Reflections

**Reflection 1:**

A key component in being an effective leader is being able to “Model the Way”. This means that rather than saying what needs to be done to achieve a goal, you as a leader set the example and actually show how to achieve the goal. The three main ideas of this leadership practice are clarifying personal and group values, setting interim goals to abide by, and setting and continuing to be the example.

A leader must first clarify personal and group values in order to structure a common goal that everyone agrees upon. For 5 years I volunteered as a swim coach for my local swim club to teach kids from 4-16 years old the fundamentals of swimming and proper technique for diving, turning, stroke, and breathing. At the beginning of each year I would meet with other volunteer coaches to discuss our goals for this year and the direction we wanted the team to move in. We would discuss our personal goals for the year such as dropping time, compete in “A” meets and relays, and earn an All-star time in at least one stroke. We would then layout the team goals such as moving up a division, dropping time in all strokes, and earning a top 5 spot in our division.

An effective leader is able to set short term goals to keep the group on track in completing the ultimate goal. . Football at my school was no joke; it was extremely competitive and required absolute dedication throughout the season. During the summer going in to my senior year the head coach called me and told me that our offensive line needed to gain about 30 pounds each while increasing our strength. I met with the other 4 lineman one day and created a timeline of exactly how we could put on so much weight in only 3 months. I set the goal for gaining at least 2-3 pounds each week to ultimately reach 30 pounds by the 12th week while also creating a unique diet plan to put on weight. I expressed that we needed to up all of our meal portions, eat more red meat and grilled chicken, drink a glass of chocolate milk twice daily, eat 1-2 protein bars during the day, and get a full 8 hours of sleep each night. Everyone agreed this was a good and fast way to put on weight and we constantly bugged each other about not straying from the diet plan.

Setting the example involves using the common vision established with the group and applying it to use to achieve your short term goals to eventually reach the ultimate goal. An example of this in my life is when I served as the marketing and design coordinator for my fraternity’s philanthropy event, Slime-fest. Our goal was to raise more money than we did last year for military heroes while making the event bigger than it was last year. I took charge of getting the word out to the public by first meeting with members of Kappa Sigma and the members of Alpha Epsilon Phi to discuss the best way to inform people of the event. We decided the best idea to put flyers with this design and a couple quick facts about the event around campus in high traffic spots so a lot of people would see it every day. I also printed out flyers and put them on all the bus stops around campus, both diners, all fraternity and sorority houses, and outside several dorms. After getting the first round of designs around campus I showed others that I actually cared about our event and was able to convince them to help me in my job.

In the movie, “Coach Carter” Samuel L Jackson models the way of an effective leader to help change the lives of young teens in a community plagued with violence, low graduation rate, and teen pregnancy. He began by having each player sign a contract to abide by during the course of the season with rules such as sitting toward the front of all classes and maintaining a respectable GPA. When the players strayed from the contract, Carter reacted by shutting down the gym and forcing the players to fulfill their duties as a student before they do so as an athlete. Coach carter never lost faith in his team and through his devotion to success, he wasable to change the lives of many.

**Reflection 2:**

My group, “Model the Way”, is comprised of high achieving, strategic, and competitive individuals not only model the 5 practices of exemplary leadership but also teach others how to be a good leader. In order to increase group participation I will constantly remind group members of deadlines, complete certain project areas myself, and help others with their pieces of the project.

I see myself as a highly motivated and competitive individual who is willing to sacrifice time and put in the effort to achieve a common goal. For example, the website blog potion of the project is difficult to those who have not built a website in the past. Having recently built a couple for classes last year, I took this challenge and spent an afternoon creating the base of our site. This helped make the project seem a little more manageable for other group members allowed for us to focus on other elements of the project. Also, our competitive group nature led our group to wanting to add an element of humor to better explain the elements of an effective leader. This will also allow us to have fun making the video and make the process of completing the project much more enjoyable.

The results of the Strengths Quest assessment revealed that our group is comprised of highly competitive, strategic, and achieving individuals which will allow each of us to advocate for the completion of the project. Our highest strength, competitive, allows us to set the tone of the kind of work we want done while also minimizing conflict. Since our group is comprised of strategists I believe we will be able to formulate a good layout to follow to complete this project. However, these two strengths can quickly become our weaknesses if several group members try to create what they see as the best approach to this assignment because we will be stuck in the planning phase for far too long. If this conflict were to arise it would halt any sort of production we know we are capable of and will not complete this project.

Finally, in order to increase communication we established a google doc, a group text message, and an email thread between all group members so we all know exactly what we have left to do and how to go about doing it. It also has allowed us to coordinate meeting times to film since everyone has a different schedule they need to attend to. I think our group is overall effective, but we do lack in group meetings. It is hard for everyone to meet at one time but we are continuing to try and increase communication so we can find a time that works best for everyone.