growth and are comfortable in its presence. Leading by such an example encourages others to look beyond the troublesome aspect of a situation and see the bigger and more positive version of it instead. To be quite honest, I am still learning and working towards having a high level of emotional intelligence. It is difficult for me to sometimes not overreact when a situation is spiraling out of control because I have a very conscientious and Type A persona. However, by use of reflective learning and developing habits, such as, sipping water when my temperament is elevated, has certainly helped a lot. When I begin working as a nurse, I hope to encourage my colleagues to indulge in behaviors that nurture their emotional self and promote emotional intelligence by hopefully being granted the opportunity to do a workshop catering to that topic area.

**Caring for One’s Self**

 Self-care seems to be one of the least valued forms of care in the nursing profession. As a nurse, and a human being, we need to have a sense of equilibrium in our lives. Putting the needs of others first is one of the most noble acts of mankind, but forgetting ourselves in the process for an extended period of time is extremely unhealthy. Transformational leaders are aware of the importance of caring for their staff’s well-being and promote work environments that allow nurses to take necessary breaks, vacations and time-off to recuperate. Self-care is, “vital and benefits both nurses and patients” (Mills 1).

 As a new nursing graduate who is still searching for a job and going to school full-time, self-care has been a struggle that I hope to overcome quite soon. Ever since I began nursing school, my life has been consumed by its demands, but I’ve managed to still do some acts of self-care whenever my schedule permits it. I make sure to put aside time in my day to watch soothing makeup tutorials whenever I need a break from my schooling and snack on healthy foods like unsalted pistachios or almonds because meal prepping is still unsuccessful for me. As much as I try, I sometimes still feel like I’m not ever doing enough, but I know that nothing lasts forever so my temporary situation will come to pass in due time. Until then, I will always make it a priority to do the best that I can and from taking this course this semester, it has shown me that I’m not alone and I will persevere because I made it through the semester despite having unexpected obstacles and frustrations abound.

**Conclusion**

To conclude, my personal leadership analysis has granted me the opportunity to fully grasp and utilize the concepts of what warrants a transformational leader. During this semester, I was taught and exposed to so much material that opened my mind to what I should consider implementing in my nursing career as I prepare to embark on a higher level in my journey. Some of the concepts I’ve discussed made me realize how deficient I was in that topic area such as, cherishing ambiguity, catering to my emotional self and integrating self-care. I see myself eventually becoming better in these areas overtime and I am grateful to start the process by beginning the first step, which is to identify the problem. I feel more proficient in the other topic areas which are integrity, valuing diversity, considering multiple perspectives, unveiling one’s potential and pursuing knowledge because I practice each of them on a more regular basis. I am thankful for the learning experience and leadership qualities I was able to acquire from this semester and I hope that when I become a nurse leader on my unit, state district or in my own practice, that I will remember how many opportunities were made possible from it.

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