

Leadership Skills Series #2: General Leadership & Purpose/Values¹

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This second publication in the Leadership Skills Series provides Extension professionals with recommendations on how to utilize short leadership videos under the topics of general leadership and purpose/values as tools to develop specific leadership skills. In particular, these videos focus on everyday leadership, utilizing grit, finding one's purpose, and learning how to feel good about work. This publication introduces four videos that can be accessed online and utilized in a number of learning environments like staff meetings, one-on-one coaching, and during volunteer professional development. A brief synopsis, a link to the video, and recommended discussion questions are provided for each video.

General Leadership

Recognizing that everyone has the potential to lead and persevere towards long-term goals can unleash tremendous power and intentionality within Extension. The following videos redefine leadership as the everyday moments that demonstrate how small actions can have a long-term leadership impact.

Video 1: *Everyday leadership*

Speaker: Drew Dudley

Time: 6:14

Where to find this video: https://www.ted.com/talks/drew_dudley_everyday_leadership

In this video, Drew Dudley tells a story of a time when he performed a small gesture, which had a profound impact on a young woman's life. Dudley argues that leadership needs to be redefined from something that is beyond ordinary people, to something everyone can participate in daily by impacting one person at a time. Dudley argues that true leadership is about creating "lollipop moments," those small incidents where a leader can change someone's perspective or make their life a little bit better.

Using *Everyday leadership*

Everyday Leadership is a short video that can be used to help every Extension member recognize his or her value and impact as a leader. Before you watch the video, start the facilitation by asking the group to define leadership and/or moments of leadership. Next, show the video and revisit your leadership definition, asking the group if they want to make any adjustments to the original definition. Additionally, ask the following questions to further reflect on the video:

- How do you define moments of leadership?
- Reflect on the past year, what are some potential "lollipop moments" you created as a leader?

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- How can we create more “lollipop moments” individually and/or as a larger group?
- What is one small thing you could do right now, as a leader, that could have a profound impact on the people around you?
- Is there someone in your life you have yet to acknowledge that has created a “lollipop moment” for you?

Video 2: Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance

Speaker: Angela Lee Duckworth

Time: 6:12

Where to find this video: https://www.ted.com/talks/angela_lee_duckworth_grit_the_power_of_passion_and_perseverance

In this video, Angela Duckworth suggests that the characteristic of grit, which she defines as a passion and perseverance for very long-term goals, has a more significant impact on success than IQ, social intelligence, good looks, health, or talent. In Duckworth’s research with diverse groups, including military cadets, national spelling bee competitors, high school students, rookie teachers, and sales representatives, grit emerged as a significant predictor of performance and overall success.

Using Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance

This video can be used to address the power of perseverance and long-term goals. Start the facilitation by revisiting your organization’s long-term goals and by reviewing some of the obstacles you have experienced over the past six to twelve months. Then, have the participants watch the video and discuss how to apply grit to your group. Possible questions for additional debriefing include:

- Overall, how “gritty” do you feel we are as a group/organization?
- Think of a person in your life you would describe as “gritty.” What makes that person gritty and what could we learn from them that may benefit us as a group?
- What are some ways to become more “gritty” as individuals?
- What might be some barriers to persevering through reaching a long-term goal for you as an individual and us as a group/organization?

- Are there areas where we need to be willing to take more risks, persevere longer, or try again as a group/organization in order to achieve our long-term goals?

Purpose/Values

Employees search for purpose in both their personal and professional lives. This sense of purpose can have a significant impact on an employees’ satisfaction with their work. Thus, leaders across industries should reflect on their organization’s purpose and values to motivate employees. Defining the purpose and values can also lead to higher levels of creativity and innovation. The following videos look to address the importance of purpose/values and aid in the facilitation of these two different concepts.

Video 1: How Great Leaders Inspire Action

Speaker: Simon Sinek

Time: 18:04

Where to find this video: https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action

This video explores how leaders with purpose think and act differently than others. This focus on purpose, or the leader’s “why,” allows the leader to define who they are and why others should follow them. At the end of the video, Simon Sinek suggests that “people do not buy what you do, they buy why you do it.” This emphasis on the person’s “why” attends to the leader’s purpose and lets others know why they are worth following.

Using How Great Leaders Inspire Action

To set up this video for a group, begin by asking the individuals to list three reasons they do the work that they do. Participants do not need to share these; rather, the facilitator can discuss the organization’s espoused mission/purpose/values and ask the group to reflect as to whether their responses align with the organization. After watching the video, debrief the group by asking the following questions:

- As a group, what is our “why”?
- Is this clear to our stakeholders?
- How are we communicating our “why” externally? Internally?
- How does our group/organization “why” overlap with the individual’s own personal “why”?

Video 2: What makes us feel good about our work?

Speaker: Dan Ariely

Time: 20:26

Where to find this video: https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_ariely_what_makes_us_feel_good_about_our_work

Dan Ariely, professor of psychology and behavioral economics, provides insight into what makes people feel good about the work they are doing in their jobs. It is common for some to falsely assume that satisfaction at work is economically motivated; however, Ariely shares convincing evidence that money alone is not fulfilling. Other factors are involved and must be addressed in order to get the best out of employees.

Using What makes us feel good about our work?

This video is a great tool to use when getting employees to think about how they lead others. Participants will have a chance to reflect on what makes tasks meaningful and how they can develop a framework for purposefully motivating others. By establishing meaning and ownership around work, as well as cultivating pride, motivation, and identity, employees can be more productive and happier. After viewing the video, some debriefing questions could include:

- What are meaningful tasks for you personally? What makes them meaningful?
- What types of meaningful tasks do we ask our employees/volunteers to engage in?
- How are we compensating employees/volunteers or acknowledging their efforts?
- Where are we finding low levels of accountability in our organization? How can we establish more ownership in these areas?

In Summary

This publication in the Leadership Skills Series introduced videos under the topics of general leadership and purpose/values. The recommended videos can be used to help develop leadership skills among Extension employees in a group setting. The videos in this publication suggests that organizations are especially effective when each member of the team functions like a leader, utilizes the power of grit, knows their “why”, and feels good about their work.

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