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Leadership and Society

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### Leadership Autobiography

Being a leader to me means earning people's trust and using emotional intelligence when problem-solving. It is easy to tell people what to do, but it is more difficult to gain their trust. In today's society, it is hard to be seen as a leader as a woman. According to Hoyt (2010), people associate leadership with dominance, but effective leadership has a balance of both feminine and masculine traits. These skills include "emotional intelligence, risk taking, empathy, assertiveness, openness to experience, extraversion, conscientiousness, integrity and trustworthiness, and the ability to persuade, motivate, and inspire others" (Hoyt, 2010). Leadership should not be all about dominance; in fact, it should be the last trait to have as a leader. It is important to hear feedback from your employees, and it is hard for them to feel comfortable speaking up if the work environment is toxic.

Many skills make a great leader. My strongest leadership skill is communication. I like to hear feedback from people I work with about how I can improve my job for the benefit of the whole team. Being a leader does not mean being perfect; criticism is good when it helps the team's proficiency. I am also quick to problem-solve under pressure. It is important to stay calm during stressful situations to avoid worrying those around me. If the leader is visibly stressed, it does not make the rest of the team feel good. For example, I am in-charge of training new employees at work. When a problem with a customer arises, I help and teach them how to solve the problem calmly to make the customer happy. I avoid simply telling new employees what to

do, but thoroughly explaining what to do and why the solution works. Lastly, I am an easy person to talk to. If any problems arise within the company, my coworkers feel safe to speak to me about it. I want people to feel comfortable telling me their feelings or problems about work. I do not want coworkers to feel like their feelings or opinions are invalid because it affects teamwork. Being a leader does not simply mean “bossing” people around; it means gaining their trust and being resilient to issues.

In the workforce, it is difficult for people, primarily men, to take a woman seriously as a leader. Hoyt (2010) explains how women encounter many problems in becoming leaders. There is a stigma that women are the primary caregivers of the family; it is difficult for them to focus on work and their home life. Additionally, Hoyt (2010) explains that women are less likely to advance in the company because they take on fewer responsibilities. Male counterparts have far more experience than women. Companies are more likely to advance employees who have more experience and knowledge on the job. According to Gipson, Mendelsohn, Catenacci, and Burke (2017), the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported in 2011 that 47% of the U.S. workforce was made up of women; however, men take up most leadership positions. These are just a couple of problems that I may encounter in becoming a leader.

As a woman, I believe I have to prove myself more than a man does at work. I must prove myself worthy of being a leader, not just by sternly telling people what to do, but also by gaining their trust that I am doing what is best for the company. I hope to inspire other women and young girls to step up against their male counterparts and know that they can also accomplish becoming a leader. I want to create an environment where women are heard and respected, despite how society makes them feel. It is important to provide women with equal rights to speak in meetings to ensure their ideas are heard. However, treating everyone equally

does not always work, and there will always be people who have a negative attitude towards women in leadership. To fight against these groups, I will advocate for women's equal rights in the workforce. This means acknowledging problems, such as equal pay and fair promotions. It is important to call out inequality issues when problems arise to reduce their impact on women. Issues that continuously occur have mental and emotional impacts that shape how women view their worth in the workplace. It is discouraging and unmotivating for them to speak up or to make an attempt to move up in the company.

Tracy (2015) explains that leaders are not born, but they are made. I agree with this statement because leadership is a skill that is taught through experience. Tracy (2015) states, "The study of great leaders of the past and present is one of the fastest and surest ways to develop leadership qualities. The more you study what constitutes effective leadership, the more likely you will be to internalize the same values and behaviors." It is important to study what makes an individual a great leader, but it is just as important to be surrounded by great leaders. Having these influences helps people learn leadership skills. I look up to my parents as they are great leaders in life. My mother always gets the lead job; she is known at work for her time efficiency and good work ethic. She taught me how to plan out my days efficiently, so I can get tasks done. On the other hand, my father taught me to work well under stress. When the whole family is stressed, he is the one to calm our nerves, remind us to think logically, and problem-solve. My two influences give me a base for leadership. They started to teach me at a young age how to use my time wisely and think strategically in stressful situations.

## References

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