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Honors: Leadership and IPC

Reflection #1

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Transformational Leadership and Schema

 Before reading the chapter over transformational leadership I had no idea that it was a form of leadership. While reading the chapter in Leadership Theory and Practice I was able to get a clear picture of what I believe transformational leadership is to me. The chapter broke transformational leadership down into multiple sections to show the differences it has from transactional and laissez-faire leadership. The book states that transformational leadership “is concerned with the process of how certain leaders are able to inspire followers to accomplish great things (Northouse, p. 190). The transformational approach believes and describes “that leaders need to understand and adapt to the needs and motives of followers (Northouse, p. 190). After taking the Leadership Instrument for the chapter I felt that out of all the chapters transformational leadership is the one that interests and describes my leadership approach the best. My approach to leadership is very simple. I see my approach to leadership as a motivating, innovating, and problem solving type of leadership.

 After taking the sample questions from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire I can conclude that my leadership style in somewhat parallel to the transformational leadership style. I find it interesting how similar the styles are when I didn’t know that transformational leadership was a form of leadership. Under transformational leadership styles I scored a three for Idealized Influence (Attributes). The three rating means that I fairly often go beyond self-interest for the good of the group. Statement two dealt with Idealized Influence (Behaviors) where I gave myself a rating of four. I frequently, if not always, consider the moral and ethical consequences of decisions. I almost always consider moral and ethical consequences or questions before making decisions because it is a necessity for my daily work ethics. I must think about others’ morals before taking photos of a subject and I must think about them ethically when using sources for any article I write. I scored a four rating under the Inspirational Motivation technique. I frequently, if not always, talk optimistically about the future. I always describe myself as someone that can find any way to motivate an individual. It comes naturally for me to get someone to see the positive side of a situation. Intellectual Stimulation was rated a three. I felt that I fairly often reexamine critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate. Lastly, under Individualized Consideration I rated myself a four. I frequently, if not always, help others to develop their strengths. I believe that this style connects with motivation because when I am motivating others I am always trying to draw out their strengths and to get them to see how their strengths help teach the follower to be more optimistic.

 For Transactional Leadership Styles I found that there is not a very complex sequence that makes up the style. The style is clearly about an exchange of goals, nothing more or less. Under Contingent Reward I received a rating of four. I frequently, if not always, make clear what one can expect to receive when performance goals are achieved. We all have goals whenever we communicate, so I believe that if goals are set they can be reached faster and more effectively. For Management by Exception: Active I rated as a one. I once in a while keep track of my mistakes. I think it is sometimes good for a leader to remember his or her mistakes to remind them what did and what didn’t work in the past. It is like turning negative reinforcement into positive reinforcement. The last section is titled Passive/Avoidant Leadership Styles. For Management by Exception: Passive I rated myself a two. I sometimes wait for things to go wrong before taking action. I think it is alright for someone to wait for things to go wrong before he or she takes action if and only if he or she has a backup plan already in place. Finally, under laissez-faire I scored myself a two. I sometimes avoid making decisions. I feel that as a leader that I am not the only one that should be making decisions. Decision should be made as a group and some need to be direct and finalized if they don’t require major discussion. From this questionnaire I was able to see how transformation leadership is connected to my form of leadership. It is interesting how my leadership type relates to how I communicate and represent my followers and myself.

 The interpersonal relationship topic I found most interesting was from the Perception and Interpersonal Processes chapter. The idea of how each person has five types of schema integrated into their interpersonal communication skills showed me how developed some of my skills already are. Self-schemata, also called self-presentation, is very prominent and reflect peoples’ views of themselves and guide how they process information about themselves. Event schemata, person schemata and role schemata build instrumental goals in an individual. Instrumental goals are an action pursued after evaluating its consequences and consideration of the various means. They help people recognize the typical ways in which sequence of actions tends to unfold, provides information about appropriate behavior based on social categories and reflects people’s understanding of individuals they know and/or particular types of people. Relational schemata reflects people’s ability to make sense of love, friendship, family and work relationships. Relational goals answer how you address situations with others and how they affect the partner. I believe that I always how a type of goal in my head when I am communicating. Either self-presentation, relational or instrumental goals I now know that I am using a different type of schemata to accomplish that goal. Through the five types of schemata I am presenting myself and what I think a leader is all about.

 By combining the schemata elements with the transformational form of leadership I was able to see some connections between the two and some questions formed from the two. With the two together I was able to see how the schemata are useful in developing the deeper connection between leader and follower when using transformational leadership. The leader needs to motivate followers to accomplish and set goals. With the help of the five schemata a leader can reflect upon his or her current interpersonal communication relationship and see what goals he or she uses the most with his or hers type of leadership approach. Then that leader can apply the same technique to his or her followers’ strengths. This knowledge of different schema would help because if a leader was able to find the best way to combine the communication process and the leadership process he or she could become more effective all around.

For example, I find myself using motivation to my best advantage when I am the leader of a group. I want my followers to be motivated and determined to accomplish their goals. However, I sometimes find it hard for myself to find the same motivation to accomplish tasks some would see as simple. If I would have taken my self-presentation goal into consideration I might have been able to find that motivation for myself, because I wouldn’t want my followers to see me downgrading my own leadership skills. Presently, I find it difficult for myself to remember how my relational goals have altered over the past few years because of the transition between being a dependent and becoming an independent. Using the schema I could communicate with my peers to get feedback from them on how to focus more on my strengths. I can use the communication techniques to develop myself in the new role of being an independent. For the future, I can see myself using this new knowledge and being able to develop my form of transformational leadership, because I will be able to represent myself and my followers more prominently and successfully. With the schemata blended in with the leadership skills I can begin to understand me and my followers’ actions and motives better.

References

Northouse, Peter G. Leadership: Theory and Practice. 7th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2004. Print.