

STUDENT LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

YEAR FOUR

SEMESTER ONE

September 16, 2021



Connections and Motivation: Knowing Oneself (Leading Self)

Description

A presentation that focuses on how we experience ourselves through our multiple attachments to the world. We'll discuss how we develop a sense of existential meaning/purpose that we can organize around in setting goals and moving with confidence through life. Presented by Brian Petersen, Director of Counseling & Psychological Services

What?

There are many ways that we grow to discover who we are. Connections and motivation are key in discovering and knowing oneself. Personal narrative also plays a role in how one relates to goals and how creating goals provides motivation. Our personal narrative is that little voice inside your head that constantly speaks to us. This is the story we tell ourselves about ourselves. Every decision we make creates a new reality. Life is continually created, and we are continually creating our life and our path. We can change our story, but there are times we feel like we aren't writing our own story- we are just reacting. Are we flexible in our narrative and can make changes as we go?

So What?

So now what? We can look at our constructed identity: extrinsic vs intrinsic. Extrinsic: what we take from outside ourselves to inform our experience of self. (Family, friends, mentors) Intrinsic: what we generate from within ourselves to inform our experience of self. This includes feedback from our own experiences, intentional seeking of sensation/excitement/meaning. How much do we filter influences and experiences and how have we created role expectations for ourselves?

Now what?

Everything that intimidates us also has the capacity to excite us. Moving forward I can be introspective to think about who I seek feedback from and who I give authority to. We must have boundaries in our connections. College is used as a transformation period. During this time others help us make decisions,

we need to examine which connections help us move forward verses which connections impede our growth. I also can examine what prompts my motivation while living in a world of contingencies of things that must be done, so they don't become so common that I take them for granted. Its ok to actively question why we are doing things in our lives. We need to determine if we are on the path we want to be on and that what we are doing is creating positivity in our lives and will it bring positivity into our future. My vision of my future creates my motivation. Without that vision it is difficult to find motivation. The definition of depression is the absence of meaning – in this case, you don't know who you are. Life is never a straight line, but we are socialized to think it is. Creating meaning is completely reliant on you- you are the only one who creates the meaning of your life. You can draw on examples, but at the end of the day you must create that meaning.

September 22, 2021



Mental Blocks (Leading Self)

Description

This session focused on the problem-solving process, and how a small team of people can avoid jumping to conclusions – instead exploring alternatives to achieve greater success. Participants will get to examine their own styles as problem solvers in order to work more effectively in the future. This session is part of the Creative Leadership Series.

What?

This SLI focused on minimizing mental blocks to boost creativity. Some items that were discussed were, setting a time and place aside to create and to make that space a good working environment. It was discussed to keep a bulletin board or white board available to give yourself a break from technology. With that said, a way to relax your mind was to try something new like getting back to nature and listening to music. With these conscious decisions we can be kinder to ourselves.

So What?

To develop our own creative talents, we must set aside time and space to create. Just like when we exercise, we must commit to it. It may seem obvious but creative people have busy lives and find themselves frustrated with little or no time to create. We can boost our creativity by clearing our desk and organizing our surroundings, this will help enhance our creativity and efficiency. It's also good to focus on the decorating scheme in the room around you so you feel comfortable in your environment. Research shows that color can play a major role in our overall state of wellbeing. The colors around us directly influence how we feel. We can add a whiteboard or bulletin board to the room to give ourselves a break from technology. Research shows that our brains need downtime from technology. Watching TV, talking on your cell phone, surfing the web on your computer or looking at Twitter or Facebook is not

downtime. Technology increases our levels of stress and makes it difficult to concentrate. downtime is important and necessary because it allows our minds to process information and remember it. Better ways of getting quality down time is to get back to nature. A recent study found that people learn significantly and retain knowledge better after a walk outside in nature. Our minds need this to destress and unwind so we can get rid of mental blocks and boost our creativity. Another alternative is to read a book on a new subject or watch an instructional YouTube or DVD to learn something new. Most importantly we need to be kind to ourselves by exercising, meditating, laughing, or doing something enjoyable. Added to that, we should eat right and get plenty of sleep. Oxygen is something we don't think about but most of us are holding our breath throughout the day. Taking deep breaths throughout the day is also very supportive. Finally, listening to music is found to affect our process of learning and thinking. Listening to pleasing music can make a task seem easier. Music can be used to simulate and relax the body and the mind. Music helps develop a positive attitude and motivates.

Now what?

I currently try to incorporate these ideas into my day. I find that with two majors I am very busy and very stressed a good amount of time. I try to work in a nap here and there where I can, and I find this to be very helpful. In addition, I connect to listening to music as a de-stressor and a way to clear my mind. Mama always said clean your room and you'll be able to focus on what you're doing in a more relaxed state. Guess she was right! I do find if I don't keep my space tidy, I get stressed out and I do like to keep things in my space that I feel a connection to so when I look up from my work it's a relief for my eyes and my mind. I'm not a great fan of exercise. I do like yoga, and I do feel it is important to assisting in keeping my mind clear. I will make a conscious effort to add more yoga/exercise to my life to help boost my creativity and overcome mental blocks.

November 17, 2021



Managers and Leaders: What's the Difference A LOT! (Leading Others)

Description

Managing and leading are often used interchangeably when discussing those who are in charge of groups of people or teams of individuals. But why? Managing and leading are not the same thing in the slightest. Sure, one person can do both, but leading a team and managing a team makes an incredible difference in the efficacy of the team and the exports of their efforts. Connor Watson presents this session to encourage individuals to hone in on their management and leadership skills to better benefit the teams they work on.

What?

In this leading others SLI Connor Watson, the student leadership consultant went around the room asking students for examples of individuals we thought were leaders. Examples of leaders were, presidents, teachers, coaches, and other people with titles. Then he went around the room asking who we thought were managers. Some people also mentioned coaches or someone who was a boss in an employment situation. The point was to reflect on the differences between leaders and managers. You can be a good manager without being an effective leader.

So What?

After going around the room and sharing ideas, we thought about the individuals we've experienced in our lives that we thought were good managers versus good leaders. After this reflection, the idea was to contemplate on how we can incorporate these skills we recognized into our personal style of management versus leadership. This sparked for me a comparison between two different managers I had experienced as a key holder manager at Joann Fabrics. My initial manager was more of a leader. She knew the company processes and implemented them, but she also knew how to go beyond those guidelines to inspire her employees. She led by example and took ownership of her position as well as her own errors. Rather than scolding people she inspired them by pointing out their strengths. She also found inspiring ways to help employees diffuse their less competent qualities. In the end she was promoted to a higher level in another area. Her replacement was not the leader she was. This manager was more of a processor of policies. He did not inspire his people and lost a good number of employees because of it. The store also went from being highly productive to less so. Although he was following and implementing policies, his lack of leadership skills effected his performance.

Now what?

A "manager" manages company processes and policies that employees need to adhere to and follow. Conversely, a leader leads his people through inspiration and self-reliance. A manager is more autocratic versus a leader that leads with autonomy. You can be both and being a more effective manager will likely include homing in on leadership skills. Leaving competition out of the equation and inspiring others individual talents. If you have a team of people inspired to do their best work, it is more likely you will have an effective working environment. So personally, I will keep this in mind and focus on leading people rather than managing them.

SEMESTER TWO

Spring 2022

For semester two, the senior year requirements are a little bit different. I will be presenting a Senior Capstone focusing on what I am most proud to have done during my time at IC and particularly in the last year. Stay tuned and look for that prestation to be posted somewhere on the webpage soon!