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The Protocol for Leadership on Campus "Revisiting the Lessons of Putney Swope"

M. Colleen Jones

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

This workshop will review some essential truths about being and ethical and effective leader. Over the course of the session, the participants will learn some "Streetwise Advice" to using experiences and education to lead soulfully."

A classic Black film, "Putney Swope" sets the subtext for the theme of this workshop. In the film, there is one Black man on a board of directors. There is an election, and the 'goodhearted white folk' - in a desire to not appear racist cast a vote for Putney to be the Chair (thinking that no one else would vote for him). To the surprise and chagrin of the other directors, Putney Swope is unanimously elected. The film proceeds to present the 'political dances' in which the others engage to undermine Putney and regain control. As people of color on predominantly white campuses, we may not experience the "exact" situation of being placed "in charge" by 'extra-liberals.' However, the circumstances which evolve when we "are" in leadership can be quite bizarre.

On its own, leadership is the elusive but measurable difference between just managing and managing well; it is the characteristic which accompanies excellence. Leadership achieves its vitality from peoples' actions and interactions that is, in the "doing" of something. Consequently, the identification of a person as a leader is generally representative of a series of accomplishments - a body of work. But how does one become a leader? What do you need to do to set yourself upon a path where others will be compelled to join, assist and support you, your efforts, and your vision? But what is it about being 'the minority' that makes leadership so perplexing to others. What we will do in this workshop is to review some of the essential elements of leadership, the characteristics of "exemplary" in leadership behaviors, how you can go about developing (or enhancing) these qualities, and how you can "lead beyond expectations" and in spite of systemic difficulties.

Long gone are the days when the notion was accepted that there are innate or hereditary characteristics which make some persons more suitable for leadership than others. We now know that if a person has the "desire" to lead, she (or he) can learn to lead. We also know that the quality of leadership is not affected by gender or race, but the "perception" of being a leader can be.

What is leadership as we move into the 21st Century? Well, leadership emerges when a person is intolerant of the status quo and is committed to change. Leadership is creative and quick-witted. People are often sought out for leadership positions because of their intelligence, as well as their organizational 'common sense.' Leaders present a panorama of the future which stimulates caring and tenacity in others. They also provide an environment where learning is rewarded and the organization becomes self-renewing.

Leaders are motivated by an inner spirit which focuses their actions and interactions on what's right-on ethical, legal, human and financial grounds. Leadership is flexible; it takes what the prevailing situation offers and works with it. Leadership is not bound to convention for convenience's sake. There is ego strength in the face of adversity. Leadership can be relied upon - there is a sense of reliability and integrity which the leader carries, offers and shares with others. But also, researchers and practicing managers, alike have discovered that leaders must let their soul, their humanity, guide their leadership vision and show in their actions.

This workshop will review some essential truths about being an ethical and effective leader. Over the course of the session the participants will learn some "Streetwise Advice" to using experiences and education to lead soulfully. This is a highly interactive session, so participants will be expected to be prepared to share critical incidents from their leadership lives, and have a commitment to have their attitudes, perspectives and behaviors examined and, possibly challenged. Leadership takes a lot of personal, intellectual and emotional energy. It may look easy, but it is not. Of course, with experience, perspective and a committed cadre of followers, assistants and supporters, the action of leadership becomes easier. Nevertheless, it is important that you don't sacrifice your "soul." Family, health and emotional wellness (i.e., "fun") are essential to personal balance.

This workshop will use the following questions to guide the discussion and "work":

1. Would I want to work for me?
2. How do I initiate my leadership journey? (How do I learn to lead?)
3. What is my leadership style? What assumptions about work and workers do I have?
4. What are my goals? What is my purpose? Why do I do what I do?
5. What can I do to lead my team in a manner which gets the job done - and gets it done well?
6. What are the attributes which distinguish me from others? (Why would someone follow me?)
7. What do I have to offer my followers?
8. What behaviors can I exhibit which will draw out followers?
9. What am I willing to do (or endure) to achieve my vision?
10. How do I respond when I am criticized or am under pressure?
11. Am I still leading when I'm standing alone?
12. At the end of the day: What did I do to add value to the organization (or my people) today?

The workshop is grounded in the theoretical works of James MacGregor Burns, Bernard Bass (Transactional/Transformational Leadership) and Lee Bolman and Terrance Deal (Spirituality in Leadership) and will use some exercises developed by the presenter, as well as data from her research on African American leaders.

PRESENTER

M. Colleen Jones is an educator and consultant, specializing in organizational behavior

and development, and managerial and executive training.

Dr. Jones earned her Doctorate of Business Administration degree in Organizational Behavior from The George Washington University School of Business and Public Management (Department of Management Science). She also holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from the University of Iowa in Accounting and Quantitative Analysis; and a Master of Business Administration degree in Management and Finance from the University of Southern California.

Jones received an American Fellowship from the American Association of University Women to underwrite her doctoral research project titled, "Learning to Lead: A Study of the Developmental Paths of African American Women College Presidents." That dissertation was recognized by the Academy of Management's Women in Management Division with the Best Dissertation Award Runner Up Certificate.

Jones is Assistant Professor of Management at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. From 1991-1996, she was a member of the faculty of the Suffolk University (Boston, Mass.) Frank Sawyer School of Management as an Assistant Professor of Management. She teaches courses in leadership, organizational behavior and development, and management communications. In addition to her teaching background, Jones also has ten years of experience in management and higher education administration (which includes being Assistant to the President of Tennessee State University, and the Director of Special Support Services and TRIO Coordinator at the University of Iowa), and college level teaching in business administration and the behavioral sciences at the University of Tennessee, the George Washington University and Suffolk University.

Jones is a certified administrator and consultant for the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) which she often utilizes in her teacher, research and consulting activities. Her research interests include: (1) leadership development; (2) access and advancement of women and people of color in executive positions; (3) cognitive style assessment; (4) stress; and (5) organizational communication issues (e.g., networking, conflict resolution).

A native of Kansas City, Mo., Jones currently resides in Lincoln, Neb. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the Organizational Behavior Teaching Society and has previously served on the Board of Directors of the Association of Black Women in Higher Education. She is presently a reviewer for the "Journal of Management Education" and serves on the Editorial Board of the "Journal of Educational Opportunity." Jones' professional accomplishments and community service activities are noted in the 3rd Edition of "Who's Who Among Black Americans," as well as in the 1989-1990 Edition of "Who's Who of Women Executives."