

## Leadership

There is one new development that every potential leadership candidate has to face on a daily bases. That development is the phenomenon of technology where any mistake, off-color comment, or outburst is magnified, then within seconds is in the ears, eyes and on the tongues of millions. Let's take for granted everybody makes mistakes, but the only protection against the exposure to potentially destructive implications is consistency. Your friends and associates will only rally around you in defense if they know your personality and attitude will not damage their own reputations. No one wants to be guilty by association. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century you always have to be "on." Especially if you have leadership desires.

I want my child to develop problem solving skills "leadership skills" for professional and personal reasons. Her optimum advantage for success would be problem solving skills, having one of those personalities that earn respect and admiration through her choices, actions, and her ability to inspire others.

It should be a natural process that enables an adolescent to factoring in all the circumstances, personality traits, arguments, benefits as well as consequences (positive or negative) in a crucial situation. Then after analyzing the information take a position they believe in. I do not believe that you should make decisions so that other people are impressed. It is just as important, not to take a position which leads to the impression that you are thoughtless or untrustworthy.

For adolescents I also identify the advantage of leadership skills as a beginning to understand the importance of networking. In adolescent sports, the fact that leadership skills correlates to networking skills seems easier to detect. Exceptional physical abilities, combined with commitment and a strong relationship with teammates, or the earning the trust of their teammates by inspiring success, though talent may be limited, denotes leadership potential. Either way, coaches and managers identify a potential leader and nurture them as best they can. But in the end, it's a player's

personal determination to improve their talents and the talents of those around them that identifies a natural leader. Not that leadership skills guarantees winning. But it does guarantee a legacy and characterization of the person.

I want my child to have a successful life and I believe leadership, and problem solving skills are essential. I would hope that in her future people appreciate the way she thinks and acts rather than judge her on beauty and sense of humor. I also want her to understand the power and responsibilities of leadership and not to abuse these powers. I want her to know that doing the right thing, making the right choice has a value, and that making the wrong choice also leaves a long lasting impression.

But leadership, is not easy, sometimes it means you must stand alone.

I chose to use "Bullying" as my background for leadership training. Statistics tell us that you can not easily stop a Bully from harassing a target. And I think asking a target to rise above the situation and just fight back is unreasonable and potentially unsafe, but just as an outside influence can instigate a bully by providing an audience, statistics now confirm that bystanders can also affect a bully to stop their harassment of a target.

By introducing this common childhood experience of bullying, it is clearer to see the rewards of leadership. This skill-building tool reinforces the heroism, problem solving skills and courage it takes to be a leader, it also sets the stage for a child to really experience the impact of leadership. But leadership can lead one into harms way and in no way is the intention of this program, even though we have simulated a number of potentially dangerous situations. Leadership means thinking things out, observing the situation, and making the most appropriate decision at that time. These choices have been reinforced by the student observations and comments.

Knowing me as you might by now, I went searching for an existing content specialist who was addressing leadership skills. I did my research, reviewed a number of existing programs on the

dynamics of problem solving but I hadn't found any that hit the right note. The programs I reviewed didn't teach me, (as I am always the student did not impress me), although they did reinforce taking leadership roles. I wanted a program that reinforced the opportunities to a leader.

One of the ways I deal with frustrations is by talking about them. Not to burden others but to learn from them, although I guess it can be a burden depending on the issue. The issue of leadership skills proved not to be a burden. In fact, it proved to be very easily solved. One of the people I discussed my frustration with was Jim Kelly, or perhaps better known as Police Chief Kelly. And Jim is more than a law enforcement officer, he is also is a lawyer and a strong advocate of training tools. He is in charge of the Palm Beach County School system of 400 schools, 2,800 teachers and 400,000 students. After a school shooting of a teacher, Chief Kelly was determined to effectively educate every teacher, administrator and security officer to avoid this and many other issues. This is not to say he didn't have assorted training for protective safe schools procedures, and crisis plans in place. The truth is you can never have enough. Most teachers and administrators never used to think it could happen to them, now they all know different and they want to learn more. He wanted training with more personal involvement, training that challenged the "user" to make decisions and experience the outcome of their choices, and that quest brought us together.

We had already worked on assorted projects and they were well received and effective. We were now working on another when during a break I mentioned to Jim my desire to create a leadership program. He just smiled, told me I owe him one, picked up the phone and called Dr. Ron Slaby of Harvard. Dr. Slaby was not in his office, but did call back while Jim and I were still in our meeting. Jim not only explained my desire to Dr. Slaby, and he sold him on interactive technology. He raved about the effectiveness of the products and actually talked Dr. Slaby into meeting with me. This could be your content specialist he told me, he has some revolutionary statistics and research.

. His research identified the effectiveness of peer intervention in relationship to bullying. In layman's terms, if bullying situations are effected by instigators (bystanders) encouraging the bully, by not encouraging the bully, in fact by actively discouraging the bully the bully withdrew their behavior.

Based on this extensive research which proved his theory, Dr. Slaby developed a program called "Aggressors, Victims and Bystanders" which was applauded by Department of Education division of Safe Schools. His program trains teachers how to teach problem solving intervention. But as I knew and Dr. Slaby confirmed, this is a tough situation because you don't want to encourage a child to put themselves in harms way. Everything is dependent upon the situation.

As it turns out, interactive media was the perfect way to take the "bystander intervention" research and teach a child the complexities of making the decision to intervene or not. And of course I challenged Dr. Slaby to take the next step, using his research to help me develop a leadership program based on realistic situations beyond just bullying, but also to include peer pressure, racism, jealousy, harassment, physical and verbal abuse as well as dangerous situations.

The enclosed CD is the result of our efforts and it can help you develop a child that knows the recklessness of instigation, the insignificance of doing nothing, and the dynamics of taking a leadership role. After every scenario, after reviewing all the possible outcomes, just ask them two questions. Which bystander in each scenario would they want to be their friends? What does it take to be a leader?

For more information go directly to [www.motint.org](http://www.motint.org)  
or Email Dr. Friedman [DrFriedman@motint.org](mailto:DrFriedman@motint.org)