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Self Assessment #1

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After reading the Relational Leadership Model chapter; participating in the group discussion during week one of class, and self-assessing my use of Relational Leadership; I have gained a better understanding of my position in leadership development. I now understand the Relational Leadership Model as a tool to lead peers in a way that also allows them to lead as well. This form of leadership prepares the skills needed in different assembled environments, such as the workplace, in school, or on a team sport. In comparison to traditional leadership, this kind of leadership is not assigning one person to give out tasks to individuals then assessing the intended overall task until the very end. Relational Leadership is about developing well-organized relationships to complete tasks and projects in a group setting.

The model is separated into five main components that describe how to use Relational Leadership in an effective way, such as purpose, ethics, empowerment, inclusion, and process-orientation. The model explains that to successfully execute a plan of action as a team, communicating the purpose and developing a process will help all understand why they're a part of the team and their roles. A leader can share what needs to be completed, but if they don't effectively communicate the process and reasoning behind the tasks then those following up may not act accordingly. With a clear purpose and process, those working together can adequately make sure all tasks are completely correct.

Along with being purposeful and process-oriented, ensuring everyone has ethical values or is being ethically correct can help assure all tasks will not be compromised because of a lack of integrity. Instilling good moral character into a team as a leader and into themselves individually ensures that everyone is doing the right thing for the right reasons. For example, a fair CEO outlines the standards and rules for a company should also follow them. This sets an example for the entire company and shows fair leadership that is under good moral standing.

The model also explains that a leader with good character should also empower those they're leading and include every member of the team during the project. A leader who inspires their team and pushes everyone to do their best can overall bring positivity to the tasks at hand. Empowerment can help a team thrive, which can be expressed through compliments, constructive feedback, advice, etc. A team with high morale will perform much better and may work harder to achieve the goals set. The Relational Leadership model reflects empowerment and inclusiveness during leadership roles as a way to positively encourage others to put in the effort at the best of their ability to complete a project.

After learning about all the components of Relationship Leadership, I believe I have already developed great skills in being purposeful and demonstrated fair ethical standards in group settings. For example, I spent four academic years actively participating in Air Force JROTC (AFJROTC) and was allowed to lead a cadet corps of 160 for one of those years. That experience taught me how to effectively communicate the importance of our unit's objectives to all cadets so that we successfully ended the year with high recognition. Leading a program that highly encourages honesty and integrity has also taught me how to set personal standards of good morality and how to teach others to do the same.

Being in that position also helped me realize that I lacked in empowerment skills and could do better with the process of working with large groups. The AFJROTC program is all about “esprit de corps”, or having *outstanding* pride within the group. I did actively encourage other cadets at events or in class, however, there were many times where I focused on the assignments and not the cadets I was leading. I wanted each event to go smoothly and often didn’t encourage my team to stay focused and positive. I worked with a very large staff of almost 40 cadets and sometimes got off track with the process of how to successfully lead the corps. There were times where the end goal became more important than the process of actually getting there.

Therefore, I am confident that I can continue to implement being purposeful and ethical in future leadership positions. I hope to empower my peers or those I may lead in any future situation more and become more patient with the process of successful group work. I believe being a part of the Village and taking SLC 101 will help achieve those goals and will continue to help me gain even greater skills in relational leadership. The opportunities given will prepare me for my future as a leader and will teach me how to effectively use relational leadership in future endeavors.