

20-Week Plan for Leadership Effectiveness

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### 20-Week Plan for Leadership Effectiveness

My personal- best leadership project is multi-dimensional and will continue to benefit myself and others long after it is complete. My personal-best leadership project is to become an Africa Yoga Project Ambassador. Becoming an Africa Yoga Project Ambassador is an “opportunity to join Africa Yoga Project in Kenya and be part of a committed group of individuals changing the world through the dynamic energy of active service” ([africayogaproject.org](http://africayogaproject.org)). Becoming an ambassador has two requirements. The requirements are to (1) raise \$10,000 in order to fund the program and support local communities in Africa, and (2) participate in the two-week immersive program which focuses on community outreach and an extensive yoga curriculum.

This 20 week project will start on June 1, 2015 and will continue on until October 19, 2015. I expect to graduate Arizona State University in May 2015; this project will be a great way to apply my accumulation of skills and knowledge to a real life scenario. This project faces multiple challenges. One of the greatest challenges is raising a minimum of \$10,000. In addition to that amount, I will have to raise extra money in order to afford airfare and other accommodations. The second challenge is developing a team that will help me reach my goals. This may be best achieved if I find people who share my vision and want to help the African community. The third challenge is feeling prepared and worthy to take on this venture. I will have to commit to my practice of both yoga and leadership in order to develop my competence and confidence in these areas. I will face new challenges on a daily basis and I must adapt to those challenges by having an open heart and being accepting and willing to learn.

As of right now, the immediate project team consists of me, my husband, my parents, Jessica Micheletti (an Africa Yoga Project Ambassador), and the local yoga community. My husband, Chadd Thompson, is a full-time college student who is working towards his bachelors degree in graphic design. He will be able to help me develop flyers and promotional materials that will assist me in the fundraising process. My mother, Kelly Reese, is a project manager and has incredible organizational skills. She has a large network of friends and resources that will become beneficial in the fundraising process as well. Jessica Micheletti is an Africa Yoga Project Ambassador and yoga instructor at the local studio, Zuda Yoga. She has a lot of experience and knowledge about the Africa Yoga Project and is willing to answer any questions that I may have. Jessica will also help me make connections. The yoga community consists of a diversity of people that I know and practice yoga with. They all share a love for yoga and are very supportive of seva projects, such as the Africa Yoga Project.

When thinking about this project and what it entails, I feel both ecstatic and nervous all at the same time. I feel overwhelmed, incompetent, challenged, exhilarated, and motivated. I find that the most difficult part of the project will be figuring out the process and identifying procedures for fundraising. Reaching out for donations is outside of my comfort zone because I do not like asking people for money. It will also be challenging to visit a strange country without any of my friends or family there with me. However, I see this aspect to be a reward as well. Arriving in Kenya and helping others achieve sustainability and learn the benefits of yoga will be just as beneficial to me as it is to those that I help.

This project is so important to me because it gives me purpose. It is an opportunity to make a positive impact on people's lives. It is an opportunity to spread love and knowledge internationally. This project is an outlet for me to form relationships and gain insight into what can help make the world a better place.

The following is a 20-Week project plan that will be followed on my journey of becoming an Africa Yoga Project Ambassador. This project is two-fold and consists of raising funds followed by completing the program.

### **Week 1- Envision the Future**

Week 1 will consist of clarifying my values and defining my objectives for embarking on this project. I will also use this week to develop a vision statement. Clarifying my values is an important step in the process because it will help me find my inner voice as a leader. According to the research of Kouzes and Posner, "the evidence is clear: to be the most effective, every leader must learn to find the voice that represents who he or she is. When you have clarified your values and found your voice, you will also find the inner confidence necessary to express ideas, chose a direction, make tough decisions, act with determination, and be able to take charge of your life rather than impersonating others" (p.48). My development of a vision statement will be utilized to coerce others into sharing my vision and helping me achieve the fundraising goal of \$10,000.

### **Week 2-Make Connections**

Week 2 will be dedicated to facilitating relationships and developing a team. I will focus on making connections with team members along with outside resources, while establishing cooperative goals and roles for the fundraising project.

### **Week 3-Innovate and Create**

Week 3's main purpose is to collaborate with the team to develop effective fundraising strategies and techniques. In order to make our goal of raising \$10,000 more achievable, the team will have to break down our big goal into multiple small goals. After interviewing the account manager, Tiffany Nyguyen, Kouzes and Posner concluded that "when you break a big project down into pieces and try a lot of little things, you also make progress more likely"(p.196). This week will also be used to organize the tools and resources that will contribute to our success.

### **Week 4- Inspire a Shared Vision**

Week 4 will be used to promote fundraising events and occurrences to the public so that they are readily aware of when and where the events will be taking place. In order to motivate people to donate in the first place, it will be our goal to inspire a shared vision of the Africa Yoga Project into the local community. We will make our cause a cause for commitment, and we will inspire others to be part of that cause. According to Kouzes and Posner, "people have a deep desire to make a difference. They want to know that they have done something on this earth, that there's a purpose to their existence" (p.120). By inspiring a shared vision, we will motivate others to make a difference through their donations.

### **Week 5-Implement Methods**

Week 5 will be the first leap into the pool of possibilities. The team and I will bring the fundraising ideas to life. We will put the planned tools and resources into effect. This will be the first week that the team reaches out for donations from the public. This is also the first week that the team will be able to identify positive outcomes and potential set backs.

### **Week 6-Develop Confidence and Competence**

Week 6 will consist of developing personal confidence and competence so that I will be able to effectively share my experiences and knowledge with the people in Africa. By practicing my yoga and teaching skills, I will be able to further develop my personal confidence and competence levels. This will result in an increase of confidence and competence from those that I educate and share my knowledge with. In week 6, I will incorporate these practices into the project plan of becoming an Africa Yoga Ambassador. This practice will continue on for the entire term of the project.

### **Week 7-Evaluate Progress**

The goal of week 7 is to evaluate the success and failures of our fundraising efforts. We will determine what changes need to be made in order to obtain better results. While the team may get frustrated and place blame on each other in the process of confronting any recent failure, evaluating progress will help us identify what is and is not working. Referring to war and blame, Virginia Woolf summarizes how catastrophe, or failure, can be beneficial to address: "One has only to read, to look, to listen, to remember. But why say 'blame'? Why, if it was an illusion, not praise the catastrophe,

whatever it was, that destroyed illusion and put truth in its place?" (p.12, Woolf).

Evaluating progress will help us see the truth and find more progressive methods.

### **Week 8-Restructure and Reorganize**

After evaluating the success along with the failures that have been experienced, week 8 will be used to exercise out-sight and to set new goals. This will be done through the research of what outside leaders, individuals, organizations, and even future Africa Yoga Project Ambassadors are doing to raise money for a cause. Looking outside of our own experience will enable the team to develop new ideas and find ways to restructure our fundraising efforts. The team will also establish new goals that are dependent on the current success and failures of the team.

### **Week 9-Recognize Individual and Team Contributions**

Week 9 is all about recognizing those on the team for their hard work, and recognizing those who have contributed so far. In order to recognize people, I plan on sending out thank you cards, emails, etc.. Saying thank you in many forms throughout this process is necessary for people to feel appreciated and for them to want to continue working with me on this project. Kouzes and Posner studied the effect of saying please and thank you after observing the employment turn- around rate at the Sullivan and Cromwell law firm. What they found is that "personal congratulations rank at the top of the most powerful non financial motivators identified by employees" (p.295). Another way that I will recognize contributions is by showing the team that I believe in them and I trust in their abilities to achieve our goal. Kouzes and Posner state that "believing in others is an extraordinarily powerful force in propelling performance" (p.279). I will

show my team that I believe in them through verbal and nonverbal communication practices.

### **Week 10-Enlist More Volunteers**

Every week is a new challenge in the project of fundraising. In the occurrence of new fundraising events, I may have to enlist more people to help with our venture half way through the project. Week 10's plan is to prepare for uncertainty and enlist more volunteers. This to avoid the risk of not having enough volunteers to help me raise money. I will enlist others by animating my vision and by appealing to common ideals.

### **Week 11-Develop Confidence and Competence**

As the leader, I will need to set up the new volunteers for success. I need to train them on the techniques and strategies that have been used in order to raise funds. I will need to develop their confidence and competence so that they will be able to organize events effectively and ask for donations appropriately.

### **Week 12-Evaluate Progress**

Week 12 will be centered around soliciting more feedback, addressing problems, and considering new options. Considering that there are only three more weeks to collect the remainder of donations that are needed, this week will be about challenging the process. Virginia Woolf has described many moments of how challenging the process can make one feel, but I found this quote to be one of my favorites: "the mysterious property of its kind--put back into the mind, it became at once very exciting, and important; and as it darted and sank, and flashed hither and thither, set up such a wash and tumult of ideas that it was impossible to sit still" (p.6, Woolf). This quote was

made when Woolf was daydreaming about a fish who is caught on a hook and fighting for freedom while being reeled in by the fisherman. Just like the fish, my team and I will be caught on the hook of a deadline and a minimum fundraising goal of \$10,000. While we struggle to make it, there is no telling if our goal will be achieved until the bitter end.

### **Week 13-Restructure and Reorganize**

After carefully considering the observations and ideas, this week will be focused on restructuring and reorganizing our fundraising efforts for a second time. This will be our last attempt to develop strategies and techniques that will bring home the bacon.

### **Week 14-Attend to the Present**

At this point in time, the most effective thing that the leader can do is attend to the present. I need to help out wherever I can and make sure that my team has everything that they need. If I want a successful future, then I need to make sure that I am paying attention to what is happening in the moment.

### **Week 15- Prepare for Change**

Week 15 is one of the final weeks before traveling to Kenya. While continuing on with the fundraising efforts, this week will be used for final preparations of the trip. This may include packing, studying, getting immunized and conducting more research.

### **Week 16- Finalize the Fundraising Process and Submit Donations**

Week 16 will be the final week to raise funds. Once all of the funds have been collected, it will be time to submit the donations to the Africa Yoga Project. These donations will be considered as a voluntary gift. However, Marcel Mauss clarifies that no gift

is free or voluntary. “The form usually taken is that of the gift generously offered; but the accompanying behavior is formal pretense and social deception, while the transaction itself is based on obligation and self interest” (p.1, *The Gift*). In reality, the gift of my donations is exactly as Mauss has described. I will be giving this gift in self-interest and obligation, with the desire to travel to Kenya and complete the ambassador program.

### **Week 17-Celebrate Team Accomplishments**

Week 17 will be focused on celebrating team accomplishments and giving recognition. The goal of this week is to make everyone feel good about what they have done and to express gratitude to those that have helped.

### **Week 18-Begin Immersive Program in Kenya**

If everything goes accordingly, I will be traveling to Kenya in week 18. I will immerse myself in another culture and begin to train in the ambassador program. This will consist of “attending, observing, and assisting in various outreach settings, such as: informal settlements, prisons and schools” ([africayogaproject.com](http://africayogaproject.com)). Throughout my first week, I will take the time to invest in trust and show concern for others. According to Kouzes and Posner, “psychologists have also found that people who are trusting are more likely to be happy and psychologically adjusted than are those who view the world with suspicion and distrust. People who are perceived as trusting are more sought out as friends, more frequently listened to, and subsequently more influential” (p.220). Establishing trust and being vulnerable enough to trust others first will expand my credibility as a leader throughout the program. Also, by showing concern for others I assist in building that foundation of trust. Showing concern for others helps people open up and show concern for you.

**Week 19-Complete the Yoga Ambassador program**

Week 19 will be my second and last week in Kenya. “Giving” is the theme and ambassadors share their strengths and skills with the Africa Yoga Project teachers in a workshop format. The workshop topic is determined with the help of the AYP team and ambassadors develop the curriculum prior to leaving for Kenya” ([africayoaproject.com](http://africayoaproject.com)). Once this week is completed, I will have earned my place as an Africa Yoga Project Ambassador. However, throughout this week I will be facing many stages that will move me from my previous known world, into the new world of ambassadorship. Arnold Van Gennep states that “consequently, I propose to call the rites of separation from a previous world, *preliminal* rites, those executed during the transitional stage *liminal* (or threshold) rites, and the ceremonies of incorporation into the new world *postliminal* rites” (p.21, *The Rites of Passage*). In this final week, I will be experiencing each of these stages until I finally earn the rite of passage into becoming an Africa Project Yoga Ambassador. I will take what I’ve learned from Kenya and bring it home to a world full of new beginnings.

**Week 20-Tell the Story**

After embarking on a 20 week long project of raising funds and traveling to Kenya, my final action will be to tell the story. I will tell the story of the Kenyans and the progress that they have made in their local community. I will empower future ambassadors through my stories. Just like Captain James Cook, I will inspire and touch lives through my stories and I will transform images in people’s minds. The following statement illustrated the powerful effect of Captain Cook’s stories: “Cook not only redrew the

map of the world, creating a picture of the globe much like the one we know today; he also transformed the West's image of nature and man" (p.4, *Blue Latitudes*). In my final week, I will also spend time documenting the lessons that I have learned throughout the process. Documenting my experiences will enable me to continue to learn from them in the future.

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