**Self-Assessment #1 – Anthony Luzzi**

**How would you describe your current understanding and use of Relational Leadership?**

We are born the most imperfect leaders possible. A baby has the given instinct to survive at all costs, to the point where they will steal nutrients from their mother if they need it to survive. This behavior could be described as necessary or selfish depending on who you ask. While this instinct slowly fades as babies mature and become more competent, for many people, an inkling of this instinct remains. Typically, it is referred to as selfishness or drive, but we shouldn’t make the mistake to forget this instinct was bred from the will to survive at all costs regardless of how it affects others.

Even today I relate with this feeling. No matter how many Leadership seminars and programs I have attended, I still see myself as a selfishly centered person, and this affects my relationship with the relational leadership model. Over the years, my view on helping others has greatly matured. Being involved in service and leadership organizations such as Boy Scouts and National Honor Society, has helped move my focus slowly away from myself and my future, and towards helping others also achieve the goals they want to reach. Some of the programs that have had the biggest impact on my view towards helping others are programs that have required me to put others before myself. A good example is tutoring other students for National Math Honor Society (weekly for 2 hours) and volunteering for Miracle League, which is a local recreational baseball league for kids that might not otherwise get the chance to play baseball. As my focus and views have matured to putting others before myself, I have found myself more involved in the Relational Leadership process. I find that I use the Relational Leadership Model the most in school. For group projects it is much easier to focus on the work/problem and delegate mindlessly than it is to consciously facilitate communication and understanding. However, I recognize that when I have showed understanding and empathy to others inputs and help them invest to the project in their own way, it forms a much greater bond for the group and allows us to complete better work.

**How would you define each of the 5 main components (purpose, ethics, empowering, inclusive, process-oriented) of the model in your own words?**

The relational Leadership model is dependent on a strong foundation of values to be successful. It is a process of working together that finds power in finding the best aspect or skill of everyone involved and using those skills to form a unique and powerful team that can focus on important tasks. The cornerstone of this model is inclusion. In order to ensure your team is as strong as possible, every team member must feel included and participate in the team. Inclusion is actively engaging every member of the team in a way they feel comfortable and important. One of the best ways to apply this component as a leader, is to invest time and energy into team members by asking for their opinions and inputs; which in turn causes them to invest back into the group by providing their own feedback and ideas. When asking for team members inputs, it not only helps to include them in the group but empowers them to decide on an important task or give an input that the team values. Empowerment can also be seen when team leaders trust members with doing something integral to the team’s success. They are investing in a member in hopes that they will continue to benefit the team.

The most important components of the relational leadership model is purposefulness. As Winston S. Churchill said, “It’s not enough to have lived. We should be determined to live for something.”. Similarly, it’s not enough to be a great team, a great team must have a purpose or objective to work towards. Once a vision or objective is in place, all members can work diligently towards it. Without a goal, teams can end up working on things they didn’t need to or even things that hurt them in the long run.

Another important concept of relational leadership that helps teams stay on track and avoid major issues is practicing ethical behaviors. Ethical behaviors are moral values and standards that should be used as a backbone of the group. If there is ever a question or decision to be made, these values should be at the forefront of consideration. Some important examples of ethical behaviors are integrity and respect. There should be no dishonesty or deceit between group members or from group members. Furthermore, being respectful to others creates a positive environment others want to be a part of.

Having a process or mission statement is the final component of Relational Leadership, and also the one that ties everything together. Having a purpose, ethics, empowerment, and inclusion filled team is complex. Writing down the values you will abide by and process you will use to get something done or make sure everyone is included, gives you something you can always look back at to make sure you’re on the right path. The methodology that shows how important this is is to believe that the process is as important as the end goal. It is important to realize, its not just what you do, but also how you get there, and Process Orientation ensures the journey coincides with your own personal and team values and goals.

**With which areas of the model are you most confident? Less confident? Why do you feel that way?**

Although I can find problems in my life for every aspect of the relational leadership model, I am most confident with the inclusive and empowerment areas. Being born with two siblings, I had to learn from a young age that empowering and including them in activities led to less chores for myself. I practice these parts of the model by calling on others opinions and empowering their actions in school work groups.

I am least confident in the ethics, process-oriented and purpose areas of the relational leadership model. While it is easy for me to observe why certain ethics are important, it is very hard for me to consciously check them before making decisions. I am very naturally a rule-breaker. While this personality trait has always been useful as someone who wants to innovate and be an entrepreneur, it makes it very hard to abide by direct rules. Ironically, if I write my own rules (which is inclusive and empowering) I [want to] break them much less often.

**How does the purpose of the service action proposal, of SLC 101, and of the Village support you in better understanding and using the model?**

SLC has helped me better understand and use the relational leadership model by providing me with literary resources that properly describe the model and promoting activities that help me live the model.