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Leadership, the Long and Winding Road
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Introduction:
This paper is intended to convey the experiences that the presenter encountered on the journey from high school shop teacher to college president. The intent is not to shine the light on this individual's career but rather provide insights into the journey that others may find insightful and helpful. Throughout the paper the attempt will be made to provide broad, general experiences and observations to hopefully enlighten others that may attempt the journey. The writer will caution the reader to remember that each individual's journey is their own and what is presented here is an effort to help with this journey.

In the beginning:
Offered here are broad suggestions as to the educational and professional experiences that will lend themselves to the development of leadership characteristics. Technology education as with all fields and disciplines has a content universe and core understandings. It serves the individual well to engender these as important to the early success of the technology education professional. The convergence of knowledge of the discipline, laboratory experiences, and pedagogical understandings provide for early success in the K-12 or postsecondary classroom. One important key to leadership development is early success in one's career. Classroom success leads to opportunities for the individual to branch out beyond the classroom in the profession. These experiences may include presenting, assuming leadership in professional organizations, and/or entry into graduate school.

At every level of one's education, it is important to seek out mentors. Mentors play a most significant role in the development of leaders. Mentors are almost always leaders themselves and they show the way to leadership by both directing and modeling the way. It goes almost without saying that all professionals benefit from the examples provided by the mentors they have encountered. Some of these individuals make it their mission to mentor while others simply show the way by their deeds. In either case, they always show that service to one's profession is both a duty and an honor and true leaders do it not for personal glory but for the greater good of the profession.

Graduate School; Then and Now:
While it is true that not all technology education leaders have garnered graduate degrees, it is generally understood that Master's and Doctoral degrees are key to entry into leadership positions. This presenter pursue graduate education more than 40 years ago when the full time immersion model of the graduate assistant or teaching assistant coupled with full-time

attendance was the norm. This model provided for deep interaction with colleague graduate students and graduate faculty members. There is much to be said for this model as provided the opportunity for graduate students to observe closely to leadership characteristics of the faculty, department chairs, and even deans as they pursued their studies. In many cases these individuals become mentors who were keenly interested and invested in their students' professional development.

Today it is much more likely that graduate students complete their coursework online and only occasionally interacting directly in person with other graduate students and their faculty and administrators. This presenter's own son recently completed his doctoral degree completely online with brief summer on-site connections. As these online models have become the norm, one may wonder if the same opportunity for leadership development is being conveyed. Perhaps this thought is only the lament of what used to be and we all know that "used to be dead". Time will be the judge if future leaders are more or less prepared.

The life of the Faculty Member:
While not all leaders in the Academy begin their careers as faculty members, a large percentage do. This presenter's career was no different spending the first 20 years in the full-time university classroom. Even now some 20+ years after leaving full-time instruction, this presenter still instructs at least one course per term. This is because of two reasons. One the love of the subject and students and second, the love of learning. The pure joy of sharing the excitement of one's discipline never gets old and on occasions becomes a longing for the pre-leadership days.

During the teaching years of one's career it is important to engage in professional service by assuming leadership positions in professional organizations, researching and writing within the profession, developing curriculum, engaging in accreditation processes, and generally participating in all manners of service. All of these activities will provide opportunities to observe leaders at all levels within the profession. These individuals will provide examples leadership, both good and not so good. It is during these developmental years that one begins to frame a philosophy of leadership. These experiences with any number of leaders will begin to frame the type of leader one will become. Unfortunately there is never a shortage of poor leaders. At times it seems that good leaders don't exist. There are many takeaways from these experiences with subpar leaders. The most straightforward being do not be like that leader. At this point, one must ask a basic question, why become a leader? There is only one answer that will sustain one's development. That is, it does not have to be that way, good leadership can be practiced intentionally. Hopefully one will have the opportunity to work with excellent leaders who model practices that serve the greater good of each individual and the organization as a whole.

Seeking the First Administrative Position:
As one considers entering leadership via an administrative position, there has to be a plan. As anyone who has ever pursue this path will convey, it is not an easy road to navigate. The first question is, does one have the tools and experiences that will pave the way to serious consideration for a given position. The old adage "you have to pay your dues" almost always

holds true. This being the case, one must be realistic in seeking positions that are appropriate for the level of experience held. It is true today, that some institutions have found it fashionable to seek applicants from the world beyond academia but most of these experiments have proven unsuccessful and the traditional progression of the leadership ladder is the norm. This being the case, the first position might be a department chairmanship or an assistant dean.

The job search process is arduous and wrought with disappointments. One must be willing to accept rejection, learn from experience and move on to the next opportunity. At times the first administrative positions may be offered within the current institution and may even allow for the opportunity as an interim. Many individuals have begun their leadership careers as temporary officeholders that provided the opportunity for them to show their abilities. These experiences also provide the opportunity for the individual to try their hand leadership and to gain a sense of one's abilities.

If opportunities within one's institution are limited, the question becomes, is it possible to make a career move to a new institution. At this point, others in one's life may come into play. If there is a family, is a relocation possible? What if tenure has to be surrendered? This presenter has done so twice. Are our priorities in the right places? Are the potential opportunities in line with the career goals? Would they provide that leadership development experiences desired?

Once an offer is extended, be sure that the fit is right. The job seeker has every bit as much right to evaluate the potential institution as the institution does the job seeker. It is okay to say no to a position. There is no dishonor in making the right decision for one's career. Do not be concerned with the potential impact such a decision might have in the future.

Once in the Position What to Consider:
Once in the position the leader needs to watch and listen and learn. There will be expectations established for the position and these will need to be prioritized. Hopefully there will be the latitude to set the goals, benchmarks and measurements that will track the successes. These goals and priorities about the organization's success are not the individual leader's success. The greatest impediment to successfully leadership is when the leader makes it about the "me" and not the "we". The leader's rewards come from the institution's successes and the successes of those that the leader supports and mentors. One of the surest ways to fail as a leader is to make it all about you.

Soon after entering a leadership position one should begin asking self-reflect questions such as:

1. Am I happy? Be very candid with yourself.
2. Am I suited for this role? Does it feel right, comfortable?
3. Am I successful? Ask others you trust what they think of your performance.
4. Successful by what measure? Compare performance to goals.
5. Do I see myself doing this type of leadership going forward?
6. Do I want to progress in my leadership? How far do you hope to go?

7. How long should I continue in this position? There is no hard and fast rule for the amount of time one should spend in a given leadership position but suffice it to say it has to be long enough to establish a record of successful initiatives and the mastering of difficult situations. No institution wants to invest in a partially proven leader. One will know when it is time if others make suggestions for opportunities (assuming they do not just want to be rid of you).

The Truths, Milestones, Struggles, and Successes:
There are a number of truths to understand and live by when one assumes leadership roles. The list presented here is by no means complete and only serves as a jumping off point for your leadership path. They include the potential pitfalls, things to watch out for, rules to consider, and more. They are presented here in no specific order as follows:

1. Be prepared for the "hit men/women" you may encounter-they do not like you just because you are in the position.
2. Be true to yourself-you cannot fake leadership-you have to be real.
3. Model the good leaders you have encountered and remember the bad leaders you have seen.
4. You have to be able to live with ambiguity-remember you are working in a profession that always seeks input from all sides.
5. You have to be able to recite the "serenity prayer".
6. Treat every day as if it is your first day and last day-it never gets old this way.
7. Place people first but with consideration of the whole-hard decisions.
8. Be a mentor and seek mentors-pass on the truths.
9. Practice "Servant Leadership" knowing it is very difficult.
10. Pile praise on those around you-remember you do nothing alone-it takes a village.
11. Craft a leadership vision that serves those around you and the institution.
12. Do not be afraid to ask others for help-including those at all levels.
13. Know when to consider leaving the position gracefully-burning no bridges.
14. Do not run from a position thinking the next one will be better-it could be that you are the problem.

Parting words of wisdom:
1. There are no perfect leaders-leadership comes with warts, if you make a mistake, own it.
2. In the end you have to serve the individuals and institutions-not yourself.
3. Leadership is worth the effort
4. Being professional is important but being "real" is the most important.
5. Be thankful for your opportunity to serve and be humble and kind.
6. Success is a journey-not a destination.
7. Do not be concerned about a legacy-if you do your part well, it will be there.
8. Finally, your greatest reward will be from the success of those you serve.