

This semester has taught me a lot about who I am as a relational leader. Firstly, it taught me what it meant to be a relational leader. A big part of that means, to me, that the leader is always learning. None of the components are things that the leader can check off a list. They are guiding objectives. A good leader should follow along with the different portions of the relational leadership model, but should not strive to “complete” it. A good leader knows that one of the most important things in their leadership is acknowledging that people grow and are not stagnant in their learning. This model allows the leader to constantly work to be better at what they are doing.

I learned that inclusivity is one of my strengths. I know that comes from having to argue over whether I deserve a space at the table for so long. I don’t want others to have to go through the frustration that I went through when I know that I can hold space for them, and make it easier. I spent a lot of my life wishing that I could be included before I pushed my way into spaces that I wanted to be in. Now I love being able to welcome others in with me without them having to bend over backwards. Inclusivity is also the most important portion to me, which is why I work on it so much. I know that everyone holds a unique perspective, and when their perspective isn’t derogatory, it deserves to be listened to. Learning about the relational leadership model gave me a chance to recognize my strong areas and work on my areas that need more attention.

An area of the relational leadership model that I grew in, was process oriented. Sometimes I struggle with remembering the goal of what I’m doing. Learning about being process oriented helped me to understand what I need to do when I’m a leader. It’s already helping when I’m in leadership roles while volunteering. Often when I’m put in as lead, my brain

scatters and it's hard for me to delegate properly. People doing things without asking me first lets me become disoriented. Prioritizing process orientation has given me the much needed skills to focus on getting to the end goal as ethically and efficiently as possible, with improvisation if needed.

In order to implement my service project, I need to grow in every portion. To me, that's incredibly important in order to be a leader. Growth isn't linear and it doesn't stop. To implement my service project, I would need to grow in each area. I think I need the most growth in purposeful because it reminds me to stay on track with my goal. Empowerment would also play a big part in this project since the goal is to empower people to be able to fight insecurity on their own. While I think that I'm pretty good at empowerment, growth in this spot would be great for the service project.

The village can continue helping me in my goals by hosting opportunities where we have the chance to be a leader, and to have fun. The service opportunities are perfect and helpful in allowing us to show our growth. They also give us the chance to work on areas of the relational leadership model that we may not be as strong in. I'm very service oriented and so that makes the service opportunities extra exciting for me. It gives me the chance to volunteer with a new place and learn about service options that I'm not already involved in.

My development in the relational leadership model connects pretty closely with my strengths test. My top strength is harmony. To me, that means everyone getting along while being equally included and listened to. That holds hands directly with inclusion being a strength for me in the relational leadership model. My other strengths were responsibility, positivity, developer, and belief. I wouldn't have guessed those as my strengths, but they fit really well. As

a leader, I always try to be positive. I feel like people want to follow a leader that's passionate and excited about what they're doing. My positivity makes it easy to put on a leadership role when I'm volunteering, and helps get people to listen to me. Since I volunteer with places that usually have older volunteers, not everyone wants to listen to a kid. Sometimes it can be hard to get my volunteers to work with me, but it's always easier to do when I sound happy and have a smile on my face. Developer was a surprise but once I thought about it, it made a lot of sense. I tend to see the best in people and I want everyone to do well. Usually, I'm willing to give second chances because I think that everyone should have the chance to grow. I wouldn't have connected that to developer on my own. Belief is a strong part of my relational leadership. It powers everything that I do. I'm not willing to deviate from my core beliefs, which can make me a compelling leader. People pick up on my passion and strength in my beliefs and that makes leadership positions feel more natural. Responsibility was not at all a surprise. I'm the oldest of six kids, so responsibility is in my blood. That shows in my leadership.

One leadership development need that I would have to do, is get in contact with big names in fighting food insecurity. I don't think that would be too much of an issue. Food insecurity isn't a big hitting field. There are nonprofits that tend to be really popular or well known and food insecurity doesn't typically fall under those. People who put their lives into fighting food insecurity are usually happy to spread the word. I would need to get in touch with other food insecurity fighters, which I think is feasible.

Another leadership development need would be organizing the event. Organizing isn't my strong suit because I often feel like I have to be doing everything. Delegating isn't easy for me. Doing that feels lazy and like I'm proving that I'm not good enough to get a task done. In the

past year I've gotten better at fixing that mindset. I think that with support from other leaders in the community, I would be able to do this task without a lot of hardship.

My leadership philosophy has stayed the same since the beginning of class. It's important to be a leader that deserves having the group listen to you. That means valuing and including all voices so long as they're not derogative. A leader shouldn't lead through fear. They should listen to their group and make sure that they're being fair. A leader leads with their group members.