

November 15, 2017

## Personal Leadership Development Summary

Freshman year, when I was a new member in both International Association of Business Communicators and IC After Dark, my mentor and advisor noticed that I acted differently in the two organizations. I remember going into her office one day for a meeting and she had asked why I acted differently and told me that she saw it as a bit problematic. At the time, I was confused. I thought I had acted differently because I was with different groups of people, trying to accomplish different things, and felt more comfortable speaking in After Dark than in IABC. The second year, when I became president of IABC and the Event Planner Finance Liaison of After Dark, she commented on it again. She had said that in IABC, I was very reserved and reluctant to share information-- even as the leader of the organization. However, in After Dark, I was bubbly and excited to be there. She said that it wasn't fair to IABC that they didn't get to see that side of me, but also unfair to myself as I couldn't be myself in both settings.

I started to open up more in IABC and find out how I could be more comfortable. I realized then that I needed to be my true authentic self to be comfortable. I needed to be an Authentic Leader and let my guard down if I wanted people to see the true me. As the author of "Why Should Anyone Be Led By You?" suggested, I started to share my weaknesses with others and ask for help. I created committees who could help me make the club better and a more enjoyable environment. Rather than standing in front of the group, I sat at the table and led the meeting that way just as I did in After Dark. Just by letting my guard down, I was able to have more fun and started acting like myself.

By sharing my stories, my experiences, my differences, and my struggles, people were able to relate to me. I started forming better friendships and seeing more results in the organization. By creating this sense of awareness that I was acting differently in different meetings, I was able to change my actions for the better. These new friendships and sense of connections were highly valuable as people trusted me more and I trusted them more. I was able to become a happy warrior where I was more relaxed and happy-go-lucky. I knew that with these friendships and people by my side, I didn't have to worry as much about the end result (myself), because it would be taken care of and everything would work out.

Another thing I struggled with was aiming to be myself rather than anyone else. In After Dark, I aimed to be just like the past executive chair. I thought that she had everything together. She was one of my best friends and in my eyes, she was a wonderful leader who knew exactly what was happening at all times and always knew what to do next. It wasn't until again my advisor pointed it out that I realized it was a problem that I wanted to be just like her. My advisor knew that I needed to be the best Megan that I could be, not the best past executive chair. She explained that the past chair wasn't perfect and that yes, she was special, but so was I. I was special in my own way and had my own strengths and weaknesses that I should capitalize on.

I then knew that it was time to focus on me and my own growth. At my internship this past summer, we focused a lot on leadership development and growth. We took an emotional intelligence assessment that indicated that I was in the ninety fourth percentile for my age range. After meeting with the talent management department and reviewing my results, I learned that I have the unique ability to read a room and understand the feelings of others at a level that most people can not. I have since used this to connect with and understand others. Through this class, I

was able to further explore my own strengths and weaknesses. I learned that I was able to influence people through consultation, collaboration, and legitimating. I am able to work in groups to collaborate with others on a topic and influence them to act on it. I research topics very thoroughly and seek insight from others by consulting them before making any decisions. From my VIA character strengths assessment, I learned that my top five strengths are kindness, perseverance, prudence, honesty, and leadership. I always aim to be nice to people and open up to them, so that they in turn, feel that they can open up to me. My New Year's' Resolution for 2017 was to be more transparent and open with people, so I was happy that honest came up as a top strength. It indicates progress.

When talking to my mentors and peers who I interviewed about my leadership capabilities, they told me that I “have the potential to do so many great things in this world and [I] just have to believe it. [I] deserve everything [I am] given.” I was also told that I need to focus on myself. My friend said “Don’t be afraid to say something or do something that could benefit you. You don’t need to please everyone. Just focus on you.”

I understand now that it is much more fun and relaxing to be the same person everywhere I go. It’s definitely more fair to myself and to those around me, as they know who to expect and how to act around me. I will continue to strive to reach the high standards I have set for and break down the walls that I have built around myself. Whether it be through student organizations, class, jobs, or personal situations, I will continue to work to find my true authentic self and allow it to shine in every situation.