

Personal Philosophy of Leadership and Advocacy

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Abstract

The following paper describes my philosophy of leadership and advocacy as a counselor educator. It is divided into two parts. Part one looks at integrating the theoretical approach I believe best fits my ideation of what a leader in counselor education should look like. It also looks at a brief background of why I believe I can be an effective counselor educator. Part two then looks at an action plan of what I will do to meet my future leadership endeavors.

Keywords: humbleness, servant's attitude, multicultural awareness, trustworthiness.

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When exploring what a leader in counselor education and advocacy looks like, I had to dig deep into my heart to understand what I believe is most important to me and what will make me a great leader in counselor education. Mainly because the thought of this had never passed through my mind before. The first thing that came to my mind was, who do I most admire as a leader? Jesus was my automatic response because He has shown me, through His actions throughout Scripture, that the most significant attribute a leader can possess is an attitude of servitude. Leaders are meant to lead, this is true, but it all depends on how they lead, which makes them great or not. Two areas will be discussed. In the first part, I will describe what leadership and advocacy theories I most relate to as they integrate within my beliefs of what makes a leader, especially regarding counselor educators. The next part will explore how I plan to become a great counselor, educator/ leader, and advocate. I will further discuss what steps I will need to take and what skills I will use to become the leader I wish to be.

Part One

What makes a great leader great? What makes a good leader suitable? What makes a strong leader strong? What does it take for a leader to be respected by all? When I began this paper, I had to ask myself these questions because these are the qualities I want as a leader/ counselor educator. I want to be the best I can be, and I know whom I want to resemble in my walk as a counselor educator, Jesus Christ. I turned to some of the most influential leaders ever, and they were all found in the Bible. Jesus was a leader/educator. He led by example, which is what I want to do. He led by humbling Himself daily and giving God all the glory. He led a life of servitude. Nevertheless, several other great leaders showed many excellent qualities and attributes that make up a great, robust, and respected leader and advocate before Him.

When looking at the leaders in the Bible, Solomon asked for wisdom from God, and he was given this along with great wealth, and his reign was free of conflict. Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and Jesus advocated for those they led. They were continually going before the Lord to ask for forgiveness for the sins of their people. I see the characteristics of a charismatic leader within myself, as I can create, share and influence others through the vision given to me through God from my prayer (Chang & Barrio Minton, 2022). Although I am not a healthy risk-taker on my own, I can do things through Christ, who strengthens me. I am empathetic and respond well to others' needs, as I desire to help others succeed, which is done through good leadership (Chang & Barrio Minton, 2022). As I do not meet the last characteristic of thinking outside the box, I feel that I am only half charismatic in my philosophy and way of leading.

Jesus was a great leader and somewhat of a charismatic leader. Chang & Barrio Minton explain that a charismatic leader shares a vision in the vision statement (2022). Jesus did that when He shared God's word with everyone he met. It is also mentioned that charismatic leaders will motivate others by influencing them with their words and actions (Chang & Barrio Minton, 2022). Jesus did this when he spoke and performed many miracles, signs, and wonders. Then he could mobilize them through the conviction from the Word of God (Chang & Barrio Minton, 2022). As a counselor educator, I will rely upon the Lord to guide me and remember how Jesus led those who followed Him—seeking God's wisdom and guidance to help my students to grow.

I believe that I have some transformational characteristics in me as well. Charisma is one of these, which I already expressed I have some of these, along with inspiring those around me using a gift from God, creativity (Chang & Barrio Minton, 2022). Individualized attention will also bring positive results for the students receiving this treatment. Jesus showed all whom He encountered individual attention and was always inspiring those close to Him to lead as He had

done. I believe in leading by example, so my students will learn the importance of advocacy for clients, the counseling profession, and even for themselves. I will demonstrate advocacy through my involvement in professional organizations. I believe in being humble and having an attitude of servitude. Abraham, Moses, Jacob, and David all came to the Lord with humility as they advocated for the lives of their people. A good leader will be willing to advocate for those who may have messed up but were genuinely sorry and understood they made a mistake. Some students may fall into an academic dilemma, and I must be able to discern how I can help them. Wisdom and turning to God, listening, giving compassion, and discernment at the same time as not to cause me harm. Being relatable is another characteristic that I feel will benefit me. Some professors were not very friendly, and getting through the course was challenging. I plan to develop and ensure that I remain humble, allowing students to come to me without feeling threatened.

Part Two

My action plan will consist of the following developmental factors that will make me a good or even great counselor educator. I will need to grow, be humble, walk with a servant's attitude, be trustworthy, multiculturally aware, take on the roles of a mentor and advocate, and be approachable. I will teach using the four phases of growing leadership according to John C. Maxwell. I will grow by recognizing that I do not know what I do not know. Humility allows me to grow (Maxwell, 2002). Understanding that I know what I do not know allows me to be humble yet aware of what I lack as a counselor educator to let me develop my weak areas (Maxwell, 2002). Then As I grow, I know I am growing, and it begins to show in how I teach and help others to grow (Maxwell, 2002). Some other traits that I believe will make me a great leader are my willingness to grow along with my students (Maxwell, 2002). As a counselor

educator, I will teach the student how to develop and grow their counselor identity and how to practice using theory and skills with clients. Although I may have more knowledge about these than they do, there will also be times when a student can teach the class and me, so I do not want to miss these opportunities to grow with my students. Then there is my willingness to advocate for my clients, students, profession, and myself. I have just completed the Leadership Certificate Program designed by the Ohio Counseling Association to train future leaders. I plan to take on some leadership roles within the professional organizations I am associated with. I am currently the President-Elect for Ro Eta Gamma Nu (Chi Sigma Iota) and will be President for the year 2023-2024.

I look to keep many factors of leadership integrated into my plans as a counselor educator. I look to continue to develop my multicultural understanding. As a mentor, counselor educators are responsible for all of their students, and with the increase of online degrees, the number of multiculturally diverse students has grown. As a counselor educator, I will be responsible for understanding their cultures. I will advocate for marginalized populations to provide ethical and professional responsibility to help remove any ethical boundaries that may arise (Storlie, et al., 2015). Continued education and research on multicultural humility is an excellent start to working on this area of my identity. I forgot to mention patience, and I will be patient when teaching my students. When I was in my master's program for counseling, I met a very dear friend during an intensive on campus, and we have stayed close ever since. I tutored him for two years while taking classes myself. He is from another country and had some difficulty with the classes, so I taught him as I learned. This was a humbling and incredible experience because I needed much patience with him. This is one reason I chose to continue to pursue my doctorate in counselor education.

As a pastor, I am a leader through mentoring, teaching, and advocating for others in this role. I believe that this will help me when I advocate for my students, clients, and profession. I have developed a servant's attitude. I have learned to listen and allow others to grow. I can grow alongside them and help them figure things out independently. I am trustworthy, and those around me can testify to this. I am very approachable and will continue to be this way.

My role as a leader in counselor education has developed into more than I imagined I would be. This opportunity has allowed me to see that I have much room for growth and that God is leading me to lead. As a counselor educator, I will work hard to ensure my students are well educated in the theories and life. I will work to advocate for issues that they may need to have addressed. I will learn from them as much as they grow and learn from me. They will treat me with the same respect I give them. I will be approachable but still maintain that separation of student-teacher understanding. I never realized how much went into the identity of a counselor educator, but I know I will be a great one.

References

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