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Leadership Philosophy

Theoretical Foundation

My views on effective organizational leadership align most closely with what the literature refers to as *Transformational Leadership Theory*. I gravitate toward this style because of its focus on inspiring and motivating team efforts toward long-term goals. At its core, this approach is highly collaborative and builds consensus and unity within clearly defined groups of professionals. According to Bass (1990):

Transformational leadership occurs when leaders broaden and elevate the interests of their employees, when they generate awareness and acceptance of the purposes and mission of the group, and when they stir their employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group. (p. 21)

Leadership Attitudes

I believe strongly that in interactions with others, leaders should model the behaviors they expect from those they lead. In leadership roles, I give respect, honesty, openness, and optimism to those I serve. I want people to know they can rely on me to follow through on promises. I want to be someone who others find approachable and who they feel worthy of their trust. I want those I serve to know they have my active support and that I am both interested and personally invested in their success. I will know that I have succeeded as an organizational leader when those I serve feel empowered and have the information and tools necessary to take initiative, develop strategies to pursue institutional objectives, and devise solutions for complex organizational problems.

Guiding Principles

- Quality leaders lead with integrity, demonstrate high moral standards, and provide a consistently positive, irreproachable example for others
- Effective leaders are active listeners and cogent, confident communicators
- Supportive leaders inspire, motivate, and elevate those they serve by providing support and encouragement, removing obstacles, and extending trust and loyalty
- Selfless leaders put the interests and needs of the people and the program they serve ahead of all other concerns
- Mindful leaders focus on the culture and work environment within the organization to ensure a safe, positive, and productive space that welcomes diversity in all its forms and where people work collaboratively for the common good
- Inclusive leaders value those they serve, respect their ideas, opinions, and perspectives, and actively engage them in key decisions and strategic planning
- Transformative leaders motivate those they serve to fully invest in the organization, work selflessly toward strategic organization goals, and feel a sense of pride and ownership in achieving desired results
- Authentic leaders are straightforward, honest, and open in their approach to organizational communication and in all interactions with stakeholders

- Trustworthy leaders inspire and maintain the trust of all key organizational stakeholders
- Motivational leaders understand that by supporting the sense of autonomy, relatedness, and competency in those they serve, they provide an environment in which intrinsic motivation flourishes
- Organized leaders allocate resources effectively, implement organizational strategies competently, and plan proactively for contingencies
- Accountable leaders accept full responsibility for outcomes expected of them and never shift blame
- Thankful leaders find appropriate ways to ensure those they serve feel appreciated and recognized for their hard work and achievements
- Humble leaders acknowledge that organizational success and achievements are the product of many people working together to achieve strategic goals in which they are all fully invested

Forming a Strategic Vision

Rather than unilaterally dictating the organization's strategic vision for the future, an appointed leader should take time to collect data, speak with key stakeholders of the organization, develop a sense of the organization's history and tradition, and explore core institutional values. Only then can the leader comprehend organizational identity and effectively collaborate with organizational members to establish a meaningful strategic vision for the future. Once that information is acquired, the process of developing and implementing an organization's strategic vision involves answering several key questions:

- What is our purpose/mission as an organization? Is the current mission/purpose sufficient and does it reflect our values adequately? If not, what changes are needed?
- What do we perceive to be our current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (S.W.O.T.)? What led us here?
- How do we fully capitalize on current strengths and opportunities while mitigating current weaknesses and threats?
- What are our priorities? What is our vision for where want to go from here? What steps must we take to get there?
- What might get in our way? How do we overcome those obstacles?
- To get where we want to go, what resources will we need? What resources do we not currently have?
- What is our implementation plan? What is our timeline to achieve goals?
- How will we know we have succeeded? What assessment will we use?
- How do we clarify and assign specific tasks to team members?

Summary

Transformational leaders are agile and can adapt to changes brought about by technological advancements, institutional shifts, and the political and social environment. As a transformation leader, I am able to empower, motivate, and lead creative collaboration to address current and future issues and opportunities.

Reference

Bass, B. M. (1990). From transactional to transformational leadership: Learning to share the vision. *Organizational dynamics*, 18(3), 19-31.