

**The Youth to Adult Transition**: How to be a Successful Leader

2015 National Order of the Arrow Conference

Session Length: 60 Minutes

Through this session, you will:

**Explain** The characteristics of a Successful Leader

**Demonstrate** Traits that successful leaders use to lead others

**Guide** Scenarios onSuccessful Leadership

**Enable** To identify the traits that successful leaders display

This session will help the Lodge leadership with the Journey to Excellence Requirements: #16 Leadership development.

The theme of NOAC 2015 is “It Starts With Us”. This session will relay this theme in the following ways:

* Identify exceptional well known leaders and what distinguishes them as successful leaders.
* Identify the qualities of successful leaders.
* Understand how to cultivate and improve leadership qualities.

**SESSION NARRATIVE**

**INTRODUCTION 5 Minutes**

Basic introduction of the course will lay the groundwork for the session including; who you are, what the objective of the session is, and how your experience relates to the material in this session.

**Trainer Instructions:** Welcome everybody, introduce yourself, and give a brief background about your experiences as a leader in the Order of the Arrow. Allow for all members to introduce themselves and to give an example of what they believe a successful leader should be, know and do.

**EXPLAIN 3 Minutes**

**Trainer Instructions:** Read the prompt below about characteristics found in Successful Leaders.

The Order is a youth led organization. It should be the purpose of every lodge to get as many

Youth involved which can enable growth and retention of membership; to develop youth members in becoming successful leaders in the organization and later in life. Allowing our youth to remain involved is to help them gain experiences that would allow them to develop many of the traits that successful leaders use in leading organizations. With each new slate of lodge officers and a set of new inductees the organization benefits with new ideas and new ways successful leaders effectively encourage and make timely decisions that can empower others in achieving their goals. The Order is not a youth-only organization and advisers and other key adult leaders play an important role in encouraging the development of essential traits that OA leaders should apply to lead Arrowmen. What are some of the traits that most successful leaders develop and naturally display? A Successful leader is motivated and motivates others; always makes good use of his communication skills. Among a variety of good traits that successful leaders could hold, we will discuss a list of fourteen traits with examples offered by the University of Missouri: Personality, Persuasive, persistent, patience, perceptive, probity, praise giving, positive orientation, People based, possible, practical, progressive, prepared and power-builder.

**SUCCESSFUL LEADER TRAITS**

**DEMONSTRATE 15 Minutes**

1. **Personality** - An outgoing style - the ability and enjoyment of "working the crowd" is a very useful skill both for leadership and many other parts of life. “Shake hands, offer a smile and always greet people.”

**Charisma** is often thought of as a trait of many leaders. We are not quite sure what charisma is. It is probably the ability of a person to gain very quickly the attention, respect and trust of others. Famous leaders like Martin Luther King and John Kennedy is said to have had charisma. No question, it is an effective tool for leaders in certain situations, but it is difficult to learn. **Humor**and **warmth** are effective in most leadership (and non-leadership) situations. If we are not fortunate enough to have them now, we can develop them. Start by developing a good smile and laugh.

2. **Persuasive** - communications skills - you must be able to speak effectively in public and in most cases, you must have good writing skills also. You must be able to communicate in the style or jargon of the group or organization. Your message must fit your audience. For example, large words and complex sentences will not work with people of limited formal education. Writing in technical terms may help in a few instances, but writing in clear simple terms helps in almost all cases.

3. **Persistent** - **Keep trying** - most social changes, large and small, is and should be slow. Major changes in values and beliefs often occur between generations. It is unusual for major social changes to occur in less than a few years or even decades. Changes in the educational system often take several decades. If change occurs too fast, people become uncertain about what is "right," good or appropriate. They lose their sense of security. Something as simple as a small change in curriculum of the local school system may take years. But if the idea is good, the results may last decades and effect many people. Also realize that in historical perspective, the changes you are working toward are small and incremental.

4. **Patience** - There are times when you will need to relax and wait for events or time to pass. Many new ideas will become accepted after people have had time to think about them. Most people who are angry or excited about a proposed change will cool down with time. Patience is a hard attribute for many young and not so young to learn. Most things, especially if they are worthwhile, do not happen quickly. Self-discipline is an essential trait for leadership.

Patience and persistence are essential twins for getting things done. Always remember *it takes time,*time for leadership, and time for change. Patience and persistence are very difficult traits for the young. The American culture wants it now - not tomorrow. But the real world does not work that way.

5. **Perceptive** - You must be sensitive to other people's wants and needs and to changes in these wants and needs. Genuine interest in another person will often develop a sense of trust by that person. A gifted politician is one who can carefully always perceive the current mood of his constituents. The ability to listen is an essential skill of a good leader. You must stay in touch with your supporters**.** If the group is large or unorganized, this is very difficult to do because of the lack of accurate feedback.

As a public leader, I find it difficult to differentiate between isolated concerns about issues which effect only one or a few people and more general concerns. Most people will not take the time to make contact and discuss issues unless the issue becomes important to them.

6. **Probity** - Honesty and trustworthy, you need to be honest both now and in the future. Most people will believe and follow someone they trust. Openness and candorare characteristics that most people appreciate. There are a few people who will take advantage of such traits, but the vast majority will appreciate them.

The age-old Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" is a good standard to follow both today and tomorrow.

7. **Praise giving** - "Strokes" - almost all people like praise and compliments. Almost everyone likes to be recognized especially if they have worked hard on the project. It may be possible to give too many kind words, but it is very difficult to do so especially if they are given in a sincere manner. If you, a leader, are working with a committee or other team, make absolutely sure that everyone is given full public recognition. If you don't, your support the next time is likely to be much less.

Mistakes and errors must be dealt with as quickly as possible. If the errors are part of the public record, then your responses should be public also. However, you should take the public blame. Do not point to some supporter or employee and say: "it was all their fault." If you do, your career as a leader will be short!

8. **Positive orientation** - The future should always be seen as bright and optimistic. **Tomorrow will be better than today.** Norman Vincent Peale in his bestselling book of fifty years ago,**“*The Power of Positive Thinking”***, contributed to a deeply held American belief about what the future will be like. We as a culture have an aversion to the negative except, paradoxically, in the mass media where the only "news" is defined to be negative stories - what went wrong today - crimes, injures, death and destruction.

Problems can be solved by our actions. And we want our leaders to portray a positive optimistic attitude. Problems are not "problems", but opportunities. Simultaneously, we want our leaders to be honest and realistic. So in dismal situations, the statements of optimism must be tempered. If there are no easy answers, say so. You must be open and honest.

9. **People based** - Leadership must be **of**, **by** and **for the people**. The only reason for leadership should be for the benefit of the people. The current tendency is to look for the benefits to an individual and not to the larger group. One reason why many so-called leaders are distrusted today is that they are seen as self-serving - primarily interested in their own benefits. Congress is seen as a "good old boys' club" with high salaries and super plush benefits; not at all like the citizen-legislators which the founding fathers had in mind. The rapidly passing term limits on politicians are an attempt to reduce the number of professional politicians. Professional leaders of any type are likely to be seen as suspect.

10. **Possible** - A leader must be **realistic** to determine the art of the possible. How much can realistically be accomplished in the time and resources available? How strong is the desire for change? Are the people willing to pay the price either in reduced services or higher taxes - whatever it takes? Very often people call for changes, but when they find out how difficult or expensive it will be to solve the problems, they will not support the proposed solutions. Determining which ideas in any organization or setting are politically and economically feasible and which are not is a vital asset for any leader. Do not jump into "solving" a problem until you have given very careful consideration to the process of solution. Will the other people support the proposed solution? **A little caution is a good asset for a leader.** Bold and swift action by the knight on the white horse occurs primarily in the movies. An old folk saying has considerable wisdom for leadership: "fools rush in where angels fear to tread."

11. **Practical** - A leader must realize that pleasing all of the people all of the time is not possible. A leader must be ***practical*** in decisions made catering to the majority, ***perceptive*** enough to realize when the majority is right and ***strong*** enough to take action without the support of the majority when the majority is wrong. At the same time you must be strong enough to stand by your convictions and accept the criticisms - valid and invalid - which are sure to come.

Again, **practical** and **possible** are twins that have considerable interrelationships.

12. **Progressive** - An effective leader will move the group forward. Incorporating new strategies in leadership and communications is important. Sometimes progress may mean maintaining the current situation. It depends upon the group's needs and desires.

Successful leaders are progressive in other things such as media usage. A person cannot be a successful candidate for president or most other public offices if he/she cannot make full use of the media. The Kennedy - Nixon debates proved that many years ago. Similarly, many CEOs of businesses have found themselves suddenly facing the media to answer questions about their organization.

13. **Prepared** - A leader must be **knowledgeable** about his or her goals, the variety of means for reaching the goals, the needs necessary to meet the goals and about the people in the group. An effective leader must be both organized and prepared. Many leaders have opened their mouths and inserted their foot and suddenly found that they were no longer regarded as leaders.

A more modern folk saying is that "you should not have your mouth in gear while your mind is in neutral."

14. **Power-builder** - Even the best leaders cannot tackle most leadership jobs alone. They need to have and to motivate followers to become involved in getting the job done. They must trust other people to get a job done and they must be able to delegate. A similar trait is the **ability to network** - to build linkages of friends and acquaintances that may be able to provide needed assistance at some future time. A classic study by James Coleman many years ago showed that who you knew was one of the most important things that influenced life successes.

**Trainer Instructions:** After dividing the class into groups of 3-5 members (combine youth and adults), use the three scenarios (or modify if desired) to assist in a discussion on what are the possible traits that successful leaders would use and why the approach taken other members in these types of situations. There are no correct answers. Each individual must realize that each person could use a different set of experiences and skills to approach certain situations. The goal of the scenarios is to strengthen the ideas of how successful leaders act. Give five (5) minutes for a person from each group to discuss the group’s ideas of what traits they believe successful leader must possess to positively affect each Situation.

Examples of situations that may be used for these scenarios are:

* Participation at the last Lodge Service Project was disappointing and the Lodge has an important and very public Community Service Project in 2 months.
* Lodge Membership over the last 2 years has been stagnant; retention of youth members has dropped.
* The Unit Election Teams have only completed unit elections in 45% of council troops due to reluctant Scoutmasters and the limited time before the Spring Fellowship dates.
* The NOAC contingent leader will depart on a short notice business trip that will take her away for three weeks. With only two months before the event, members are concerned with the lack of information available. The competent leader works long hours at work and has failed to provide timely information.

**GUIDE 25 Minutes**

The groups most discuss and use specific examples of successful leadership experiences in their Lodges. The three scenarios (Adapted from “Redefining the Youth/Adult Roles”) are designed to illustrate situations that have or may occur in Lodges and how successful leaders should use their unique skills to take immediate action or through a particular trait the leader will empower others to positively change the outcome of the situation. The first scenario shows the Adult crossing his boundary as an Advisor. The second scenario shows the Adult maintaining the proper balance as an Advisor strengthening essential traits in the Youth and empowering him to find a solution. The third scenario falls somewhere in between but ultimately is another example of a well-meaning Advisor taking on the role of a Youth and failing to enable a future leader.

Scenario 1: The Show Must Go On

Alex is the Youth in charge of one of two ordeal ceremony teams. His Advisor John noticed that Alex has not communicated routinely with members of his team in two months, with only six weeks before the lodge’s Ordeal weekend. John speaks to Alex on the phone to discuss his concern and quickly begins to chastise Alex for “allegedly” failing to communicate. He tells Alex that he will “take care of this by putting together and sending a written schedule out for the team.” John feels it is important that the ceremony team maintains good communications. Comments/questions for discussion: What traits did both leaders demonstrated in this scenario? Which traits of a successful leader could have been applied in this situation?

Scenario 2: Help without Helping

Jacob is the newly elected Lodge Vice Chief which in his lodge puts him in charge of the Lodge’s annual Lodge Leadership Development (LLD) Training. The Lodge Advisor has appointed Bob to serve as Jacob’s Advisor for the LLD. Jacob, as an ambitious, but relatively new member of the Order is quickly overwhelmed with designing such an important lodge training event. Jacob worries about what trainings to include, who will be the trainers, and how to encourage members to attend (which has been a difficulty for the Lodge in past years). Jacob calls Bob and asks him if he would pick the trainings to include and recruit trainers as he knows Bob has been in the Lodge for a long time and he thinks he feels overwhelmed. Bob asks Jacob why he is overwhelmed and tells Jacob he will help him pick trainings and provide some names for potential trainers for Jacob to contact. He suggests Jacob elicits desired trainings from the Lodge Executive Committee and to contact the potential trainers to see if they are available to teach. Comments/questions for discussion: What trait(s) has Bob demonstrated and which ones you think Jacob now has now positively experienced?

Scenario 3: Lodge Success?

Robert is an Advisor in the Lodge and has recently completed the Adult Wood Badge Training. Robert has identified the Lodge Extended Elangomat Program as one of his Wood Badge Tickets that he must complete within 18 months. Excited about this program and it’s potential to reduce the Lodge’s “Sash and Dash” problem he brings it back to the Lodge Executive Committee where all are in favor of beginning to implement the program. The Youth member Jake is put in charge of this program. This program requires Elangomat Training and steps for the Elangomats to follow after the Ordeal Weekend. It also requires someone to coordinate contact info and follow up with the Elangomats to ensure they are reaching out to the new Ordeal members that were in their clan. Robert goes full speed ahead planning and scheduling the training for the following month so the program can be implemented for the next Ordeal. Jake is the trainer for this training and has been kept informed since the Lodge designated him the Youth in charge of Elangomats. Jake is a great trainer, the training is well attended, and all are excited for this program to be implemented at the next Ordeal. Comments/questions for discussion: What traits were (or not) coached, developed and learned by Robert and could any had been applied by Jake?

**ENABLE 10 Minutes**

A Youth member should facilitate the discussion on:

* Of the list of traits demonstrated in class which three you consider essential to all lodge leaders?
* What traits should Youth leaders seek to have and to bring to the table to help achieve the Lodge’s goals?
* What traits could Adult leaders bring to the table to help achieve the Lodge’s goals?

**Trainer Instructions:** Allow a Youth member to facilitate the discussion using the prompts. Have them (or their designee) write down answers on a flip chart or white board. They should be considering the scenario discussions and even the decision to have a Youth lead this discussion!

**CONCLUSION 2 Minutes**

It is important to define empowerment which can be an important leadership competency for lodge leaders to practice. Explain how it relates to the results from the facilitated discussions. Empowerment is a management practice of sharing information, rewards, and power with members of the organization so that they can take initiative and make decisions to solve problems and improve service and performance.

**Trainer Instructions:** Define empowerment and give a real life example of empowerment (i.e. by empowering leaders who genuinely value the input of their team members and allow them to fail without repercussions may be best able to cultivate an autonomous learning environment. Then tie in how the points from the Youth led discussion are examples of ways to create synergy within the lodge. Encourage participants to remember these elements and traits and to bring them back to their lodges to promote Youth/Adult synergistic relationships.

**TRAINER PREPARATION**

The preferred trainer for this session should be a young adult who can relate to the life of the young adult member (between the ages of 18-28). He should be experienced in the leadership positions of the lodge (preferably as both a youth and an adult).

Appendix Resources:

* Power point slides
* White Board or Flip Chart for Discussion Results
* Scenario Instructions Handout for Actors
* Discussion Prompt Handout for Youth facilitator