

LeaderShape 2013



During Winter Break of 2013, I participated in a conference called, The LeaderShape Institute, the name of which I realized is very appropriate given everything that happened in those six days. The LeaderShape Institute is a six-day institute that works to facilitate people's realization of a vision based on a set of core values, and then provides the skills to execute those passions on a large scale. The overarching purpose of it was to get people to realize their potential and help them apply that to something they were passionate about, all in the hopes of making the world a better place. People's visions were from areas as diverse as aiding poverty, to providing global healthcare, to the promoting of cultural awareness. These visions were realized through reflection, planning, and large and small group work. Through all these means, I was able to come up with my vision—a world where people have the knowledge, skills, and opportunities to escape the poverty cycle and the subsequent power to thrive in a modern society.

I had heard from so many people who had already participated in the institute that it was a life changing experience, but nobody had really explained to me why it was

so great; maybe this is why I was a bit weary of attending and taking time away from home to be there. Nonetheless, I went into LeaderShape with an open mind.

I have been in some sort of leadership position since the sixth grade and through those I had thought that I had a solidified vision of what a leader was; however, through LeaderShape, I formed a slightly different, and more comprehensive view of what leadership really is: “A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way” (John C. Maxwell). To me, leaders are those who can mobilize others with similar passions, and then provide the means to make that passion a reality. LeaderShape helped me to realize this broader definition of leadership. One thing that was stressed heavily from day one was the idea of Community and developing that community within the LeaderShape group. The first morning we were there, everybody participated in a Low Ropes Course. As a part of the course there were multiple events all of which had a similar thread—teamwork. From just these activities, we were shown how important it was for people to work in concert with each other. For most of the events, they would not have been completed without group effort, whether it be people offering their thoughts or opinions, or their physical strength. This type of activity showed the “Value of One, The Power of All,” appropriately the theme for the day. More important than that ropes course, was the small group activities that occurred throughout the week as the “Traveling Wrecking Balls”. Being with my group and existing in the state of vulnerability we were in— sharing our beliefs and thoughts— built a sense of community that I would not have imagined possible in such a short amount of time.

In my time at LeaderShape, we also did a substantial amount of reflection. Of all the reflection, the most meaningful to me entailed my Core Values. These core values were supposed to be five simple words that described who you were and what you believed in. My five words were acceptance, balance, inner-harmony, learning, and authenticity. To me these words are not just five separate entities, but rather words that intertwined with each other for form a uniform ideal by which I live my life. With these five values we were set off to write them on a tee shirt and then display them to everybody, again in a state of vulnerability. It was interesting seeing other’s values and how they aligned with my values and how they differed. What made this whole exercise interesting though, was what we did after. We were read a statement that related to our values and were then told to go in one of four corners depending on how strongly we agreed. This was a true measure of how well I followed my values and it was interesting to see how sometimes how I acted differed with some of my core values and how they aligned.

The other heavily stressed aspect of LeaderShape included challenging what our world currently is, looking at what we want it to be, and developing the skills and finding the resources to make that vision a reality. To me, this was where I realized what people were saying about how inspiring LeaderShape really is. Prior to realizing what my actual vision was, I had had some ideas of what I wanted to do and how I wanted my LeaderShape experience to be. In the early stages of vision planning, I was primarily thinking of band and the more specific passions; however,

once I realized that my true passion lied in service to others, I was filled with an overwhelming sense of excitement and inspiration. In my "Breakthrough Blueprint", I discussed my passion for helping those less fortunate than myself. Poverty has always been something dear to me heart. Some of my most vivid memories as a child going to India were not those spent with family, but those traumatizing ones that involved seeing children my age begging on the streets for money. Since then, poverty has been something that I have wanted to eradicate, or at least work against. Through LeaderShape I realized the ideal future that I would like to create entails equal opportunity in the sense that people have the knowledge, kills, and opportunities to escape the poverty cycle and the power to thrive in modern society. This would become a reality by providing citizens of the world with the real world knowledge and skills that would allow them to obtain jobs and maintain a healthy and sustainable lifestyle. However, as a more manageable goal I discussed being an adult leader in a Boy Scout troop in the local Clifton area. My friend and I had once talked about doing this just for fun, but it was at LeaderShape when I realized that it was not just something I wanted to do, being an Adult Leader was something I had an obligation to myself to do. I know how much being an Eagle Scout has impacted me and I would love to instill that same sense of personal and civic responsibility. Additionally, Scouting taught me so many real life skills like finance, survival, and leadership that I would have had no hopes getting had I not been in scouting. All these skills were instrumental in my success in life and being able to impact others boys coming to manhood in the Clifton area, I feel that I would be able to bring my vision to reality, if even on a small scale.

After LeaderShape was said and done, I felt like I learned a lot about whom I was and how I could use my individual skills to lead in an effective way a path to my vision. Overall, LeaderShape was an amazing experience for me, from the friends I gained, to the inspirational lessons of leadership that will stick with me.

BREAKTHROUGH BLUEPRINT

My Commitment to a Healthy Disregard for the Impossible

Name Austin Menezes Date 12/17/2013 Sponsor/Session _____

What ideal future do I want to create, and for whom? **(VISION)**

One where people have the knowledge, skills, and opportunities to escape the poverty cycle, and with these things, have the power to thrive in a modern society.

What challenging goals will result in a breakthrough toward this ideal future? **(STRETCH GOALS)**

Providing the citizens of Cincinnati with the real world knowledge, skills, and opportunities that would allow them to get jobs and maintain a healthy and sustainable lifestyle.

What realistic goals will help me get started on my vision? **(MANAGEABLE GOALS)**

One goal would be to be an adult leader at a Boy Scout Troop in the local Clifton area in order to instill a sense of personal and community responsibility to help them thrive as they move into adulthood.

With whom do I need to connect to ensure success for my vision and goals? **(RELATIONSHIPS)**

I would need to connect with Troop leaders and the district headquarters with whom I could potentially work with, I would also like to connect with people who would be interested in pursuing this vision alongside me.

What immediate steps will I take to jump-start this breakthrough? **(ACTION PLANNING)**

I would like to look out for, and join, a scout troop as soon as possible in order to start the process.

DO NOT COMPLETE THIS BOX UNTIL DAY 5 AFTERNOON

<p>MY CORE VALUES Acceptance Balance Inner Harmony Learning Authenticity.</p>	<p>Principles that guide my actions... Acting openly and accepting other beliefs and cultures working to be sure that I have a balance in life that leads to inner happiness. Authenticity is also important and importance in regards to authentic learning.</p>
	<p>I want to be the kind of person who... people look to as a leader and somebody who has their life in order. Additionally, I want to be viewed as somebody who is accepting of others and their beliefs and wishes to provide them.</p>