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My Personal Leadership Analysis

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**Introduction**

Effective leadership skills are very important in all field of services. It is an integral part of our role as employees, parents and community members. In my quest to write this paper, I have made many realizations regarding leadership. One being that, it is quite hard to define leadership, partly because individuals have different temperaments, Hence, why we have many different types of leaderships. I had to ask myself and others around me “What is leadership? And what makes a good leader?”. According to Ogbonnia, "effective leadership is the ability to successfully integrate and maximize available resources within the internal and external environment for the attainment of organizational or societal goals” (2007). She continues, an effective leader is an individual with the capacity to consistently succeed in a given condition and be recognized as meeting the expectations of an organization or society. Taking this class has given me great aspiration, and more importantly, it has allowed me to identify my strengths and weaknesses. Now, I know I want to be a transformational leader. I will focus on these valuable leadership concept provided by the American Organization of Nurse Executives. The nine concepts include: integrity, appreciation of ambiguity, appreciation of diversity, accounting for multiple perspectives, discovery of potential, quest for knowledge, experience and reflective learning, nurturing the emotional self, and self-care. In this paper, I will discuss how these concepts will help improve and shape my style of leadership. Furthermore, I will discuss the way that transformational leadership style will directly impact my life, my nursing career, especially the people around me.

**Integrity:**

I believe Integrity to be one of the most essential leadership skills, and by virtue it is also one of the most difficult to acquire and master. It is the ability of an individual to present and align themselves with reality in a manner that is truthful to their character but also deeply rooted in moral wisdom. The Oxford dictionary defines integrity as “moral honesty, consistency, and truthfulness” (2018). Integrity is particularly important in health care, this is a place where patients are vulnerable in many ways physically and emotionally. Therefore, a deep trusted relationship between the healthcare workers and the patients is extremely critical. In the nursing profession, we are educated regarding the ideal of beneficence, which is, doing no harm to our patient and being kind, honest and ethical. Integrity goes beyond that because it embraces the core value of trust, ethics and authenticity not only in the workplace but also in life and relationships. As a nurse these values are an integral part of a good leader, they inevitably inspire respect from others, trust from colleagues and patients. The value of integrity embodies what the healthcare institution stands for. By nature, and in training, RNs are team leaders. We set a tone for ourselves but also for what we represent we are accountable for our actions. Each and every one of us plays an important role in upholding the values set by those that came before us and the institution that we work in.

**Appreciation of ambiguity**

Nurses are faced with many challenges and one of these challenges is the ability to develop an appreciation of ambiguity. According to Parse, appreciation of ambiguity is “the experience of not knowing explicitly all of the consequences of decisions yet moving on with executing the details” (2014). Nurses experience uncertainty with handling and completing complex tasks. As a new nurse, I wanted the facility to provide policies and procedures to cover every possible consequence, but that is not possible. However, there is a process that is in place that helps us to deal with ambiguity. I am able to feel comfortable dealing with ambiguity and develop an ability to provide meaningful care by using the nursing framework to support and guide my practice. The nursing process consists of five sequential steps, which are assessment, diagnosis, planning, implementation, and evaluation. These steps aid me in developing my critical thinking skills as I develop a plan of care and embrace the challenging healthcare arena. Thus, I am still not comfortable dealing with ambiguous situations. However, the utilization of the nursing process to guide care is clinically significant and help me to build my confidence while providing care.

**Appreciation of diversity**

We currently live in a globalized society that is increasingly diverse. Thus, it is vital that we develop skills that allow us to understand and peacefully interact with individuals from different race, gender, religion, and sexual orientation. According to the Queens Borough community college’s website, the concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. “It is the exploration of each individual’s differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual” (2018). We have to take the time to assess ourselves and our bias. This will allow us to create an inclusive environment where all individuals feel valued, respected, and are able to showcase their own unique talent.

As a transformational leader, I planned to use diversity as a potential organizational asset in order to enhance performance. Having a diverse group of people allows us to recognize the uniqueness in each individual. Each person has their own strength and as a leader it is our responsibility to help bring and foster those strengths. I planned to foster diversity by being aware of my biases and embracing the differences in each individual.

**Accounting for multiple perspectives**

The healthcare field, by design, is a multidisciplinary profession in which doctors, nurses, and other health professionals from various specialties must work together, in order to bring the best possible treatment and care to the patients. As a nurse, I work in an integrative field. Hence, I feel that it is my responsibility as an aspiring transformational leader to help create an inclusive environment that help foster multiple perspective, a safe environment and open communication. Park et al., discuss “Multiple perspectives as a road term to encompass multiple and possibly heterogeneous viewpoints, representations and roles, that can be adopted within both a collaborative and non-collaborative context” (2000). Throughout my life experiences, I have been told that there are multiple ways to achieve an objective. Perspective for me is how we see the world and how we interact with it. My reality can be different from someone else’s reality. Consequently, it is very important to foster open communication in order to allow other individuals to discuss their viewpoints. I planned to listen to all ideas to foster innovation, and create an environment where employees think critically and take part in creative processes.

**Discovery of potential**

We are born into this world eager to achieve as much as possible. We often describe life as an epic journey of self-discovery and actualization. Abraham Maslow discussed his observations of humans' innate curiosity, in which he develops a classification system that reflect the universal needs of society. His theory, The Maslow's hierarchy of needs consists of five fulfillments, which are, physiological, safety, belongingness and love, esteem, and finally self-actualization. He debated that an individual must accomplish each stage before moving on to the next. Therefore, he believed that an individual must have their basic needs met such as food, safety, belonging to a group and self-esteem before they go on to self-actualize. Self-actualization is a stage where someone is self-fulfilled and is seeking personal growth and peak experiences. Maslow described it as “a desire to become everything one is capable of becoming” (Maslow, 1987). Therefore, as leaders we cannot help others reach their full potential if all the other previous needs are not met.

The ability to discover potentials in ourselves and others is very difficult. It is very hard to leave our comfort and challenge ourselves. Three years ago, I was lost and didn’t know what I wanted to do as a career. I started college with no intention of being a nurse. I had a friend who was comparable to be my mentor, and we would look into different career choices. We discussed the benefits and downfalls of a wide range of careers. We looked into nursing and I was a little skeptical at first. Nonetheless, I continued to research. I discovered the many different pathways that nurses can go into and that excited me. I am currently pursuing a bachelor’s degree and already looking forward to graduate school. I want to become a CRNA and every time, I tell myself this. I get scared and doubt my intelligence. Thinking about graduate school has released the fear of me not being good enough and not living up to the expectations I set for myself. I do not think I have enough courage to accomplish such a goal. We are usually our own worst enemy. We hold ourselves back in so many ways and sometimes don’t even know how many opportunities we have missed due to fear. I am ready to turn off the pattern and stop doubting myself. I have surrounded myself with the right people and resources that will help me to achieve my full potential. No matter the obstacle I know I can do anything with the right amount of planning and consistency. In all honesty, my fears will never go away, however I am contented with my awareness. I will use that in my advantage and no longer let fear control my life. Instead, I have a hold on how they can or cannot affect me.

**Quest for Knowledge**

In any profession, the individual makes a commitment to learn, acquire knowledge and be able to serve and practice in that field. Nursing is not very different in that aspect to other professions but as a nurse, the commitment to learn and acquire knowledge is a commitment you make for life. The nursing field is always improving. Therefore, there are constant changes happening; changes that makes it difficult for a nurse to perform adequately over time, without a quest for knowledge.

Think about how much science in the medical field has advanced just over the last decades, new drugs have been invented, new laws have been implemented and old practices have been retired. Every health care professional nurses and doctors alike had to learn their way up, they had conformed to those changes, they had to develop an appreciation for humility and a quest for knowledge. Once we realize that we don’t have all the facts, then do we allow ourselves to intake new information. This commitment to be a life-long learner is one of the most important things that leads to success and longevity and any field and particularly nursing.

As an aspiring transformational Leader, one of my goals is to have a deep intent to be a learner along with my colleagues and institution. That commitment translates to us learning about the current but also the everlasting improvements in the field. These improvements will help us to be more efficient in our careers and life. I will use all that I have learned, along with my commitment to be a lifelong learner, to further help care for the patients. I will use evidence-based practice in order to conduct the best possible treatments available.

**Experience and reflective learning**

We learn as we live and experience the world and in turn, this helps us to grow and develop into the person that we are today. Every day presents a learning opportunity. According to Boyd, and Fales Reflective learning is the process of “internally examining and exploring an issue of concern, triggered by an experience, which creates and clarifies meaning in terms of self, and which results in a changed conceptual perspective” (1987). Therefore, our daily experiences lead to observation which ultimately leads to the development of new insights or conclusions this in turn helps to shape our actions in the future. We can’t always study how to handle every situation ahead of time. However, we can develop a process of learning from experience that ensures progressive competency development over time. This process is us learning through our past experiences.

Reflective learning to me is looking through a mirror and analyzing your actions and decisions that you’ve made in the past. However, this is a very hard task, since it is difficult to self-analyze and admitting our wrongs. In fact, I believe the process of leadership is intrinsically connected to reflective learning. To be a leader, you have to learn from your experiences and failures. In the nursing field, experiential learning is essential. Throughout my experiences in school, I find it that I try to memorize and retain information in order to regurgitate it back onto a test paper. This process has proven to be inadequate because the learned information often fades after the exam. However, ever since I started working, I find that the more experience I gain, the more knowledge and confidence that I have acquired. Reflective Learning can facilitate insight, and stimulate self-discovery, not only in our personal lives, but also in our professional lives as well. Critical reflection of one’s personal experiences can broaden perspectives which lead to a more holistic understanding of complex or ambiguous situations. Our experiences provide an opportunity for personal growth and development, and we retain this learned information for a long time. Therefore, as leaders, we need to know how to learn from our experience and this is through reflection, either alone or in the company of others. Thus, in the end, we are the best teachers of ourselves.

**Nurturing the emotional self**

It is one of the most overlooked problems in today’s society, a vast majority of the population take little care of their mental health.  This is particularly true amongst my ethnicity and environment. There is a social stigma associated with taking care of yourself mentally. It is often viewed as a bad thing; people often joyfully ask “what’s wrong with you?” accompanied by laughter. I have always been aware of the importance of mental health. Since, I am aware of the impacts of the emotional state have on me and the people around me. I often take the necessary steps to protect myself and improve my state of mind.

Good leadership skills do not only incorporate someone who can initiative, strategize, plan, and accomplish goals, but having emotional intelligence is also an effective skills. According to Rai Niharika’s perspective, emotional intelligence “involves the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth” (Rai, 2007). Thus, leaders need to be able to comprehend and accurately perceive their own and others’ emotions. This is strictly because leaders need the ability to manage complex social and personal dynamics. Andrea Ovans also argued that “The most effective leaders are all alike in one crucial way: they all have a high degree of what has come to be known as emotional intelligence. It’s not that IQ and technical skills are irrelevant. They do matter, but they are the entry-level requirements for executive positions”*(*Ovans, 2015). Keeping a [positive perspective](https://www.gottman.com/blog/the-positive-perspective/), validating each other’s positions despite disagreement, and being intentionally respectful, even during difficult times. It’s a dynamic that works. It helps everyone involved feel supported and valued.

Nursing is one of the most demanding jobs there are, both physically and emotionally. It requires the individual to be extremely accurate at all times. This is entirely due to the fact that humans’ lives are in our hands. That’s why it is so important, that I continue to perform skills that foster healthy emotional self. Because doing those things not only helped me relieve stress but they also help me perform tasks better, I am more open to new ideas, I am more curious, more intrigued and eager to learn, I have more energy and feel great throughout my body. All things that are extremely essential to a leader but also a nursing professional. I feel very confident that these habits, will help me nurture my mental health and help me perform excellently at my job. Furthermore, they are discipline that a leader should possess.

**Self-Care**

Nurses are often viewed as the caregiver of everyone. Our roles entail being an advocator, communicator, educator, interpreter, caregivers and help with liaison. Being a nurse requires you to fill in multiple shoes throughout the day. Although we are very talented and get the job done, we sometimes forget the importance of self-care. This is extremely dangerous since it can lead to errors on the job, fatigue, burnout, and multiple health problems.

One of the most difficult question for a nurse is how do you feel? This is hard to answer because we often forgot about ourselves in the mist of worrying about everyone else. I can’t even count the days that I worked without a single break to eat, hydrate, or use the restroom. However, I had to reflect on the compounding damage that I was creating on my health. I realize that in order for me to care for others, I have to care for myself first; Or else, I would not be able to provide aids to the ones in need. Therefore, paying attention to our own needs and well-being should remain paramount.

Self-care for nurses starts with the awareness of personal needs. We can’t accomplish anything without firstly having the awareness of its existence. We all experience stressors on a daily basis; hence, that requires the need for self-care practices. The World Health Organization defines self-care as the many things that people accomplish for themselves in order to establish and maintain health and to prevent and deal with illness. The self-care practices include hygiene, nutrition, lifestyle, self-medication (2016). We always try to educate our patients about the importance of self-care. Therefore, we have to practice what we preach. Sometimes when I am having a stressful shift, all I have the time to grab is some snacks or some sugary drink. However, we have to be mindful of our body and eat healthy, exercise, and get adequate sleep. When we take care our bodies, we will be able to effectively manage the physical and emotional stressors of the work and home environments and in return be more effective as a caregiver and healer.

**Conclusion**

My personal leadership analysis has provided me with many insights within myself. I have come to acknowledge my strengths and weaknesses. I realize that being a leader is not just about bossing people around. There are many other key components. Throughout this paper, I have learned to appreciate integrity, ambiguity, and diversity, while also providing self-care to myself and empowering others. This class has helped me to develop certain confidence in my abilities to lead. I came to the realization that my leadership journey has just begun. I desire to cultivate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that I have attained and carry it to my future endeavors. I will continuously push myself to learn and observe so that I can become a highly effective leader who supports others and myself.

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