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ABOUT THE COVER



In a sea of tiny flags, one can sense unity, belonging, and respect, culminating in a fusion of unique voices and experiences. It starts out as a soft wind and as more voices from across the globe join in, it becomes a rolling thunder, letting its presence be known. The flags are a reminder to students that they are strong and malleable, yet rooted, much like the ground; it's a call for students to exercise their right to vote. It's a reminder to be adaptable to their political environment but firm in their desire to make an impact. Behind these flags sits the Roots of Knowledge (at Utah Valley University's Fulton Library), a piece of art that immortalizes leaders and their individual impact on the world.

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LETTER FROM STUDENT EDITORS

TO OUR FELLOW READERS,

When discussing the topic of leadership, it is important to note that opportunities to lead are virtually limitless. This fact, combined with the variable nature of leadership, causes some potential leaders to self-select from a leadership path.

While the initial barrier of entry may seem high, leadership opportunities are readily accessible to those who create them. This leadership-creating mindset is one we hope to foster in ourselves and in our staff.

In this issue of *The Journal of Student Leadership*, authors and artists demonstrate the value of extraordinary and everyday leadership. These applications and analyses of leadership provide meaningful and applicable ideas and practices. We encourage all to examine the diverse styles of leadership presented in this issue and determine their own leadership path, rather than choose the path of exclusionary self-selection.

The Journal of Student Leadership is dedicated not only to publishing exceptional articles and artwork, but also to helping writers improve upon their abilities and become stronger writers. While we are not able to publish every submission we receive, we appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback and direction to all those who do submit, and we express our appreciation for their hard work and contributions to the discussion of leadership.

We would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication from our staff in the creation of this issue. This work would not be possible without their diligent enthusiasm. We would also like to thank our advisors and senior editors for their guidance during this process. Their examples, along with many others, provide a framework of leadership that inspires us.

MATT HAZEL
STUDENT EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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MANAGING EDITOR

LETTER FROM SENIOR EDITORS

DEAR READER:

With this issue, we complete our third year in publication, meeting the publishing milestone of printing over 100 articles and works of art in our three volumes (six issues) combined. Authors expanded our views of leadership and artists inspired us with their perspectives, supporting the two-fold purpose of *The Journal of Student Leadership*: to contribute to the scholarship and discussion on leadership and to provide an engaging outlet for research, writing, editing, and publishing.

As the flags on our cover represent the impact students can have as they make their voices heard, leaders have the potential for affecting the lives of others in enduring ways. The authors and artists featured in this issue remind readers to be empathetic, self-reflective, and creative in their leadership. The narratives of Cuban students contributing to their country's revolution, health care workers making a difference in the Hispanic-American community, and the positive influence parents have in the sex education of their children, encourage determination and action. We appreciate their unique insights.

We especially thank the dedication of our JSL leadership: Student Editor-in-Chief, Matt Hazel; Managing Editor, Zachary Smith; and Technical Design Editor, Rachel Burningham. Their vision and management for this issue have been exemplary. We thank our editorial staff, for their many hours of editing, marketing, and design contributions and express gratitude to our scholarly editorial board in addition to the anonymous faculty and student reviewers who helped ensure a double-blind peer review for each submission. We also acknowledge the continued support from the Department of Student Leadership and Success Studies and the University College Dean's Office.

Thank you, again, to all who contributed to the success of this issue of *The Journal of Student Leadership*.

BENJAMIN A. JOHNSON, PH.D.
SENIOR EDITOR

SANDRA C. BENNETT, M.ED., M.S.
FACULTY EDITOR AND ADVISOR

PROMOTING HEALTH IN THE HISPANIC AMERICAN POPULATION THROUGH A COMMUNITY EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE ON DIABETES MELLITUS: A NOVICE RESEARCHER EXPERIENCE

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The role of nurses is to become a leader in their communities. One way to demonstrate their leadership is to organize prevention programs to improve the quality of life for Hispanic Americans. The prevalence of diabetes mellitus (DM) diagnosed in Hispanic Americans is reported to be 12.1%, compared to 7.4% in non-Hispanic Caucasian Americans. This study was a non-experimental, educational intervention using pre- and post-test design held at a county health department. Following the educational intervention, a paired sample t-test showed overall positive acquisition of knowledge ($p=0.038$). From time 1 to time 2, gains were seen in knowledge about purchasing diabetic foods; importance of weight control; eating a high protein/low carb diet with fiber; impacts on kidneys, eyes, and sexual function; importance of regular check-ups with a healthcare provider; potential for stroke or other complications; and understanding risks for children developing diabetes whose parents are diabetic. Losses were seen in understanding the cause of diabetes, importance of physical activity, food preparation, and specific foods to eat. We recommend a personalized education intervention for Hispanic Americans understanding their own DM risks and modifiable behaviors.

BACKGROUND

Diabetes mellitus (DM) is a prevalent and potentially life-threatening disease, affecting 12.2% of the Hispanic American population in the United States (U.S. Health and Human Services, 2017). These rates of prevalence are of grave concern for the Hispanic American population and health care providers. Complications of diabetes contribute

to impaired eyesight, heart disease, kidney impairment, and even death. “Despite the development of new technologies and self-management tools, less than 30% of persons with diabetes achieve recommended glycemic targets” (Benavides-Vaello, Brown, & Vandermause, 2017, p. 2).

DM is not a single disorder, in fact, it corresponds with a set of autoimmune, genetic, and metabolic disorders that all share the common factor of hyperglycemia (Egan & Dineen, 2019). Forty percent of all adults living in the United States are likely to develop DM Type 2, and Hispanic adults are more than 50% likely to die from this chronic disease compared to non-Hispanics (National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention, 2017; Narayan, Boyle, Thompson, Sorensen, & Williamson, 2003).

Historically, research has focused on Hispanic Americans as a singular population rather than by Hispanic subgroups. Higher rates of DM are seen among Central Americans, Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, and Mexicans (Balfour, Ruiz, Talavera, Allison, & Rodriguez, 2016). Yet recent studies are using within-group Hispanic/Latino designators, in answer to the U.S. government’s call to include more racial diversity in research efforts (Smedley, Stith, & Nelson, 2003). For example, the Hispanic Community Health Study/Study of Latinos organized their research by Hispanic subgroups (Balfour et al., 2016).

The importance of cultural factors needs to be acknowledged, as individuals’ family and friends have cultural associations that can impact DM. For instance, sharing food is an inherently social activity, and Hispanics are more likely to include starchy foods in their diets than non-Hispanic whites. These foods are associated with larger waist circumferences, higher BMI, and increased risks for developing diabetes (Valencia, Oropesa-Gonzalez, Hogue, & Florez, 2014). The relationship between social support and blood sugar stability among U.S. Hispanic/Latino diabetics was considered by Rotberg, Junqueira, Gosdin, Mejia, and Umpierrez (2016). Findings showed patients with low levels of social support had higher A1C (9.8%) measures than those who reported moderate to high levels of support (8.9%) (Rotberg et al., 2016). Hemoglobin A1C measures the average amount of glucose attached to hemoglobin over 3 months. Any Latino patients with DM, especially those with lower levels of family and social support, expressed concern about having social

assistance (Rotberg et al., 2016). This practice implication is that healthcare providers must become informed about relevant cultural factors in order to determine practical strategies to educate patients about DM.

The Model Outpatient Diabetes Education Program explored an effective intervention that provided DM education (Paulozzi, Norman, McMahon & Connell, 1984). In this study, an interdisciplinary team provided prevention education, self-care management, and skills for managing DM over 16 hours. A pre- and post-test were used 3 months before and 3 months after the study. Results demonstrated significant improvement in diabetic control for participants (Paulozzi et al., 1984).

The purpose of this study was to explore community-dwelling Hispanic Americans' understanding of DM and the impact of a DM education intervention on their knowledge gained.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was approved by the Utah Valley University Institutional Review Board. The target population, recruited using snowball sampling, identified as Hispanic American adults who were 18 years old or older. The sample size for this study was driven by the available space at the site of intervention (n=17).

In a 2018 community health survey to local Hispanic Americans, they expressed their major health concern was DM. A DM knowledge survey was created using information from the Diabetes Knowledge Questionnaire (DKQ-24) (Garcia, Kouzekanani, Villagomez, Hanis, & Brown, 2001), the Revised Michigan Diabetes Knowledge Scale True/False Version (Lloyd, 2008), and information from the American Diabetes Association website (2019). The survey was comprised of 20 questions with potential responses of "yes," "no," and "I don't know." It was available in both English and Spanish languages to participants. See Appendix to view the survey.

The intervention was held on a Friday evening at a county health department facility. Upon arrival, participants consented to participate and completed the knowledge survey to evaluate their initial understanding of DM (Time 1). Next, diabetic-friendly foods were offered to participants to sample. The education intervention lasting 60 minutes was presented

in Spanish, provided by an interdisciplinary healthcare team consisting of a medical doctor, dietary health educator, and health department worker. Topics covered were lifestyle changes, portion control, culturally-appropriate diabetic-friendly foods, physical exercise, general diabetes management, and community resources for Hispanic Americans with pre-DM or DM. Immediately following the intervention, participants completed the post-test survey (Time 2). Data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel.

RESULTS

Results along with questions included in the survey are shown in Table 1. Pre- and post-tests percentages correct are shown in the table. All participants (n=17) were above the age of 18 and self-identified as members of the Hispanic community. Response categories are presented next.

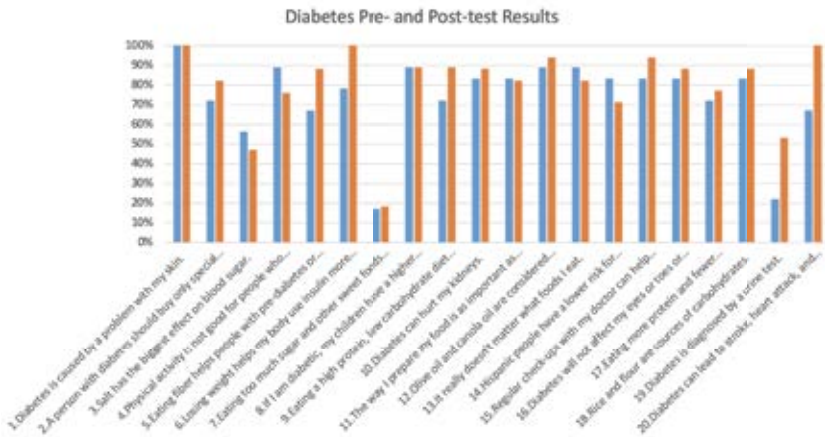


Table 1: Comparison of Results Obtained from Pre- and Post-Tests

CAUSES OF DM: PHYSIOLOGIC

Understanding causes of DM showed inconsistent results from pre- to post-testing (Q1, 6, 7). A few participants (3) did not understand that sugar is not the *cause* of diabetes, yet they maintained knowledge (100%) of issues with skin not causing diabetes. The intervention conveyed clear gains about the importance of weight relating to diabetes (T1 = 78% to T2 = 100%).

CAUSES OF DM: GENETIC/RACIAL

Knowledge of genetic and racial associations with risks for DM showed some increase in knowledge from pre- to post-testing (Q8, 14). Knowledge remained stable (T1 = 89% to T2 = 89%) about understanding the greater likelihood of passing on DM to their children, however, there was about 12% increase of understanding that Hispanics have a higher risk for DM (T1 = 71% to T2 = 83%).

SIDE EFFECTS

Participants increased their knowledge of DM side effects, including kidney damage (T1 = 83% to T2 = 88%), effects on toes, eyes, and heart (T1 = 83% to T2 = 88%), as well as chronic conditions such as stroke, heart attack, and sexual problems (T1 = 67% to T2 = 100%) as demonstrated by comparing the outcome of pre- and post-tests (Q10, 16, 20).

MEDICAL CARE AND DIAGNOSIS

Although participants were unsure of how DM was diagnosed (T1 = 22% to T2 = 53%), they realized how helpful a medical provider could be during checkups (T1 = 83% to T2 = 94%). This highlights the importance of the patient-provider relationship for Hispanic Americans who are pre-diabetic or diabetic to manage their disease (Q15, 19).

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY RELATED TO DM

Participants lost knowledge about the importance of physical activity for DM prevention and maintenance (T1 = 89% to T2 = 76%), however, participants understood the importance of losing weight to help better manage the body insulin levels (T1 = 78% to T2 = 100%) (Q4, 6).

CONSIDERATIONS OF FOOD/DIET

In recognition of the impact of food on DM, nine questions in the survey focused on participants' understanding of aspects of foods. Understanding the importance of fiber showed an increase of knowledge (T1 = 67% to T2 = 82%), however, participants misunderstood salt's impact on blood sugar (T1 = 56% to T2 = 47%). They understood and showed gains about the importance of a high protein with healthy fats (T1 = 72% to T2 = 89%), as well as the importance of decreasing carbohydrate intake (T1 = 72% to T2 = 77%). The majority of participants also understood where carbohydrates are found in certain foods (T1 = 83% to T2 = 88%) (Q2, 3, 5, 9, 11, 12, 13, 17, 18).

DISCUSSION

It is concerning that participants experienced some loss of knowledge during the intervention (Q3, 4, 13, 14). These negative results may have been due to lack of attention during the intervention, unclear explanations by presenters, or misunderstanding the content delivered and should be explored. Future use of the survey with a larger sample size would allow for the survey to be tested for validity and reliability of questions and constructs.

Participants understood side effects related to damage to kidneys, heart, toes, eyes, and brain (Q10, 16, 20). Overall, the pre-test mean ($M = 73.85$) improved at the post-test measure ($M = 79.7\%$). This aligns well with the Model Outpatient Diabetes Education Program (MODEP) that had a similar intervention and showed similar gains from 82.9% to 87.7% on the post-test (Paulozzi et al., 1984). Another study by Rashed, Sabbeth, Younis, Kisa, and Parkash (2016) used a pre- and post-test to measure effectiveness among a group of Palestinian DM Type 2 adults of the community. Their 4-hour seminar discussed risk factors and dietary management and showed improvements from 60.6% to 78.1% by post-test (Rashed et al., 2016). Overall, the results of the studies show significant improvement in post-test results after educational interventions had taken place, even within different cultures and applying slightly different methods.

RECOMMENDATIONS

KNOWLEDGE GAINED ABOUT STUDY DESIGN

Several lessons were learned while designing and executing this intervention. Advertisement through social media, personal and professional contacts, and peer groups were shown to be effective recruiting methods for this population. We suggest presenting the information in the native language of the target population, as participants expressed appreciation for this consideration. When considering the scheduling of the event, a Friday night was an effective time frame that supported participants bringing a friend or family member to participate in the intervention. Providing food helped incentivize participation and was well received by participants. For study management, using electronic consent forms and surveys may prove to be more efficient throughout the study instead of using paper copies.

In the future, researchers should consider what constitutes an appropriate “start time” and allow for late arrivals to still participate using a flexible study design, in order to take advantage of participants’ willingness to be involved. We recommend securing a more accurate count of participants who will be attending the intervention in order to plan and ensure sufficient supplies and food. We also recommend participants being served their meal instead of offering it buffet style, since portion control can influence blood glucose levels. It is recommended researchers contact participants three to five days in advance of the intervention to encourage participation.

We encourage working closely with the presenters and offering the intervention in the participants’ native language, as we did in this study. Because of differences in rates of DM in Hispanic American subgroups, we feel it is important to target individual subgroups in future education interventions (Balfour et al., 2016) and where possible, offer the intervention to more individuals.

Based on the results of our study, Hispanic Americans were able to identify a health education need, were eager to receive education, and showed improvement in several areas during the intervention. It is unknown why certain questions showed a loss of knowledge from Time 1 to Time 2 (Q3, 4, 13, 14). A qualitative inquiry might be considered to inform the data regarding knowledge losses specific to those questions. Future studies could focus on other novel ways to engage this population to promote their personal health, including longitudinal studies to demonstrate knowledge retention over time.

LIMITATIONS

The results from this study need to be interpreted with caution considering the non-experimental design of the study and the small sample size. A validated survey tool was not used. The current tool should be validated if it is used for future studies.

During the intervention, paper consent and pre- and post-tests were difficult to manage especially since some attendees arrived several minutes late. Some participants did not confirm they were planning to attend but attended anyway, much to our delight. Consequently, those that were

not there from the beginning missed parts of the education intervention but were still given the opportunity to fill out the post survey (however, this data was not included in the paired sample t-test analysis). Our sample would have been larger if we could have included all who attended the intervention. Designing an intervention that can be flexible to meet the needs and actions of the participants should be considered.

Lastly, even though participants were given the opportunity to sample diabetic-friendly foods during the intervention, some had multiple portions which is not consistent with intake recommendations and portion control. Reflecting on these limitations will help us as novice researchers improve our research skills in the future.

LEADERSHIP IN NURSING

As newly graduated nurses, the Hispanic American population is often under our care. Through doing this research, we have identified that Hispanic individuals are interested in improving their health and will participate in activities designed to teach them more about specific risks they face. The role of the nurse is to lead out in communities and educate them on how to prevent DM. Therefore, nurses can be agents to lead minority communities on finding appropriate resources and receiving proper and correct health education.

CONCLUSION

It is essential for newly graduated nurses to be leaders in their communities, in particular by focusing on increasing education and health outcomes for minorities. In light of the expected rise of Hispanic Americans developing DM, increasing Hispanic American DM educational needs is essential in order to help influence a better quality of life for this community. For this reason, this educational intervention explored methods that may be effective for future health promotion and education in the Hispanic community. Subjects showed overall improvement in the majority of areas, such as DM effects on body systems and dietary management, however, it would be important to more fully address areas such as racial predisposition and insulin resistance impacting DM. This study has shown that clinicians and novice educators can engage Hispanic

Americans with DM education that targets their socio-environmental factors, such as nutrition or social support, to manage the rise of DM in this population.

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APPENDIX: DIABETES QUESTIONNAIRE

- Q1:** Diabetes is caused by a problem with my skin.
- Q2:** A person with diabetes should buy only special diabetic foods at the grocery store.
- Q3:** Salt has the biggest effect on blood sugar.
- Q4:** Physical activity is not good for people who are prediabetic or diabetic.
- Q5:** Eating fiber helps people with prediabetes or diabetes keep their blood sugar more stable.
- Q6:** Losing weight helps my body use insulin more effectively.
- Q7:** Eating too much sugar and other sweet foods causes diabetes.
- Q8:** If I am diabetic, my children have a higher chance of being diabetic.
- Q9:** Eating a high protein, low carbohydrate diet with healthy fats helps blood sugar be more stable.
- Q10:** Diabetes can hurt my kidneys.
- Q11:** The way I prepare my food is as important as the foods I eat.
- Q12:** Olive oil and canola oil are considered healthy oils for cooking.
- Q13:** It really doesn't matter what foods I eat.
- Q14:** Hispanic people have a lower risk for diabetes than Asian or Caucasian people.
- Q15:** Regular check-ups with my doctor can help me spot early signs of diabetes.
- Q16:** Diabetes will not affect my eyes or toes or heart.
- Q17:** Eating more protein and fewer carbohydrates supports healthier eating.

Q18: Rice and flour are sources of carbohydrates.

Q19: Diabetes is diagnosed by a urine test.

Q20: Diabetes can lead to stroke, heart attack, and sexual problems.

(Lloyd, 2008; Garcia et al., 2001; American Diabetes Association, 2019)



UVU COURTYARD

AMANDA DRYER

UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

Oil Painting

This painting is a plein air painting of Utah Valley University. “Plein Air” is a method of painting that the impressionists invented, which meant that you painted on the spot, outside. If you look at the top right, there’s a little friend who decided to stick around in the painting—that’s what happens when you paint outside! This painting depicts my favorite courtyard at Utah Valley University, where I have many fond memories. Utah Valley University has helped me to grow as a person, a leader, and a communicator.

LEADERSHIP: A PROTEAN INSTITUTION OF THE MIND AND OF CIVILIZATION

PIERCE BASSETT

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

As the inherent nature of leadership is continuously redefined in contemporary society, there is accentuating emphasis placed on its utilization and comprehension. The primary objective of this analysis is to examine this emphasis on leaders in the 20th and 21st centuries. This paper explores the study of specific styles, differences, and examples of leaders within several communities and throughout history. Further studies into the development of leadership processes based on consideration from this analysis have the potential for the synthesis of ultramodern techniques in the advancement of ethics, diversity, and communication in all facets of leadership positions.

Leadership has been a universal constant in terms of power, tyranny, and progress in the edification of some of the world's most dominant and vast human societies. Though there is no single, universally recognized definition or standard of leadership across time, it is still one of the paramount aspects of any organization, and as such often represents the difference between success and failure (Qadri, 2016, p. 1). Within the juggernaut of historical and modern research on contemporary models of leadership, there exists comprehensive traits that have consistently manifested themselves in nearly all leaders from this century and the last. Effective traits of leaders can include initiative, leadership motivation and the importance of knowledge (Kirkpatrick & Edwin, 1991, p. 48). As a student who started his education at Utah Valley University, and as a member of this modern sense of community, my perspective on leadership is one of fluidity, primarily dependent upon the adjustability of the leader's character as well as his or her ethical disposition. These traits illustrate the necessity for diversity amongst a broad spectrum

of those in influential leadership positions as well as my perspective as to why leaders need the flexibility to communicate efficiently within appropriate contexts.

FLUIDITY OF ETHICS IN LEADERS

The ethical perspective of an effective leader needs to be fluid. I define fluidity as the ethical awareness of other perspectives and of the influences of context as well as the willingness of a leader to alter his or her course of action consequently. In ancient and contemporary societies, there are inherently evil and good leadership motifs and techniques. Leadership is illustrated in polar extremes throughout history—in politically and socially absolutist figures like Adolf Hitler and in benevolent and ethically fluid leaders such as Abraham Lincoln. Both are model examples of leaders, yet the stark ethical differences between them are staggering. Hitler's leadership style was one determined by racial bigotry, and his actions against the victims of that hate while in a position of authoritative leadership have forever stained the history of the world. Hitler's principle view of racial supremacy was unethical, and his rudimentary and specific moral schema did not allow for the influences of outside perspective and context. On the other hand, Abraham Lincoln, considered one of the greatest presidents in American history, "rose to political visibility by moral argument" (Miller, 2002, p. 401). When Lincoln became president, he inherited the executive office with virtually no executive economic climate of a then divided United States. Abraham Lincoln displayed fluid leadership styles and ethical values towards extremely controversial issues such as emancipation and race, which allowed for the establishment of an ameliorated and unified post-Civil War America (Ross, 2009, p. 382). While these men were both undoubtedly impressive leaders, Hitler's implementation of a grotesque ethical agenda, obscured by narcissistic rage and delusion (Redlich, 1999), repudiates any personal classification standard of a true leader. Conversely, Abraham Lincoln's example helped set a standard of leadership for how I recognize leadership.

Ethics are required of a leader to build trust with their constituency. A leader who is aware and understands their constituents establishes this trust. Presently, politicians represent some of the most recognizable public figures and are continually thrust into a system of meticulous

scrutiny aiming to analyze their systems of leadership, and thus, their code of moral ethics. Public servants and politicians elected to positions of leadership on a community level agree to a relationship of trust with those whom they represent. However, bureaucratic politics is now often associated with unscrupulous policies and personal standards (Velasquez, Manuel, Moberg, & Cavanagh, 1983, p. 68). This encroachment of ethical values bastardizes the agreement of trust with the community of which they are serving and, to me, is a fatal vice for any sort of successful leadership formulation. A contemporary paradigm of this bastardization is former President Richard Nixon. Nixon demonstrated a high system of unethicity and disregard for the law by essentially attempting to manipulate the results of the presidential election in 1972. The direct result of this strictly unethical behavior was Nixon's impeachment in 1974.

These analyses substantiate that an exemplary standard of ethical disposition should be continuously adaptable within appropriate contexts, which is a mandatory aspect, from my perspective, of all prominent leadership positions. Adaptability is vital within leaders and involves both awareness and trust.

DIVERSITY IN LEADERS

Because leadership has now become an intrinsic aspect of many organizations, it is essential for collective diversity amongst all forms of leaders. Diversity is a premise on modern western cultural values and thus should be represented by our leaders (Mcdaniels, Cathy, & Kelly, 2009). "The joining of the two bodies of theory and research—one pertaining to leadership and the other to diversity—enriches both domains of knowledge and provides guidelines for optimizing leadership in contemporary organizations and nations" (Eagly & Chin, 2010, p. 216). In this analysis, diversity includes different aspects of culture, gender, and race. With the incorporation of diversity within leadership, the world has transformed toward a predominately advantageous system of integration. Fluid, modern, conceptualization of social amalgamation allows for the discovery and implementation of unique methodologies within leadership (Chen & Velsor, 1996, p. 286). These leadership techniques include improved interpersonal conflict resolution across previously insurmount-

able ethnic and cultural barriers, which have stimulated international business relations. This miracle of cross-cultural synergism, synthesized from the assimilation of leadership and culture (Schein, 2004), has promoted an unprecedented growth and flexibility of diversity within leadership positions.

As well as promoting multinational business, diversity in leaders is essential in utilizing the differences of leadership methodologies present in men and women. In the past, men have often held the majority of leadership positions (Bryman, 2011). However, recent studies have shown that when contrasted in synonymous leadership positions with their male counterparts, women demonstrated a more dominant, gender-determinant leadership technique, known as transformational leadership (Bernard et al., 1996, p. 5). Implication of transformational leadership methodology by women in leadership positions is directly proportional to “validity generalized over longitudinal and multisource designs” (Judge & Piccolo, 2004, p. 755), which has the potential to produce forward-looking results for women in future leadership positions who excel in all aspects of their inherent leadership style (Eagly et al., 2003, p. 570).

Growing up in a predominately conservative and Caucasian demographic, I have encountered minimal exposure to diversity amongst leaders. Hence, when I began my university career in an environment of diversity within administration, faculty, and peers at Utah Valley University, I ascertained a distinct and humanizing impression of the value that the diversity and cultural fluidity within leadership holds, particularly within an academic setting.

COMMUNICATION

Growing up, I was a member of the Boy Scouts of America. Within my scout group, we were often required to assume leadership roles. From the ages of twelve to eighteen years old, I cycled through a variety of leadership positions that, although often in an informal setting, instilled first-hand knowledge and experiences in me as to the importance of communicational qualities that are required of any leader. I learned communicational skills in the Boy Scouts by composing weekly emails of upcoming activities for the members and their parents, and through

corresponding with venue owners regarding potential outings. This early exposure to communication within leadership has played a defining role in shaping my perspective into what it is today.

Effective communication in leaders is the ability to successfully transmit a message, appreciate and understand situational tone, and to convey oneself in a way that will be clearly received by others (Barrett, 2006). Fluidity in communication is vital for any leaders to diversify their sphere of influence (Vries, Bakker-Pieper, & Oostenveld, 2010, p. 367). As a university student, and especially when working with my professors, I have come to recognize the necessity for successful communication. In addition to wielding an impressive reservoir of knowledge, professors responsible for the education of university-level students can only achieve genuine success with adaptable and masterful styles of communication. Through my personal experiences with different professors, I have witnessed a plethora of leadership styles. These represent a proportional relationship to the degree of effectiveness of the communicational styles used and the success of the class. One important observation worth noting is when professors exhibit accomplished and adaptive communication styles, both in a lecture setting as well as outside of the classroom, students achieve improved grades in a difficult subject matter. Although no type of professor or instructor offers a quintessential example of fluid communication within their leadership style, there still exists a definitive correlation between those who show the necessary development and utilization of their communication techniques and the improved results from their students (Reeves, 2008).

IMPLEMENTATIONS OF PERSPECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Leadership is a paramount aspect of any successful organization. From the perspective of a university student, leadership such as this is achieved primarily with the utilization of a fluid style of multi-faceted aspects such as diversity amongst those in leadership positions, the ethical values upheld by them, and the ability of leaders to be able to adjust communicational styles based on situational context. Due to the proven results found in the implementation of fluid leadership methodologies, leadership professionals may be able to generate new techniques and procedures that have the potential to revolutionize modern leadership roles.

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REFLECTION

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Photography

For me, leadership requires personal reflection. Who do I want to be to the people I lead? What are my values, opinions, goals, and intentions? Leadership should not be taken lightly, but with responsibility. For that to happen, personal reflection is crucial—it guides who you are now to who you will become.

UPON YOUR HEADS

IVY SUDWEEKS

A king finds himself a ruler of a kingdom at peace and a people very discontent to find it that way.

He reigned in the time when all the world breathed out. Gone were the snakes, the poisons, the wars, and all their contentions, their kings with their leaden crowns, and he was born with hair of purer gold than any of their crowns and eyes as green as holly.

He walked among them, they said, an Arthur in his own right, except he knew what he was without accidentally fetching his birthright. His boots were soft, his muscles firm. He was tall and slender and lithe and flexible in judgment. His sword was at this side, but there was no armor on the man as he walked from house to house as his people patched holes left from those men who had ravaged their land. For in this land, now, there was no need for armor, because peace was the expectation and he was the man who demanded it. He fetched the hearts of all his people.

For a time. And that time flew quickly.

See, there is nothing so flighty as a heart at rest. Time has a way of greying hair and the splendor of peace. Gone were the men who had known the danger of kings with helms instead of crowns. The people looked upon this man, with a thin circle of silver around his head, the crown of his head exposed, and they wondered how they could ever follow a man so weak.

“Who is this man, that we should know him?” The people asked as he sat on his chair made from a barrel. They crafted him a throne, which cost more than all their cattle put together. When they presented it to him, he said that he could not accept, and so the throne lay empty with a people hungry to fill it.

More time passed, and with it, a traveling party of royal women passed through the king’s land, and the people saw in the party, a woman who was fairer than any.

“A match, a match, if there ever was a match to be made,” the people pleaded, but the king brought his own wife forward in the clothes she made herself. She and the fair lady passed time together and the fair lady left the land far more radiant because of the time spent with the King’s wife. “Surely you have missed your chance!” The people howled. “Look at the kings around, with their beautiful wives and their golden chairs and tell us that you are not lacking.”

The king thought and thought on their words, pacing the halls of his castle, for the good of his people was always first on his mind. Finally, he ordered the golden chair to be brought to him and he had it installed in his chamber where he gave judgment. On it, he had installed three thorns, and next to it, he kept his old wooden barrel chair. He sat upon that throne through the years and gave his judgment with his sword upon his knees.

The suns of days rose and fell, and with them rose up a man; a man skilled in metal who had made the crowns of the kings in lands about, but never for himself, to his greatest sorrow. He was the kind of man that, with a word, could break a horse; not through inspiration, but through sheer trickery. And so, he spun his words; should not a king have a crown? Should not their king have a crown to match, no, exceed the crowns of the kings in the lands roundabout?

“Yes,” the people said, and so was forged a crown in the shape of a helm and it was presented to the king as he sat upon that golden throne.

The years that he had sat upon that bright throne had reflected the light of the sun into his green eyes the way his simple wooden one never

had. Erased were the lines worn by smiling. Instead, his eyes had receded into his face to escape from—and all the duller because of—that ever-present light. The people brought the helm to the golden-haired king.

“Here, King,” said the people, and the man who had forged all the crowns brought the helm forward and laid it upon the king’s knee. It sat there with a leaden weight. The golden-headed king looked at that crown with the same weight in his greying eyes, and when he finally rose, he placed the helm, not upon his head but upon his simple wooden chair that always sat so close. The weight of the helm crushed that little wooden chair.

Sparing a single glance at his people, and another to his wooden chair, he uttered only a few words.

“Upon your head, be your crown.”

The king was buried in his simple circlet, his hair still golden after all those years.

When he died, a new king was raised in his place—that same man who had built the crowns of so many kings and, finally, one for himself. When the people saw his mighty helm, they breathed in and dreamed of a man whose crown had been that part of his head where his golden hair had never greyed.



POWER IN PEACE

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Photography

Many view being humble or peaceful as a sign of weakness. I view it as a sign of strength. When leading others, one must learn to be submissive and peaceful in their dealings.

EMPATHY: A CASE FOR SELFLESS LEADERSHIP

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Research supports the claim that there is a positive relationship between empathy and successful leadership. Empathy is attempting to understand the perspective of another by personalizing his or her narrative to oneself; in essence, it is “putting yourself in someone else’s shoes.” Empathy is a highly effective leadership trait; it can enhance one’s leadership abilities and equip him or her with the resonance and respect he or she needs to succeed. Empathy is vital for successful leadership, although some in the business world might discount that skill. While some see sensitivity and empathy as unconventional or a sign of weakness in leaders, these traits allow one to better understand and serve their followers from a higher moral ground. Leaders who seek to develop and strongly exhibit empathy gain more trust from followers, and followers, in return, offer better results. Also, empathy is a central aspect of transformational leadership, which is popularly revered as the most effective and inspiring form of leadership. Empathetic leadership can motivate followers to work harder and with more enthusiasm and commitment toward the overall goal. It can reshape organizations, communities, and companies to cultivate a more positive, creative, and human environment.

INTRODUCTION - DEFINING EMPATHY

Empathy is a word often thrown around by psychologists, yoga instructors, and emotional intelligence gurus. It sounds like a neat concept, but what does it truly mean? Empathy and its sister-word sympathy are often used interchangeably without much thought or purpose; however, there is a defining difference between the two. *Merriam-Webster* (2019) clarifies that while sympathy means “sharing (or having the capacity to share) the feelings of another,” empathy embodies “imagining, or having the capacity to imagine, feelings that one does not have” (para. 3). Thus, empathy is characterized by not only “feeling sorry” for another but visualizing and internalizing another’s feelings and experiences.

Psychology researchers Decety and Jackson (2004) further supported this definition as they describe empathy as acknowledging and somewhat understanding another's emotions (p. 1). Thus, empathy is a mindful state of communication with those around us. It requires vulnerability from not only the sharer, but the listener; he or she must access his or her own emotions and experiences to effectively practice empathy. This effort and sacrifice of humility can increase trust and strengthen relationships.

The ability to practice empathy is built into our psychology. According to emotional intelligence researchers Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2013), the part of the human brain called the amygdala allows one to read another's facial and body language to remain connected to the emotional responses of the other. Following those calculations, the prefrontal cortex then aids in crafting an appropriate response (p. 48). A healthy human brain also produces mirror neurons, which fire when we perceive emotion or action from another. These neurons allow us to imagine or "mirror" another's emotions or experiences. Mirror neurons are the reason we tend to cringe or squirm when watching a violent or painful scene in a movie or sometimes mirror another's tears. From that, one can argue that empathy is a part of human nature, and as other innate characteristics can be inhibited or amplified, effective empathy can be further exercised, learned, and developed.

EMPATHY IN LEADERSHIP

It is suggested that when leaders seek to exhibit empathy and positively influence follower's emotional states, follower performance can increase (Pescosolido, 2002, p. 595). When leaders exhibit empathy, they are able to be more socially aware of their followers and their follower's needs. "Social awareness—particularly empathy—is crucial for the leader's primal task of driving resonance" (Goleman et al., 2013, p. 49). Empathy allows leaders to be "in-tune" with their followers and enables them to be more democratic and perspective-seeking (p. 49). Perspective-seeking is a democratic approach, meaning leaders seek out and value their followers' perspectives in decision-making and problem-solving. This can make followers feel like understood and appreciated team members rather than task-robots.

In addition, empathy cultivates a mutual respect between leaders and followers. It helps maintain, create, and manage relationships among others. Three key elements of leadership are persuasion, conflict management, and collaboration. Many other major leadership tasks and roles depend on this interpersonal respect and emotional understanding (Goleman et al., 2013, p. 50). While empathy and emotion may not be the most culturally-stereotypical management traits, they are necessary to complete many leadership responsibilities.

Furthermore, Holt and Marques (2012), Chair and Dean of the Department of Management at Woodbury University, argued that empathy is “a critical leadership quality that has thus far encountered resistance in being accepted in both business education and business performance” (p. 97). In search for validation of this hypothesis, they surveyed 87 undergraduate business students enrolled in a higher-level class titled “Leadership Theory and Practice” (p. 97). In the first stage of the survey, they asked the students the question, “What qualities are essential to be an effective leader (on a scale of 1 [least important] to 10 [most important])?” After collecting the data, they found empathy to be ranked the lowest.

In a follow-up study, they explained the data results to a group of 35 MBA students and asked them, “Why do you think empathy was considered least important among the 10 leadership qualities presented?” After gathering the students’ responses, they found that most reasons given were either based on the belief that empathy in the workplace is “unethical” or that the respondents from the initial study lacked a proper understanding of empathy (Holt & Marques, 2012, p. 100). These results raise questions to current cultural and social understandings of empathy, ethics, and the business world. While many may see managerial and leadership positions conducting as “strictly business,” there is reason to argue that leaders are meant to inspire and that acknowledging the human factor, meaning the authentic, emotional core of individuals, is crucial if one hopes to succeed or impact others.

Further in the article, Holt and Marques (2012) examine major corporate leaders and CEOs. In these analyses, they observed a rather “thin line” between the characteristics of successful, inspiring, and known leaders

and “psychopaths.” It was noted that those who crossed unacceptable lines of ethics and had poor interpersonal interactions/reputations lacked a crucial characteristic that the revered leaders appeared to have: empathy (pp. 101-103). This could be due to the infamous leaders’ lack of effort or ability to try and understand their followers and their needs before making decisions.

Now, referring back to the inference made regarding empathy to be unethical; it appears that not only is empathetic leadership ethical, but a shared root of unethical leaders is the lack of empathy. When one lacks or is weak in his or her ability to empathize, relate, and consider the emotional and human state of those they interact with—and in a leader’s case, whom they oversee—it seems it could be easier to behave unethically and/or antisocially because only one’s own ego is considered (Holt and Marques, 2012). Thus, empathy can be a foundation of ethical and transformational leadership.

EMPATHETIC LEADERS’ EFFECT ON FOLLOWERS

Leaders’ symbols of success often lie in the performance and results of their followers; if they can leave a positive impact on their current or future followers, they can hope to make a lasting difference. One way a leader can accomplish this is through practicing transformational leadership. Transformational leadership, as illustrated through its name, aims to inspire and transform its organization and/or followers for the better in order to reach a higher goal. According to Gardner and Stough (2002), transformational leadership aims to increase the confidence of followers while cultivating a growth-centered environment that will push the organization forward and closer to its goals (as cited in Pinos, Twigg, Parayitam, & Olson, 2013, p. 63).

Consequentially, Bass (1995) stated that a vital characteristic of transformational leadership is empathy (as cited in Pinos et al., 2013, p. 67). Pinos et al. (2013) added, “Transformational leadership is based on the perception of subordinates, therefore the more that subordinates feel that the leader is a transformational type, the more that the leader’s vision is ingrained in followers” (p. 60). When followers perceive their leader(s) exhibiting confidence in and empathy toward them, they are then more likely to work toward and reach the organization’s goals and vision.

As aforementioned, empathetic leaders can have a positive effect on follower performance. According to Choi (2006), empathy can act as a catalyst to elevate followers in their work (as cited in Terrasi, 2015, p. 14). When followers feel supported in their efforts through personal understanding, belief, and empathy, they can be further motivated and accelerated toward their goals. Terrasi (2015) supported this theory, describing how empathetic leadership is shown to inspire increased efficiency, optimism, enthusiasm, commitment, confidence, productivity, resonance, and decreased frustration among followers (pp. 14-17). Even the potential of these results should not be overlooked, for if any group, company, or organization could cultivate an environment concentrated with any one of these outcomes, it could revolutionize its future. Thus, empathy can significantly strengthen both leaders and their followers.

One theory that supports and more clearly illustrates the reasoning behind empathy's effects is renowned author Stephen Covey's P/PC Balance theory. Covey (1989) explains that there is a direct correlation and need for balance between one's production (P) and production capability (PC); in other words, one's ability to work and to produce quality work is based on how well they are taken care of (p. 59). For example, let us say an employee is facing difficulties at home, and it is manifesting in their work. If the manager approaches them, sincerely tries to understand his or her problem, and attempts to work with them, that employee is more likely to succeed. If the manager does not first seek to understand and instead punishes or demeans the employee for his or her recent behavior, the employee's work and attitude will decrease in quality and willingness. It seems simple, but it is potentially revolutionary. Opening the door to vulnerability and human emotion in business and leadership positions can motivate followers and unite groups toward higher and unprecedented performance.

CONCLUSION - A PLACE FOR EMPATHY

The capacity for empathy is innately built inside of each of us as humans. It is the formal ability and practice of "putting yourself in someone else's shoes." It is more than sympathy and more than a simple "sorry." It is reaching inside yourself and summoning your life experiences, imagination, and emotions to connect with someone else. While at first

it may appear too personal or un-businesslike, it has the capacity for great achievements and successes, particularly for those in leadership positions. It can bolster them toward transformational leadership; it can envelop a leader with trust, intuition, resonance, creativity, democracy, ethicality, and respect; it can help them find innovative solutions and gain loyal, inspired followers. Followers' results and efforts can be vitally strengthened and motivated by leaders who seek to embody and promote empathy.

Empathy has the potential to redefine leadership and refurbish organizations—it's only a matter of effort and practice. As a research professor, Dr. Brené Brown (2015) summarizes it, "Empathy has no script. There is no right or wrong way to do it. It is simply listening, holding space, withholding judgment, emotionally connecting, and communicating that incredibly healing message of, 'You're not alone'" (p. 81). Now, there is room to argue that if one lives by this motto, whether in an official leadership position or not, they—by definition—are a true leader.

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MY LIFE, AND THIS, MY LOT

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CLAIRISA JAMES

My life's desire, before my eyes
How can I make it so?
I'll fight and pray, and work my days
To see it stay, not go.

So up at dawn I find myself,
To make it come about.
Through sweat and tears I do the work,
My efforts tall and stout.

It's everything I think, and do,
This building life's success,
For if I slip and halt my deeds,
I'm sure to fail these tests.

My every step, each gentle sway,
I feel myself draw near.
I know I'm reaching for what's best,
I feel it strong and clear.

Every day I'll try, I'll fail,
And then I try again.
I know that it's a worthy cause,
This battle I must win.

And every morning when I wake,
I'll fight for what is mine.
This is my cause, my destiny,
It is my right divine.

At times I feel it start to slip,
I freeze, I rearrange,
This journey will not be for naught
Although it seems deranged.

I've worked so hard to beat these tests;
My allies by my side.
I see the end draw near and cry,
"This life is now my prize!"

I'll hold it close against my heart,
This battle that I've fought,
This victory was mine, I know,
My life, and this, my lot.



SOUND IN A DARK ROOM

AUDREY REEVES, PH.D.

UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

Oil Painting

SOUND IN A DARK ROOM

AUDREY REEVES, PH.D.

UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

Oil Painting

I discovered a pond, sat crisscrossed on a rock overlooking it, and sank into the rhythms of Bassnectar's music as the dancing lights on the water imitated each musical note. I recreated this moment of peaceful sanctuary as a way to return to the space, and to remind me of the positive sensation, the beautiful noise on a gloomy night. While Bassnectar doesn't know the extent of his impact, he inspires me every day. Along with building community and connectedness, he and his music stand for positivity, acceptance, and social consciousness. These are all qualities a true leader possesses, and I am reminded of his wisdom every time I listen to his music. Leaders need to be the light in a dark room and focus on the silver lining in any situation. When you throw out positive energy into the universe it shoots back at you like a boomerang.

ALMA MATER WOULD BE PROUD

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Student leadership can be seen in all parts of the world in different campuses' organizations, clubs, or groups. This essay will focus on the historical significance of a Cuban student organization during the Revolution in Cuba. The Federación Estudiantil Universitaria (FEU) and other student-run groups aided the 26th of July Movement to overthrow Cuba's tyrannical leader, Fulgencio Batista. This essay will then analyze the actions of the Cuban student groups and identify ten key components of student leadership. Student leadership can change society, and the FEU is one exemplary example of change.

Each year, a new group of young students begins classes at the University of Havana, Cuba. On this day, it is a tradition of the freshman class to walk up the grand staircase in front of the university, toward a statue of Alma Mater. She sits with arms wide open to welcome the students into her home; here, they will learn and develop new skills over the next few years. Education is vital to the success of society, and students have proven themselves to be powerful leaders who can facilitate real changes in society.

Cuba has a history full of war, revolution, and great leaders. When thinking of the Cuban revolution, one often thinks of Fidel Castro, Raul Castro, Ernesto "Che" Guevara, and Camilo Cienfuegos. However, few people realize the impact students at the University of Havana had on the revolution and the vital role they played in the overthrow of Fulgencio Batista. While Batista was originally elected into power in 1940, he was soon voted out in 1944. Later, in 1952, he would once again rise to power after a quick and violent seizure of the government. Not long after that,



“Alma Mater,” University of Havana, Cuba. Photograph by Chelsea Smith.

his presidency turned into a ruthless dictatorship (“Cuba Overview,” 2013, p. 2). During Batista’s reign, more than half the country was impoverished, approximately one million citizens were illiterate, private property no longer existed, and citizens could no longer vote (Pineda, 2016).

The youth felt they deserved social and political change, but they also knew that these changes would not come easily. As the students matured, they witnessed their country deteriorating. They noticed a higher homeless population, greater poverty levels, and an overall poor quality of living. The general public turned to their government for help but noticed that instead of devoting time and resources to aiding their people, the government was spending money on lavish living for their leaders. The government leaders began to notice the restlessness of the nation. In order to suppress the general public, the government began stripping citizens

of their individual rights. Soon, citizens found themselves starving, living on the streets, and surrounded by government leaders who could not care less. Their only option was to join the rebel forces and risk everything up to and including death. A group of students studying at the University of Havana began to see the impact of the Revolution and decided to aid in the fight against tyranny. On March 10, 1952, the University Student Federation (FEU) was created. They declared that “The University Never Surrenders and is Never for Sale” (Museo, n.d.).

The group of students began by spreading their message of freedom through public demonstrations, typically ending with the arrest or death of a few of the members of the organization. The FEU also helped to create other pro-revolution organizations, one of which was called the Revolutionary Directory. The main goal for the Revolutionary Directory was the illumination of social classes in Cuba. In February of 1956, men and women from all walks of life began to join the movement. Beggars, business owners, workers, students, blacks, whites, all came together to defend the idea of equality for all humans (Museo, n.d.).

By August 1956, José Antonio Echeverría, the student leader of the FEU, agreed to join forces with Castro and the 26th of July Movement led by other freedom-fighters. On March 13, 1957, the students of the University of Havana came together to take back their country from a tyrannical leader. A group of students piled into trucks and drove to the Presidential Palace with hopes of killing Fulgencio Batista and beheading the anti-revolutionary forces. However, upon arrival, Batista’s army opened fire on the trucks of students, killing most of them before they could exit the vehicles. The few remaining students entered Batista’s home through the south end of the Palace. The student movement managed to fire off a few rounds at Batista before he fled to the fourth floor of the Palace through a hidden door near his office. While Batista hid, the remaining students were slaughtered or captured by Batista’s army (Museo, n.d.).

During the strike on the Palace, another student-organized group planned to overtake a radio station and broadcast messages from the rebel army. These messages would announce Batista’s death at the hands of the students and encourage other Cubans to take up arms and fight with Castro’s army. However, the group was intercepted and only a small

part of their message was broadcasted. The FEU leader, José Antonio Echeverría, was killed during a police shootout after fleeing the radio station (Museo, n.d.). José Antonio Echeverría is still to this day regarded as a hero among Cubans. He, along with many of his classmates, made the ultimate sacrifice.

Batista's army attempted to cover up the horrific scene by patching the bullet holes throughout the Palace, but they could not hide the ones left in the marble staircase. Pictures of these holes appeared in the newspapers the next morning (Museo, n.d.). For some, this was seen as a terrible defeat for the rebel soldiers, but for many others, it was seen as a cry for action. These young people gave their lives to a cause they believed would liberate Cuba and bring forth a brighter future.

Although the student group was not successful in the assassination of Batista, they proved that anyone, young or old, could aid in the war effort. Students and faculty contributed to much of the change during the revolution and continued to provide support even after it had been won. Rebel armies continued to push against Batista's rule until Castro's army pushed Batista off the island of Cuba and overthrew his government by appointing new political leaders. Although Castro and the 26th of July Movement were ultimately responsible for winning the war against Batista, they were not the only influential organization fighting for equality during the revolution. Students and teachers joined in the fight and made a large impact on the outcome of the Revolution and on society as a whole. Nine months after the victory over Batista, the students and faculty at the University of Havana formed the military organization "Brigada Universitaria José Antonio Echeverría" (BUJAE). The organization was 600 persons strong. Members trained like any other military organization, but students also continued their studies while aiding the BUJAE (Museo, n.d.).

The bravery and wit of the Cuban student revolutionaries have had long-lasting effects on Cuban life. The entire Republic of Cuba views studying as a high priority, has major respect for the students, and wants students to succeed. Gaining an education is an important part of any culture, but the Cuban culture perceives studying as a priority for young people.

After his victory in 1959, Fidel Castro implemented a countrywide literacy program in hopes of educating the country (Wolf, Hernández Penton, Beltrán Marin, and Romero, 2011, p. 225-226). This focus on education resulted in more than 700,000 Cubans learning to read by 1961 (Figueredo, 2016). In addition to this, Raul Castro has made major changes in certain underdeveloped sectors of vocational schools in Cuba allowing students better access to educational resources like books and writing materials (Wolf et al., 2011, p. 225-226).

While this is the story of Cuban students, students all over the world are using education to gain insight into the world and change society for the better. Gaining an education gives students an opportunity to become leaders who will change the world in which they live. Becoming a leader does not simply happen overnight. It takes education, drive, and determination to be a truly successful leader. In order to be a good leader, ten commitments are recommended, and the FEU student movement follows them all.

First, good leaders must clarify their values (Zorina et al., 2018). This usually takes place in college. Many students feel bombarded with political ideologies, religious views, and lifestyle choices. This is the time when young adults begin to think for themselves and find their own voice. Students begin to identify what has meaning to them in their lives, and what does not; they begin to develop an identity and solidify their values and beliefs. Freedom and equality were vital values for the student groups, identified in the early stages of the revolution by many individuals.

Second, leaders must set an example (Zorina et al., 2018). In addition to identifying individual values, leaders must live their lives based on those values. Leaders cannot truly value something they do not practice. For example, it would be difficult for a student to truly value good grades if he or she does not study to earn good grades. The individual students of the FEU may have shown their values through day to day activities, such as the inclusion of all people in discussions or activities.

Third, envisioning the future is essential for powerful leaders (Zorina et al., 2018). Based on their values, leaders must imagine their ideal future and work towards that goal. Students must find a purpose in life, often

related to their major or career path, which will benefit the student or society as a whole. The purpose should be attainable, and the student must create a plan of action for achieving their goal(s). The students envisioned a future free from a tyrannical government system where all people could be treated equally.

Fourth, the leader must enlist others (Zorina et al., 2018). Leaders identify other people with common goals or values. They create groups or organizations centered around these ideals and lead the group toward the end goal, using the individual skills and talents of the group. Jose Antonio Echeverria, the leader of the FEU, enabled all these like-minded students to join together in hopes of securing their ideal future.

Fifth, a good leader must search for opportunities (Zorina et al., 2018). Leaders take initiative and look for ways to move their group forward, either towards their end goal, or towards smaller goals that build up to the end goal, such as increasing group size or obtaining funding for group activities. The FEU looked for opportunities to advance their group, eventually joining together with Castro and the 26th of July Movement.

Sixth, leaders must experiment and take risks (Zorina et al., 2018). All groups will hit dead ends, but great leaders will find ways to circumvent these roadblocks by enabling followers to try new things. These new techniques may be risky, but they may also be worth the risk. The FEU took a risk and attempted to assassinate Batista in the Presidential Palace in order to reach their goal of a free society.

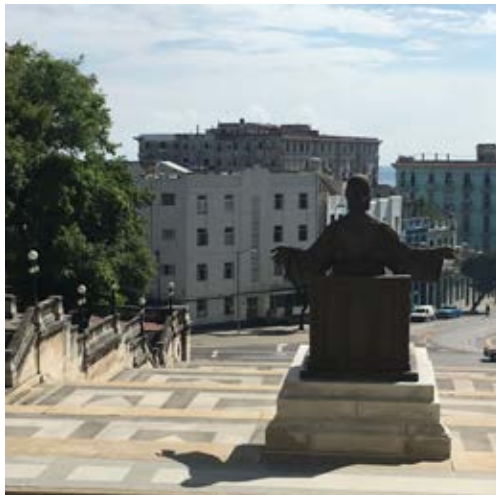
Seventh, leaders must know how to foster collaboration (Zorina et al., 2018). If the group is unable to successfully collaborate, the end goal will not be reached. Leaders must build trust with the group members and facilitate relationships between the members. José Antonio Echeverría united the group and allowed them to work together peacefully towards a common goal.

Eighth, leaders strengthen others (Zorina et al., 2018). They enhance self-determination and enable group members to build trust and confidence within themselves and the group. José Antonio Echeverría strengthened the group and recognized individual members for their part in attempting to overthrow the government.

Ninth, recognizing contributions is an aspect of leadership that cannot be eliminated (Zorina et al., 2018). Members of the group must be commended for the good work they do to help the group succeed. This acknowledgement drives motivation and creates more productive group members; they should be held to high, attainable standards.

Tenth, leaders celebrate the values and victories of the group (Zorina et al., 2018). No victory is too small. Celebration creates a positive atmosphere and promotes productivity. If the group feels they are not winning enough small battles, members may become discouraged and leave the group. Lastly, the FEU group celebrated their attack on the Presidential Palace, even though it appeared to have failed. The group knew their message had reached the public and it was only a matter of time before more people joined the revolution and fought for freedom and equality. The student movement was vital to the overthrow of Batista's government, and an excellent example of student leadership.

On graduation day, after receiving their diplomas, the students once again gather at the staircase in front of the University. This time, they stand behind Alma Mater. Once the entire graduating class has made it to the staircase, they descend the steps. They leave Alma Mater, and head toward the city. In their hands, they hold the power to change the world.



“Alma Mater,” University of Havana, Cuba. Photograph by Chelsea Smith.

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WALT DISNEY
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White Pencil on Black Paper

Walt Disney was an exceptional leader and an embodiment of the American Dream. Rising from poverty and obscurity, he imparted imagination, optimism, determination, and remarkable communication and people skills, leading his team beyond preconceived limitations. Disney was a dreamer who overcame failures, effectively communicated his vision to others, and was prepared to take risks to meet his goals.

“All the adversity I’ve had in my life, all my troubles and obstacles, have strengthened me...You may not realize it when it happens, but a kick in the teeth may be the best thing in the world for you.” -Walt Disney



WALT DISNEY

NICHOLAS LAWYER

UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

White Pencil on Black Paper

AMERICA’S TEEN SEX EDUCATION: CAN PARENTS REALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

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America’s children’s sexual health and sexual education has been declining in recent years. With the lack of leadership from public school’s sex education, parents need to step up and have more discussions about sex with their children. When parents lead discussions that are more adaptable according to the child’s needs, consistently frequent during adolescence, and equally discussed by each parent to each child, America’s adolescents’ sexual health can improve exponentially.

“Get ready for love, laughs, [and] lube.” This is how *Netflix* advertised its new show “Sex Education,” that started streaming January 2019 (Sex Education | Official Trailer | Netflix, 2019). The show’s premise—inexperienced teens teaching other teens about sex. “Channeling his Sex Therapist mother, inexperienced teen Otis decides to set up [an underground] Sex Therapy clinic at school for the [other] hopeless students” (Sex Education | Official Trailer | Netflix, 2019). And with 40 million viewers just within the first month, this *Netflix* TV show accurately illustrates the current “hopeless” situation of teenagers and sex, especially in America (Porter, 2019). America, even with all its worldly advances, currently has by far the highest percentage of teenage pregnancies in the world (Sedgh, Finer, Bankole, Eilers, & Singh, 2015). In just a year, almost a quarter of a million new mothers were teenage girls, half of which would not graduate high school—and these statistics are not including any of the teen girls who had miscarriages or abortions (Perper, Peterson, & Manlove, 2010). During the hundred years that American public schools have taught sex education, what and how much to teach has continually been disputed, with many different voices calling for it to

be taken away, improved, or simply kept (Cornblatt, 2010). While some say that public schools are best for teaching teenagers about sexual health to lower their pregnancies, promiscuity, and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), others say that parents need to improve their sex discussions with their children to accomplish this (Cornblatt, 2010; Flores & Barroso, 2017). And with recent research indicating that perhaps parent-child sex communication is the main source of children's sexual knowledge and health, it supports the claim that parents need to take the lead and be involved in their children's sex education rather than simply leaving it up to the public schools (Flores & Barroso, 2017). Examining the current public-school sex education program reveals that more can be done to increase children's sexual health and safety, including more parent involvement and leadership. A solution that could have an immediate impact is the way parents choose to lead sex communication with the children—discussions that are more comprehensive according to the child's current needs, more consistently frequent during adolescence, and more equally discussed by each parent to their child.

In 1918, America started to feel the need for improved sex education to supplement the traditional parental leadership in parent-child sex discussions. After a huge spread of STIs during WWI, the U.S. government funded sex education for the first time to teach American soldiers, with public schools adopting it shortly thereafter (Cornblatt, 2010). This sparked the debate that has lasted over a century regarding who should lead these sex discussions. While some say that public schools' teaching of sex is perfectly adequate, some argue that the schools are leading too much, and others debate that the schools aren't leading enough. This debate was illustrated by statistics at the 2019 National Conference of State Legislatures, where it was reported that currently only 24 states require sex education to be taught, and that it does not always have to be "medically accurate" (Blackman & Scotti, 2019). "Medically accurate" is a term that has been in the mix of the sex education debate since the beginning, primarily within the religious community, with the conference also reporting that "35 states and the District of Columbia allow parents to opt-out [of any sex education offered] on behalf of their children" (Blackman & Scotti, 2019).

These statistics show one reason why public schools' sex education cannot be relied on as the sole provider of information teens receive. It can

be deduced that public school sex education in the United States is inconsistent and possibly inaccurate, with modern research substantiating this claim—simply, schools are not the best leaders for sex education (Blackman & Scotti, 2019). A 2016 study done on sex education in the United States found that the only thing that has remained consistent in public-school sex education is its decline in the past decade and it appears that this will continue to decrease in frequency over the next few years (Lindberg, Maddow-Zimet, & Boonstra, 2016). Another recent study performed in 2017 further strengthens the unreliability and validity of public-school sex education. In evaluating public-school sex education effectiveness, it was discovered that the schools that do teach sex education, most often only teach abstinence (Denford, Abraham, Campbell, & Busse, 2017). In a further evaluation and analysis of the effectiveness of school sex education, the study also found that the current teaching of abstinence was highly ineffective in improving teen sexual health and extremely “weak” in lowering risky teen sex (Denford et al., p. 33). It would appear that public school sex education is not only inconsistent in its consistency, but also in its effectiveness. And with 70% of the United States allowing parents to deny their children access to public-school sex education, this further reveals the great need for parental leadership in sex discussions (Blackman & Scotti, 2019).

Despite these facts, some believe that public school sex education is still perfectly adequate and the best authority in lowering their children’s sexual activity. It is true that in the past 6 years, the rate of American teen sex dropped by 4% (Padilla-Walker, 2018). However, the main concern is the sexual health and safety of America’s children, not just the amount of their sexual activity. Even as the rate of teen sex dropped, the rate of risky unprotected teen sex increased by 6% (Padilla-Walker, 2018). It can be inferred from these statistics that although teenagers are having less sex, when they do choose to have sex, they have a higher chance of getting pregnant and receiving STIs. This debunks the claim that the current public-school sex education is the best authority for sex education and further illustrates the need for parental leadership in parent-child sex education and discussions, with recent research showing that parents can substantially decrease the amount of risky sex their children have with these parent-child discussions (Widman, Noar, Choukas-Bradley, & Francis, 2014).

The need for improved parental leadership in parent-child sex discussions is underscored in a study from the University of Pennsylvania. It found that parents (out of all the other modern resources) are the primary and best source for their children's sexual knowledge (Flores & Barroso, 2017). This suggests the same sex education discussion held in school would have a much greater impact on the sexual health of the children if led by parents, and multiple recent studies strengthen this inference. Two different studies conducted in the past five years showed that parent-led sex discussions are associated with teenagers lowering their amount of unprotected sex, STIs, and even sexual partners (Flores & Barroso, 2017; Widman et al., 2014). Conducting one of these studies, Dr. Barroso from the Medical University of South Carolina writes, "Parent-child sex communication results in the transmission of family expectations, societal values, and role modeling of sexual health risk-reduction strategies" (Flores & Barroso, 2017, p. 532). In essence, this research suggests that sex discussions led by parents to their children have the power to change society by improving a teenager's sexual health. Research suggests that even a few sex discussions led by parents can prevent their children from participating in risky sex. In one specific study, it found that just one conversation about sex between a mother and a daughter lowered the amount of unprotected sex the daughter had for up to three months (Hutchinson, Jemmott, Jemmott, Braverman, & Fong, 2003).

Some parents say their current sex conversations with their children are adequate and frequent enough to improve their children's sexual health. However, recent research suggests that parents think they are doing better than they actually are. One 2015 study from the State University of New Jersey found that parents claim to talk to their children about sex more than they actually do (LaSala, 2015). This indicates how unaware parents are regarding the sexual knowledge and health of their children, and further shows the need for more frequent parental-led sex discussions. The University of Pennsylvania's previously mentioned study revealed that many parents are unwilling to talk to their children about sex and that almost all parent-child sex discussions are simply an uncomfortable "birds and the bees" talk that occurs only once in the child's life (Flores & Barroso, 2017). With parents being the "primary" source of their children's sexual knowledge, this research conveys the

need for improved parent-child sex conversations. A 2016 study indicates this further, discovering that parent-child sex communication has not improved at all in the past few decades (Lindberg et al., 2016). All this recent research advocates for the need of more frequent and improved parent-led sex discussions in America. Fortunately, the research also illustrates how this can be accomplished.

A 2017 study about sex education in America suggested one way parents can make a difference in leading their children's education towards sexual health. It discovered the reason why school sex education has been largely ineffective in its leadership of changing risky sex behaviors with teenagers—its current curriculum is based solely on abstinence sex talks. However, the study also showed that comprehensive sex conversations with children that targeted STIs, specifically HIV, were very effective in intervening and lowering risky and unprotected sex among teenagers (Denford et al., 2017). Since research already shows they are the most effective source and lead for their children's sexual knowledge, parents are the ones who can have these comprehensive sex discussions with their children (Flores & Barroso, 2017). With the importance of these comprehensive sex discussions being evident from this research, and other recent research indicating that parents are the best choice for providing this information to their children, it is suggested that comprehensive parent-child sex discussions would be highly effective in lowering teen pregnancies, STIs, and their overall sexual health.

Another 2017 study discovered one reason why parents are the primary providers of sexual knowledge for their child is because parents can start answering their children's questions about sex from an early age (Flores & Barroso, 2017). The study also suggests that if parents were consistent in leading these discussions throughout adolescence, it would greatly lower the amount of risky, unprotected sex and STIs had by their teenagers. This indicates the more consistently parents talk about sex with their children, the better sexual health their teenagers will have. A study from a Brigham Young University researcher found that as parents stayed consistently frequent in leading their sexual health discussions with their children, it not only decreased the amount of unprotected sex

their children had while teenagers, but also decreased the amount of unprotected sex and sexual partners their children had as young adults (Padilla-Walker, 2018). Dr. Padilla-Walker, the study's author, wrote, "This should increase the urgency that parents feel to have conversations with their children about sex, and educators and pediatricians should encourage parents to initiate conversations at least as soon as early adolescence, and with increasing frequency over time" (Padilla-Walker, 2018, p. 757). This suggests that parent-child sex discussions are more important than most other sex discussions—that even schools should encourage parents to have more sex discussions with their children—and that parents are the leaders in sex education that children need. The research indicates that the more consistently children have parented discussions about sex, the more consistently sexually healthy they will be.

While research suggests that parent-child sex conversations can be improved with further comprehensiveness, frequency, and consistency, research also suggests the need for more parent-child sex discussions by each parent to each child. Research from the University of Oklahoma provides evidence for this claim. Dr. Wisnieski found in her 2015 study that almost all parent-child sex discussions are done by the mother, and are almost always only given to the daughter (Wisnieski, Sieving, & Garwick, 2015). This indicates the need for more sex discussions given by fathers, and to sons—although both parents are needed in parent-child sex discussions—as it was a quarter of a million boys that participated in getting those girls pregnant ("About Teen Pregnancy," 2019). Perhaps fathers currently do not talk to their sons about sex because their own fathers never did. Since research already shows the great effectiveness of mother-daughter sex discussions in lowering chances of the daughter's risky teen sex, it follows that the impact would only increase if both parents were involved in and led the teaching their children, regardless of the gender (Hutchinson et al., 2003). With research showing the lack of, and also, the importance of father's leadership in parent-child sex discussions, it is suggested that increasing father-son sex discussions will lower teen pregnancies, promiscuity, and STIs, and improve their overall sexual health.

“Get ready for unprotected sex, STI scares, and lube” is perhaps what more adequately describes the new *Netflix* show “Sex Education.” What is ironic is how the show also adequately shows where teens are currently getting most of their sex education and knowledge—not from schools or parents, but from their friends. The popularity of this TV show illustrates how many teens in America truly have a desire to be educated about sex. Children born in 2018 from those quarter of a million teenage parents are more likely to drop out of high school, face unemployment, be incarcerated, and become a teen parent (“About Teen Pregnancy,” 2019). It is a cycle that could continue on for generations. Conversely, generations will be changed for the better as parents become involved with and lead their children’s sex education. Children in America will continue to receive STIs from multiple partners, give birth to children while being children, and keep America with the world’s highest teen birth rate if current trends continue—if parents do not step up. However, the research suggests that if there is an improvement in parental leadership in parent-child sex discussions, this trend could be slowed and even reversed. With parents leading sex discussions that are more sexually comprehensive, more consistent and frequent during adolescence, and more equally discussed by each parent to each child, more parents will begin to see the great difference they can make, and their children will reap the benefits from their leadership.

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WATCHFUL EYE

PIM-ON PHURISAT

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Clay

A bird sat on a branch of a tall tree, looking for prey to feed its chicks. Once it obtained the prey, it would return back to its nest and feed the chicks. The chicks were protected from harm under their mother's wings. The love and kindness they felt was from their mother's watchful eyes. Keeping a watchful eye doesn't mean to look for faults and mistakes, but to make sure that all are safe and protected.

NO CART LEFT BEHIND

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During an encounter with a shopping cart I become painfully aware of my own prejudice and privilege. Self-awareness is a fundamental quality of authentic leadership. Environments of equality, inclusion, and diversity truly have to be created from the inside out.

It was as if the shopping cart knew my name. It was posing in a patch of grass, empty except for a coupon catalog. Five blocks away it would be back in its motherland if I had the gumption to get it there. I think only the birds in the trees could have told me exactly why the cart had been dumped like a sex-addicted boyfriend or discarded like stale tortilla chips. I walked twenty self-righteous steps past the absurd piece of furniture and turned around. My shoulder angels this time were Curiosity and Ego. For years, I have wondered what it would be like to push a shopping cart down the street. I suppose privilege had helped me avoid the opportunity until then.

The cart was much louder than I anticipated. Every time I pushed past a crack in the sidewalk it sounded like Tweety Bird was having a seizure in her cage. The rattling jiggled all the tissues in my wrists and I was sure joggers could hear me—or rather my basket on wheels—from blocks away over their heavy breathing and workout playlists. Even though my embarrassment felt louder than the noise, I didn't move to the seamless street.

Self-awareness is the best leadership quality I know. I thought my nervousness was amusing. “What is it about this shopping cart that makes

me question my gracefulness and my sense of belonging?” I said a friendly good morning to someone who’d just parked their car and offered them a side smile with eye contact. Holding in a stampede of disclaimers, I found the source of my insecurity; I realized I didn’t want him to think of me the same way I had thought of everyone I’d ever seen pushing a shopping cart beyond the grocery store. Still my next instinct was to disguise my quest like someone who raises their hand but gets shy and pretends they were scratching their head instead. I felt seen. Brené Brown calls this “validation”; I call it microwaving my character. All prejudice was heating, spinning, and splattering inside me.

As a middle child I have always been passionate about justice. If my mom asked me to move some shoes in the living room, I’d tell her, “That isn’t my mess! It isn’t fair if I have to clean it.” In that same way, I felt entitled to leave the shopping cart behind; I believed for a few sickening seconds that I deserved to ignore it. But the world is sprinkled with chaos and when I meditate, I hear mother earth asking all of us to be tidy. The more I learn about poverty, racism, supply chains, genocide, rape culture, racial profiling, subliminal messages, and global warming, the more I am convinced this is *our* mess. We cannot trace the mayhem back to one source; we have tried. So instead of arguing about who is responsible, I have learned to be generous.

I’m not sure if the shopping cart was a symbol of world peace, but I am sure it was a worthy companion. When I made it to Smith’s Grocery I didn’t abandon my metal basket in the edge of the parking lot; I strolled with it past the automatic doors and shoved it into the cozy tessellation of other carts, swiping the handle with a sanitation wipe before walking away.

It is endlessly funny to me that the next 200 shoppers to use that cart will have no idea “where it’s been.”

The truth is I don’t know where you’ve been either. But if I can be generous about helping a shopping cart get where it needs to go, then, like any compassionate leader, I can do the same with people.

RELIQUARY FOR THE EVIDENCE OF CHEATING

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Mixed Media

The word “cheat” is, more often than not, accompanied by a negative connotation. However, for some it is a familiar word that deserves a more positive light.

This wrench was bent by the employment of a bar, commonly called a cheater bar, placed on the wrench handle to generate more torque and ease the use thereof. This is only accomplished through using a cheater bar.

The use of a cheater bar increases a laborer’s ability to work while also mildly bending the wrench. Taking on the role of a leader increases the work that can be done while also placing a load on the back of the leader. Unlike this wrench, the load a leader bears cannot be seen, but should be recognized and appreciated as this wrench is now.



RELIQUARY FOR THE EVIDENCE OF CHEATING

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EMPATHIC LISTENING: EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS AS LEADERS

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This article focuses on the need to listen to the narratives of others from a place of understanding. Empathy is vital for successful communication. When we approach a conversation with defensiveness, shame, criticizing, or advising, an opportunity to connect with someone and lead them to a higher place is lost. On the other hand, when we practice empathic listening, we can empower individuals to become leaders and encourage more harmonious and compassionate communication in interpersonal relationships. It is our responsibility as leaders to initiate these changes through listening with empathy.

A few months ago, I experienced the outcome of a conversation that lacked empathy. I chose to open up to a loved one about something that was personal and painful for me to talk about. Unfortunately, this attempt backfired. I walked away from our conversation feeling judged, misunderstood, and alone. My relationship with this person now felt rocky and unnavigable; I didn't know how to approach future communication with them. I felt like this person showed no empathy toward me, but, consequently, I showed no empathy towards them. This experience taught me that regardless of how others respond in circumstances similar to this, especially as leaders, choosing to listen with empathy is something that lies within our power.

Learning to empathically listen to the stories people tell us is perhaps one of the greatest skills we can learn and apply as the leaders in today's world. Neglecting this necessary skill in our communication can lead to misunderstandings, escalated conflicts, and damaged interpersonal relationships in organizations, government systems, international relations,

etc. Humans crave connection; we want people to hear our stories and understand who we are and where we are coming from. For us to make this a reality, we have to learn to listen with empathy. Cultivating the ability to listen empathically to others can empower individuals as leaders in helping to promote and create a more compassionate society and world. Initiating this change is something that all of us—formal and informal leaders—can accomplish.

WHAT IS EMPATHY?

When we hear the word empathy, we commonly confuse it with sympathy. Sympathy is feeling pity for someone, while empathy motivates us to act on that person's behalf. Instead of simply feeling bad for them, we want to understand where they are coming from and how we can help. We do this through listening to and feeling with them, experiencing and understanding them from their perspective ("Empathy," n.d.). A common metaphor used to differentiate sympathy from empathy is finding a person stuck in a hole. Sympathizing happens when we look down and feel sorry for them because they are stuck. Conversely, empathy is climbing down into the hole with them and saying "I'm here for you. I want to understand how you're feeling, so I'm here to experience it with you." This ability to demonstrate empathy, as described in the example above, is fifty percent inherited and fifty percent learned, according to empathy researcher and author Roman Krznaric (as cited in Manning-Schaffel, 2018).

These findings shed light on the fact that showing empathy is a choice; it is something we can learn how to do, and we can begin simply by getting in the habit of asking people how they are and actually listening to what they say (Manning-Schaffel, 2018). Can you imagine the difference listening this way would have had on the experience I shared earlier? This person and I may not have come away with the same opinions, but we would at least have understood and validated one another's perspectives. Similarly, as leaders, we may not agree with every opinion we hear, but being able to empathically take on the perspective of another is vital to relationship preservation and leadership success.

BARRIERS TO ACTIVE EMPATHIC LISTENING (AEL)

A common problem with listening is that we tend to overemphasize the physical aspect of it; we assume that if we are hearing what they are saying

then we are being a good listener. In reality, listening is so much more than nodding our heads, not interrupting, and being a blank slate at whom they can throw their words (McClelland, 2017; Shrivastava, 2014). If basic listening is a difficult process, then it can be assumed that active empathic listening (AEL) is even harder. Knowing this, the necessity of education, especially for leaders, on common barriers to AEL is crucial. Having this knowledge will better prepare leaders and future leaders to recognize AEL barriers in their own lives and navigate a course to more empathic listening.

SPEAKING RATE VERSUS LISTENING RATE

One logistical barrier to AEL is the fact that we process words much quicker than a speaker can speak them. A 1992 study found that the average speaking rate is 120–180 words per minute whereas the average listening capacity of the brain is 500–800 words per minute (Shrivastava, 2014). This gap naturally results in excess time for our brain to wander in the listening process. In a perfect world we would use this extra time to tap into empathy, perhaps by dialing in to what the speaker's nonverbal communication is telling us about how they are feeling. Instead, it often becomes a time where we get off track; we rehearse in our head how we will respond or become distracted by a memory their story reminds us of (Salem, 2003).

DEFENSIVENESS AND SHAME

In conflict especially, defensiveness and shame are toxic habits that fuel the conflict cycle and directly halt the empathic process. While empathy draws us to another person and allows us to accept and understand their pain, defensiveness repels us from one another, undermining any hopes of connection. When we are focused on protecting ourselves and guarding our position, listening to and validating the other side of the story is most likely not the first item on our agenda (Beckenbach, Patrick, & Sells, 2010). Shame also prevents us from exploring the other's perspective. Note that there is a difference between shame and guilt. Guilt originates when we recognize we have caused another person distress through a particular action; we see how reparative acts, like apologizing, may restore our relationship with them. Guilt is linked to perspective taking (the goal of empathy) and motivates us to do so. Shame, on the other hand,

condemns the whole self, resulting in personal distress. Shame tells us that the affliction we have caused another person is not because of a particular action but because we ourselves are inherently bad. Why then would we want to hear the other's perspective and further recognize the problem that we believe we are? When shame envelops us, we don't listen with empathy; instead, we resort to more damaging behaviors such as ignoring the problem or the person, denying responsibility, or even lashing out at the very person who needs our empathy (Leith & Baumeister, 1998).

OTHER BARRIERS

There are other barriers to empathy, including: criticizing, challenging the legitimacy of the speaker's feelings, giving advice, interrupting, and changing the subject (Salem, 2003). In the vulnerability of sharing one's story, perhaps the worst response one can receive is that of criticism. Critical phrases such as "Why did you do that?" can staunch the open flow of information sharing and may result in feelings of shame if the speaker feels that the listener is negatively judging their character and actions. Likewise, the speaker should not feel like the purpose of sharing their story is to convince the listener of the truthfulness of their feelings; they want to be trusted and validated. Furthermore, if we are interrupting, giving advice, or changing the subject, the listener may feel that we are there to listen minimally and then get our point across. These responses may communicate that we want to change them and how they do things instead of communicating understanding and support (Jones, Bodie, & Hughes, 2016; Serbin, 2013).

ENABLERS OF AEL

Admittedly, we are all human, and because of this we give in to behaviors that hinder AEL. We get distracted, become defensive, shame ourselves or others, interrupt, criticize, and give advice even when we have good intentions in our listening. But, as leaders, we can do better than this. We can become agents of change in our lives and in the lives of others by learning how to overcome these barriers. The solutions to these barriers are contained within the AEL process, the steps of active listening with empathic habits woven throughout them. When acted upon, these are the habits that have the potential to transform communication, relationships, and leadership.

ACTIVE LISTENING

The active listening process is composed of three steps: sensing, processing, and responding. Sensing involves an active awareness of both the verbal and nonverbal, explicit and implicit information the speaker is communicating. Processing comprises synthesizing the information gained during the sensing stage into a narrative whole. The final step, responding, is the listener's way of letting the speaker know that they hear and understand what is being communicated. This is done through verbal and nonverbal cues such as nodding one's head, asking questions, and paraphrasing (Jones et al., 2016; Shrivastava, 2014). Together, the combination of sensing, processing, and responding contribute to the listener's efforts to communicate empathy to the speaker.

MINDFULNESS IN THE SENSING STAGE

In the active listening process, leaders can utilize the following empathic concepts to encourage a more compassionate flow of communication. David Sauvage, a corporation consultant, states that, "The basis of empathy is emotional self-awareness" (as cited in Manning-Schaffel, 2018). This means we have to sense and accept our own thoughts and emotions before we can do the same in our communication with others. In support of this claim, research shows that individuals who score high on mindfulness also score high on empathy and that vulnerable (empathic) listening is dependent on the listener's understanding of what is happening internally for them (Jones et al., 2016; McClelland, 2017).

In summary, if we are to accurately interpret and articulate someone's emotions back to them, we must first be able to internalize and comprehend our own emotions. Part of this emotional intelligence is being able to differentiate when we are feeling guilt versus shame. In leadership, identifying shameful thoughts is an important step in correcting our thinking. Rather than resorting to defensiveness or retreating from a situation (which are common side-effects of shame), we can instead engage in reparative acts (i.e. apologizing, listening to the other person's narrative) that produce empathic results in our relationships.

SELF-EXPERIENTIAL EMPATHY AND IMAGINATIVE IMITATION IN THE PROCESSING STAGE

During the processing stage of active listening, we may not initially identify with the narrative being told; this makes it harder to take on the speaker's perspective. In situations such as these, leaders may find the tactics of self-experiential empathy and imaginative imitation useful. Self-experiential empathy occurs when the listener reflects back on their own experiences to help them better comprehend the speaker's narrative. Imaginative imitation involves mentally putting oneself in another's shoes and imagining what a particular experience must have felt like for them (McLeod, 1999). When listening, good leaders will extend beyond trying to logically synthesize the details of a narrative, they will also try to feel how the speaker is feeling. Both self-experiential empathy and imaginative imitation can aid in this process.

POSITIVE RESPONSE METHODS

Sensing (being aware of the speaker's communication and one's own thoughts and feelings) in addition to processing (synthesizing the narrative and beginning to feel with the listener) are both vital steps in AEL. When done well, these first two steps have the potential to set the leader up for success in the response stage. However, to be a good empathic listener, one must be good at all three steps (McLeod, 1999). As previously stated, disbelieving someone's emotions, telling them how to feel, teaching, and giving advice are negative ways of responding that discourage the speaker from feeling empathy. A more favorable alternative is to check the accuracy of our processing by vocalizing how we think the individual is feeling and then listening to see if we need to readjust our perceptions. Open-ended questions and attentive nonverbal behaviors are also responses that inspire more empathy. Rather than being an interpreter trying to give meaning to the speaker's words, the listener is more like a mirror, reflecting back the emotions and perspective of the speaker to help them know they are understood (Salem, 2003). The difference between these two approaches, interpreter and mirror, may seem small, but the resulting consequences can be monumental.

RESULTS OF AEL

Utilizing AEL skills allows leaders to positively impact individuals, relationships, and cultures by setting an example of valuing and validating narratives that may be different from our own. One way this happens is through the facilitation of reappraisals. A reappraisal occurs when a person sees an event or emotion in a more positive light. Jones, Bodie, and Hughes' (2016) research found that empathy and active listening directly predicted reappraisals, meaning that showing empathy as a listener can help the other individual become an agent in how they construct meaning from their emotions and experiences. This is leadership in action. McLeod (1999) discovered that the following therapeutic microprocesses are other possible results of empathic listening:

These include: feeling valued and accepted; feeling confirmed in one's own identity as an autonomous, valuable person; learning to accept feelings; reduction in alienation ("I am not abnormal, different and strange"); learning to trust and get in touch with one's own experiencing; cognitive restructuring of chaotic experiencing; and facilitating recall and organization of information. (p. 11)

Again, these are all benefits that simply result from someone being willing to listen, with empathy, to another individual's narrative. It is clear that empathy can greatly benefit the individual being listened to, but what would happen if both parties in a conversation applied empathy? How would this change relationships, communities, and the world? Shrivastava (2014) claims that empathic listening creates, maintains, and enhances positive interpersonal relationships. Salem (2003) lists four ways it does just that. First, it enables those in conflict to release their emotions in a healthy, constructive way. The second and third benefits outline that it reduces tension through encouraging the open sharing of information. Lastly, empathic listening helps create a psychologically safe space that is conducive to collaborative problem solving.

IMPACT ON LEADERSHIP

Together, these factors have the potential to facilitate greater emotional intelligence, healthy relationships, and both negotiations and solutions that better serve both parties involved in conversation. As individual leaders, it is important that we begin implementing this impactful process

in our own lives through learning about, internalizing, and applying principles of empathic listening. Leaders who exercise AEL in their relationships have the potential to create a ripple effect in propelling society to a more compassionate destination.

In the beginning, I described a personal experience from my life that lacked empathy and therefore resulted in a damaged relationship with someone close to me. Just a few weeks ago, I had another encounter in my life that went quite differently. I was struggling to share the strong emotions I was feeling and the events that led up to them with a family member. None of this person's approaches in helping me to open up were working, in fact, they seemed to be making things worse. Finally, I blurted out, "Look, I need you to just listen to me. Don't jump in, don't give me solutions, just listen." It was a therapeutic process as I vocally explored my thoughts and feelings with my loved one and what I found was amazing. I calmed myself and found a more positive perspective because someone was there to listen to, believe, and feel with me. I felt understood, and because I felt understood, I wanted to understand them better. What made this experience so beautiful was that it transcended our relationship; I was so profoundly affected that I wanted to listen this way to the stories others tell me so that they could feel the way I did. This lesson has helped me realize that our willingness to experiment with and improve upon our empathic listening skills demonstrates true leadership as we strive to make the world a more compassionate place, one conversation at a time.

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EMILY HANKS completed her ASN at Utah Valley University in April 2019 and is enrolled in the bachelor's completion program. She plans to pursue further education through a Doctor of Nurse Practitioner program and continue with further research. Her hope is to work as a critical care nurse practitioner as well as to help promote health education and opportunities in minority communities.

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ANNA CHRISTINE PETERSEN graduated with a bachelor's degree in communication from Utah Valley University. She is an advocate for social change and enjoys spending much of her time participating in activist groups. The influence of her teachers, mentors, and education have inspired her to pursue further research and writing on empathic communication.

PIM-ON PHURISAT, originally from Thailand, moved to Utah to earn a graduate degree in in community health at Utah Valley University, aspiring to become a health service administrator. She currently assists people and easing their troubles. When she isn't working, you'll find Pim-on sculpting, drawing, playing guitar, or anything that relates to art and music. If not, she is probably eating Thai food.

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IVY SUDWEEKS is a graduated member of society who works a job she loves. She spends much of her time sleeping. She loves dogs, humans, horses, or basically anything with a social hierarchy that can be observed and analyzed.

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