

Notes on Leadership



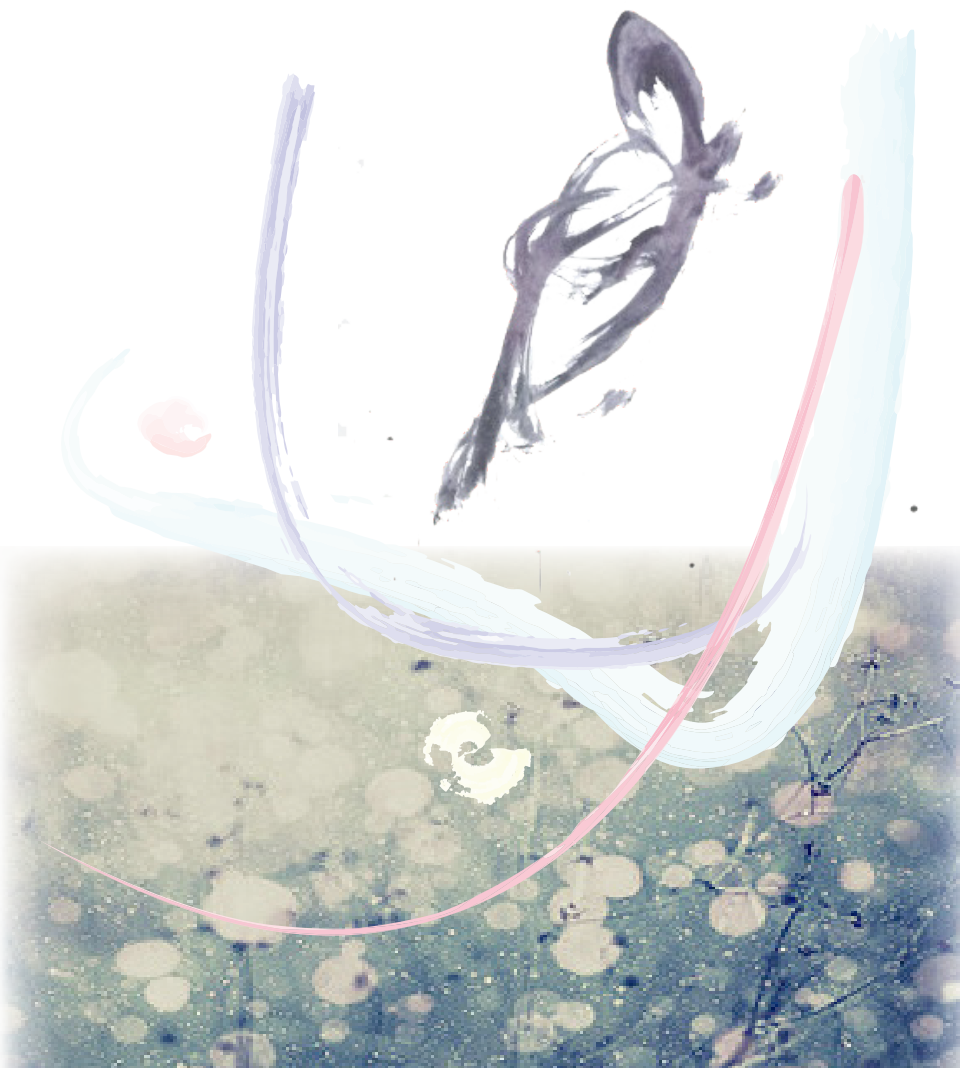
Dear Reader,

I am myself

I am narration

I am theory

The Beginning



Who am i...

the cursor blinks

still blinks

i am shy, uncertain, nervous, new, unconfident, hesitant
should i keep going?

i am determined, hard-working, creative, adventurous, driven,
happy, enthusiastic,

yet my insecurities obscure my strengths...

She enrolled in the University of Wisconsin in 2007. She decided to participate in fall recruitment. She joined Alpha Phi. She wanted to be an active member, so she ran to be a panhellenic delegate. She was rejected. She still was determined. She applied for an appointed position. She got Recording Secretary.

Was she happy? She did not get the position she applied for. Rejection after rejection made her uncertain about who she was. Was she a leader? Did she even know what a leader was?

Here is the definition of leader from the Oxford English Dictionary:

Leader.

I. One who leads

- a. One who leads a body of armed men; a commander, a captain
- b. One who guides others in action or opinion; one who takes the lead in any business, enterprise, or movement; one who is 'followed' by disciples or adherents; the chief of a sect or party
- c. One who leads a choir or band of dancers, musicians, or singers.
- d. Among Methodists, the presiding member of a 'class'.
- e. The first man in a file, one in the front rank, one of the foremost in a moving body.

She thought, "leadership is not a complicated subject. All I need is confidence, strength and respect and then I can be a leader." Yet the inner workings of her brain pondered...

*i do not lead a body of armed men. i do not lead a choir.
i do not guide others in action or opinion. at least not yet...*

The word is written with uncertain meaning.
What is leadership? What does it mean to lead? What defines a leader?

The Popular Theories of Leadership:

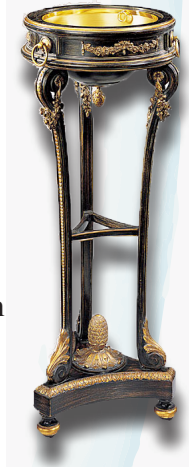
1. Great Man Theory: leaders are born, not made
2. Trait Theory: leaders must be born with inherited traits
3. Behavioral Theory: leaders can be made
4. Participative Theory: leaders represent teamwork
5. Situational Theory: leader's best actions are dependent on the situation
6. Management Theory: leaders based on system of reward and punishment
7. Relationship Theory: leaders inspire followers



The Myth of Leadership:

Let's explore the meaning of leadership. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, "leadership is the dignity, office, or position of a leader, esp. of a political party; ability to lead; the position of a group of people leading or influencing others within a given context; the group itself; the action or influence necessary for the direction or organization of effort in a group undertaking."

Leadership is signified by its linguistic presentation. The meaning and pronunciation come together to form a sign. Thus, Leadership embodies a glorified concept of power. Leaders are seen as individuals who in some form embody the nation and act as its leader. Leadership becomes mythologized when a leader is held up on a pedestal. No longer is a leader viewed as someone who leads. A leader becomes a form of a celebrity. The original meaning of leadership is altered. In society today, leadership becomes an ideal, a role only accomplished by accomplishing greatness. The true value of leadership is lost by the value of society.



i can be made a leader. i can prove them i am strong, organized, deserving, determined, motivated, focused, confident. i can do this. i can demonstrate the true meaning of leadership.

i will strengthen the recording secretary position. i will bring it to a new level. i will take what i am given and make it better. i will be stricter with attendance. i will take better chapter notes. i will take my job seriously. i will be prepared for the next elections. i will use this position to grow. i will become stronger. i will learn what it means to be a leader.



She took her job seriously. She recorded minutes, took out attendance and never forgot to send out chapter announcements. She was proud. She liked the position. She was on her way to become a leader.

But first, she needed to understand her past.

Remember when you were just six months old? Well, you may not, but here is what happened. You sat in front of the mirror and recognized your image, but your inability to fully coordinate put you in conflict. From this your Ego formed as a result from your visual appearance and your emotional reality. You now have a sense of mastery.

This false confidence has shaped who you are since childhood. Your identity is reflected into the cultural values of society.

Your formation of the Ego has left you confused. Inside, you see this ability to be a leader, but always feel you fall short. A false sense of mastery leaves you disappointed and hurt because as of yet you have not conquered the discourse of leadership.



Language acts as a barrier that prevents your understanding. Your relationship with your own image is projected in the world you live in.

Therefore you see yourself as insecure, so you are insecure. You admire those who display the qualities of leadership you desire. You want to demonstrate those qualities, but your identification with your self-conscious image makes you unable to reach your dream.

She was confused. How could she become a leader if this identity struggle blocked her dream.

i am confused. i am brought down by those who do not want me to succeed. members of my chapter do not wish for me to be a leader.

She believed the executive board of her chapter did not think she was suited for leadership. She struggled in her own small institution of Alpha Phi to prove them wrong. She wanted to be a leader, but she doubted her abilities to lead.

What did she do? She turned to another organization that believed in her. She became the apparel chair and social chair for the University of Wisconsin Synchronized Skating Team. She grew a little as a leader. She was now ready for the next step.

Or are you? Enter the real world of a crumbling system and your mind may change.



The system you live in must be dismantled and deconstructed. For Derrida words can have multiple meanings and definitions. The term *différance* describes the process where meaning 'slips' when transmitted. It is the non-presence.

Your word leader has multiple meanings. We can see that in the definition from the Oxford English Dictionary. Does the word leader 'slip'? Does it? Does it? Does it?

When the meaning slips, the value is lost, giving leadership an empty shell. Everyone has a different meaning for leadership. This makes it impossible to develop a universal meaning, which leaves leadership a fragmented and undetermined concept.

*within my chapter i see different types of leaders...
corrupt leaders, mean leaders, creative leaders, respected leaders,
weak leaders, pointless leaders, great leaders, powerful leaders.
with some of them the meaning of leadership escapes into the
non-presence. they bear the title, but lack the ability.
how can i understand leadership when it falls between the
cracks?*



She questioned and questioned what leadership could be. Like the cursor her mind ran blank.

See there is not room in this world for more leaders. There is already so much working against authority, so why become the role? Listen carefully...

Binary oppositions are worthless. This means the concept of leader and follower have no value together. Thus, can there be a leader without a follower?

Deconstruction wants to destabilize the link with the dominant binary, meaning leaders are not the authority over the followers. This makes leadership harder to accomplish, possibly even impossible. Best of luck.

She knew she could not be a leader without having some sense about the meaning of leadership. So she reflected on her role as a leader thus far.

a leader leads people. no, wait, i can do better. a leader...a leader...a leader...a leader. now i got it. a leader is someone who represents her organization, makes decisions in her organization's benefit, solves the problems of the organization, addresses the needs of organization members, and overall does her job well.

Yeah, if you want the formal rigidity of structuralism. The creation of power and social class is exclusive. You will exclude those who fall in vulnerable social groups. With your thinking you classify knowledge, marginalize power and create systematic control of power. Beware you do not attempt to rule 'defiant' behavior.

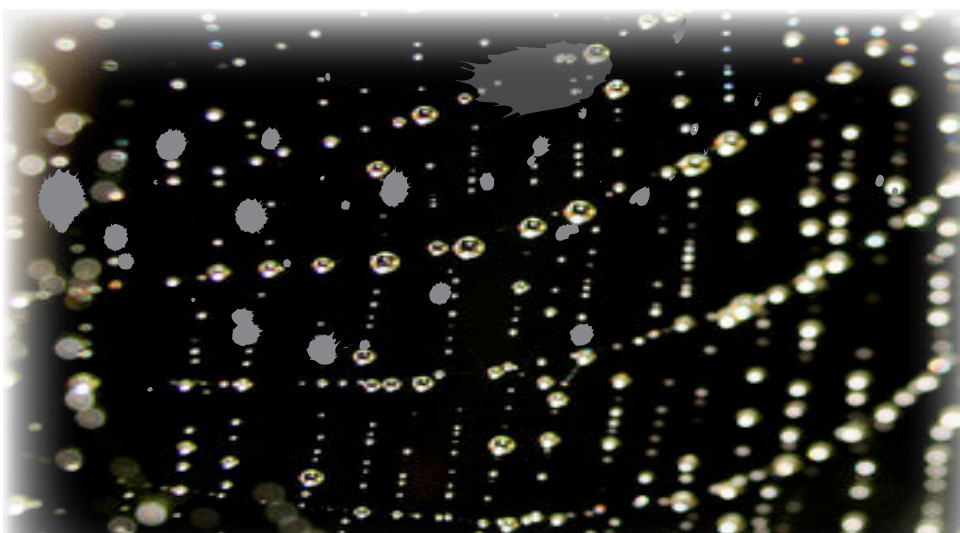
i don't want that to happen. i want to respected, not hated by chapter members. one of the executive members attempted to control all defiant behavior and now everyone hates her. but don't you need to stop some behavior before it gets out of hand?

She realized some behavior that didn't follow the rules must be held accountable. She knew it couldn't be ignored because irresponsible behavior could take a turn for the worse. She agreed exclusion was bad and promised she would not let it happen. But she would have to rule over defiant behavior. She stuck with the rules. Yet she decided she would not handle those situation in a authoritarian manner. She would handle troublesome behavior as a conversation. The misbehaving members would be included into the discussion and decision-making.

this will work. i be respected and not hated.

And so it did work. She created unity by Including others in decisions.

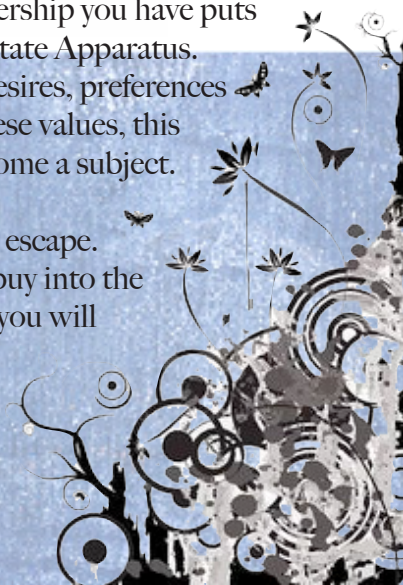
The Middle



She was ready for elections the following year. She wanted to be Vice President of Member Recruitment. She loved fall recruitment. She enjoyed the planning, the training, the decorating, and the talking. She had ideas to improve recruitment. Ideas were what mattered.

I really want this position. not because i want to be a leader, but because I want to change recruitment and improve the negatives. work week was a disaster and i know I can make the week fun and enjoyable.

This strong desire for leadership you have puts you inside the Ideological State Apparatus. You buy into the material desires, preferences and values. By following these values, this myth of leadership, you become a subject. You are not aware that you are doing so, but there is no escape. You must be careful not to buy into the myth of leadership because you will lose your meaning of leadership.

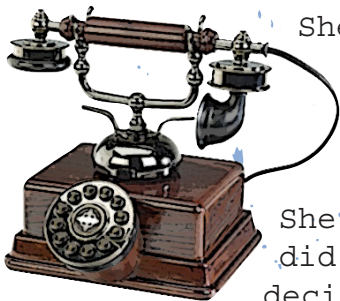


She was determined, but there were forces working against her. She soon discovered certain members did not want her to be Vice President of Member Recruitment. She was called by her advisor and was informed she was not slated for Vice President of Member Recruitment. She was not even slated for Director of Formal Recruitment.

i was upset. I was disappointed. i did not understand. I knew majority of the members supported my decision to run. i later learned it was one person who opposed. She argued I was too quiet. i understood this was an excuse, which she hid her real reason behind. She was someone with authority and control over our chapter.

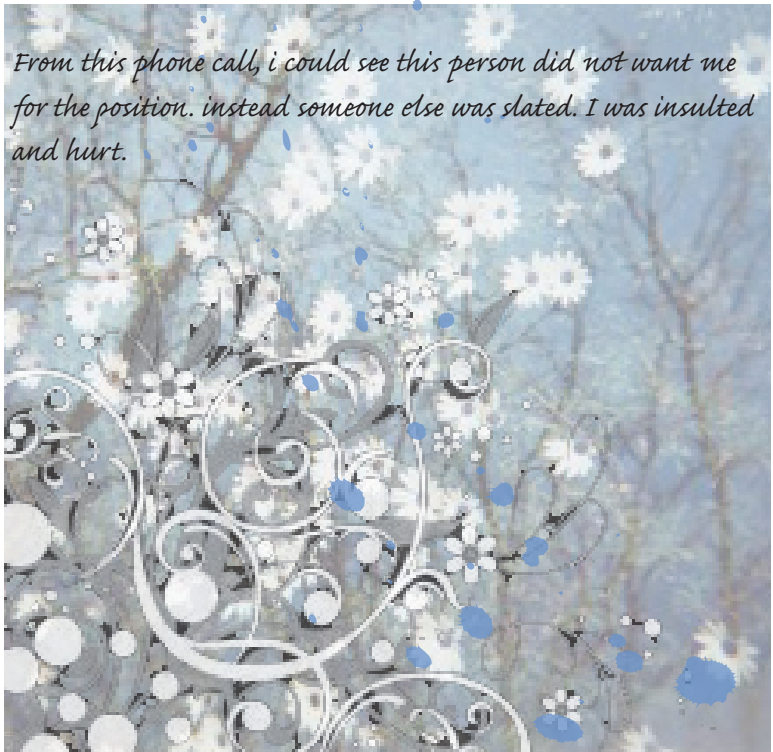
If you lose your fear of the system it will no longer have hold on you. Systems will only keep their authority if you treat them as having authority. Remember this is challenging in actual practice.

this can't be too difficult. If i no long fear her, then she will no longer have authority.



She received a phone call informing her she would be slated as Director of Informal Recruitment. She told her advisor, she did not agree with this decision and she would still run off the floor for Vice President of Member Recruitment.

From this phone call, i could see this person did not want me for the position. instead someone else was slated. I was insulted and hurt.

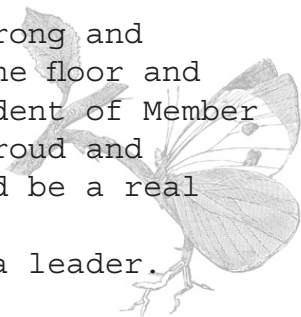




You acted against your advisor's Ideological State Apparatus. Her authoritarian principles positioned her as a member of the Repressive State Apparatus. Staying true to your beliefs allowed you to overcome her beliefs about leadership. You incorporated your own values and definition of leadership to allow yourself to act against her actions in a successful manner.

She decided to stay strong and believe. She ran off the floor and was elected Vice President of Member Recruitment. She was proud and satisfied. Now she could be a real leader.

She could learn to be a leader.



Check out this. The schizophrenic exists to provide us with a model to resist authority. Imagine, psychoanalysis tries to make us conform. There are forces, such as nomadism, that attempts to break down the basis of authority. While slightly extreme in value, this should have some resonance.

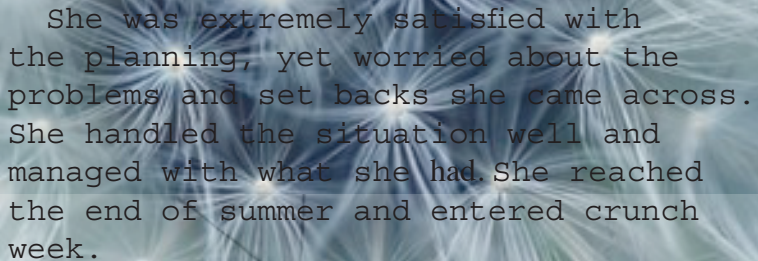


Here leadership represents the enemy of desire. Leadership could prevent happiness and freedom.

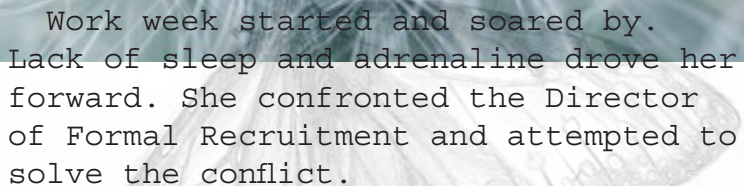
Why would i want to prevent happiness? it would be great to be a leader, yet still let chapter members be happy. I know this is something i can do.

She spent the summer months planning. She had many phone conferences, due dates, schedules, and appointments. She felt her thoughts were only on recruitment. She was excited, but then discouraged. She discovered the Director of Formal Recruitment was hard to reach, didn't do her work and fell short with ideas. She became frustrated. She soon became angry.

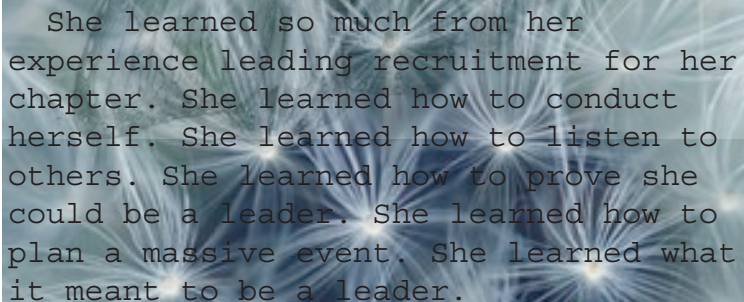
She worked hard. She worked really hard. She wanted a successful recruitment. She didn't want chapter members to hate her. She didn't want a repeat of last year. She made an extensively detailed schedule, practically down to the minute. She created entertaining and interactive learning games. She filled the days with game breaks and even included a full afternoon sisterhood. She planned what everyone would wear, how the house would be decorated, the songs members would sing and every little detail revolving around recruitment.

The background of this section is a close-up photograph of dandelion seeds. The seeds are white and fluffy, with bright yellow centers. They are scattered across the frame, with some in sharp focus and others blurred, creating a sense of depth. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the seeds.

She was extremely satisfied with the planning, yet worried about the problems and set backs she came across. She handled the situation well and managed with what she had. She reached the end of summer and entered crunch week.

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Work week started and soared by. Lack of sleep and adrenaline drove her forward. She confronted the Director of Formal Recruitment and attempted to solve the conflict.

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She learned so much from her experience leading recruitment for her chapter. She learned how to conduct herself. She learned how to listen to others. She learned how to prove she could be a leader. She learned how to plan a massive event. She learned what it meant to be a leader.

At the time she didn't know what this position had done for her. She didn't know how it had shaped her. She soon learned how much it meant to her.



The End



I know. Leadership is not the title. Leadership is not the position. Leadership is not the power. Leadership is what you do with that title, position and power.

Leadership is how you listen. Leadership is how you help others. Leadership is how you grow.

Leadership has become distorted. Leadership has taken on this essence of the glorified hero. The problem is this does not represent leadership. Instead it represents an idea of leadership.

Leadership is what you make of being a leader. It is how you act, not how high or big you rise. It is not about the authority or the control. Leadership should be how you change what you lead. How you improve it and make it better no matter how near perfect it is. Leadership is about what you see inside yourself and how you use this to benefit those around you.

We have lost this view of leadership. Today, we look at leaders who are seen as celebrities and do not see these values.

Leadership is lost and must be brought back.

She went on to become the Vice President of Public Relations for the Panhellenic Association. Overseeing the Greek community gave her new perspective. She learned about leadership and is still constantly learning.