

Servant Leadership and our 5 Star Points

In a 2012 interview with Keith Miller, Michelle Obama gave her philosophy on leadership. She said, “Leadership leverages power to provide for the needs of others by creating security, individual respect for the self and for others, an aura of acceptance and unity, the spirit of love, by creating meaning opportunities, and encouraging achievement.” This concept of leadership is not unique, and I submit that for us to cultivate a spirit of harmony, it cannot be unique. We all must understand and accept the definition of leadership as a common thread. It is a thread that once pulled and unraveled will reveal, at the core it is grounded in respect and love. It is a thread that once pulled and unraveled will reveal, at its core, a grounding of respect and love. Now add to that foundation the concept of service and apply it to the Heroines of our beautiful order in hopes that we will glean a little more about ourselves and how each of us can build the underpinning traits of the Eastern Star to increase our ability to provide truth, relief, and brotherly love.

The five Heroines of the Order were natural leaders. Each displayed character traits and qualities that inspired Robert Morris to select them as representatives for us to emulate. Our Initiation tells us that he chose “Adah because she freely sacrificed her life to save her father’s honor. Ruth, because she willingly left home and friends, to dwell with the people of God. Esther, because she was prepared to render up her crown, and even life itself, to save her people from destruction, Martha, for her undeviating faith in the power and merits of her Redeemer, and lastly Electa, because she preferred to suffer death rather deny her religious beliefs.” Let us pull the thread of love and define the leadership traits and determine if we should consider ourselves servant leaders and thrust ourselves in the same category as any of five Heroines. The Marine Corps adopted an acronym that will help us to remember fourteen of the most commonly accepted leadership traits. JJ-DID-TIE-BUCKLE. Judgement, Justice, Dependability, Initiative, Decisiveness, Tact, Integrity, Endurance, Bearing, Courage, Knowledge, Loyalty, and Enthusiasm. These leadership traits are taught by many of the fortune five hundred companies, the military and several organizations where team building is important. Today, we will define their attributes and apply them to the five Heroines of the Order of the Eastern Star.

J: Judgment is defined as the individual’s ability to make a quick assessment of a situation. How does one make a quick assessment? A quick assessment requires that he or she has already done the homework and has a 60 to 70% solution. The rest will come from the team. Leaders who appear brilliant, don’t come to the table with blank sheets of paper. This is where one gains the assurance and confidence to make that tough but sensible decision on the spot.

Adah had already done her homework. She was already prayed up and she knew that her death would allow her father to keep his vow to the Almighty Father. She did not require time to mull over her decision. She knew instantly that she would give her life to honor her father's vow. Esther executed sophisticated judgment when she enlisted the assistance of her people to fast and pray prior to going to King. She exercised educated judgment in the Chamber when approaching her husband. She did not abuse her power, instead she wisely waited for the King to extend his scepter,

J: Justice means we don't play sides. No favorites. We don't favor a Sister just because she is from our District. Peace comes from treating everyone equally. Work and rewards is shared equally, so is heartache and disappointment. When Haman conspired to kill all the Jews, Esther achieved justice for her people by revealing her true lineage.

D: Dependability a person can be trusted in the middle of turmoil and in spite of difficult issues. Proven and consistent results...trustworthy reliable. Ruth was the epitome of reliability. As Naomi lost her sons and her other daughter in law went back to her home land, Ruth refused to leave Naomi. Ruth endured hard labor, harsh conditions and isolation to care for her mother in law. She was a true friend. Adah could have gone into the mountains and never come back. True in today's world, it is easier to think about it. But perhaps, she could have done so then as well. She came back and face a certain death.

I: Initiative is the power or opportunity to act or take charge before others do. It is doing what must be done and is not dependent upon recognition. It requires drive and ingenuity. One must assess the situation for oneself independently and create an autonomous opinion. Electa was known for her hospitality in relieving the destitute. She took it upon herself to provide relief to the weary traveler.

D: Decisiveness requires that one understand the leadership's goals and where you fit in the process. When you can see the big picture clearly, you can act decisively. Esther was decisive in her commitment to go to the king, but it came to me that Electa was also decisive. She made up her mind that she was going to serve God. No matter what the government did or how they coerced her, she held to her belief in Jesus. They killed her family and still she, 'took the cross pressed it with ardor to her bosom, to her lips, to weep tears of love upon it, to assure the soldiers she was more willing to die.'

T: Tact is simply the ability to communicate under distress without causing harm or stress to the other party. You can make your point and without offending through maturity and playing fairly. You can show sensitivity without being overly soft. Ruth showed tact when she was approached by Boaz. She didn't get "all up in his face-ghetto style". No. She simply showed him what she had in her hands and

told him her story. Esther also had excellent tact. According to our Ritual, “The sacred narrative informs us of the consummate tact with which Esther achieved the advantage. She achieved complete success and save the nation, which to this day keeps an annual festival, Purim, in her honor”.

I: Integrity. Be truthful. Tell the truth or don’t speak. It’s in your actions as well as in your words. The values of each of the five Heroines lend themselves most to integrity. They had to be true to who they were before they could walk in the path that God had for them. They all had Moral uprightness. Honesty and truthfulness. According to the book *Our Heroines* (Martha Zoercher). “The ideals exemplified here are self-sacrifice integrity, and obedience”. Dwight D. Eisenhower (1955) tells us that, “The supreme quality for leadership is unquestionably integrity. Without it, no real success is possible, no matter whether it is on a section gang, a football field, in an army, or in an office.”

E: Endurance Keep moving forward. Having tolerance, forbearance and patience. It doesn’t matter what it looks like. You only fail if you stop moving forward. It’s in the face of unpleasant circumstances, that you must push the hardest. Martha’s only brother was dead and the one person she knew could save him was nowhere to be found. Martha didn’t give up, she didn’t give in, she dug in. We too must wait on the Lord. When time gets tough, we must dig in and wait for Jesus to come to our rescue. The race is not given to the swift

Another Star Point with amazing endurance was Electa. Electa spent a lifetime caring for others. Yes, she got tired and weary. We know that every day was not sunshine and roses. When the soldiers came and demanded that she denounce Christ, she must have thought, “How easy it would be to just give in”. But she didn’t, like Martha, she held on. Even when they threw her in jail for a year, she held on. They killed her family, and she continued to hold on. Knowing that she would be killed, she still held on. What was she holding on to? Yes, God’s unchanging hand. She was holding on to the promise of eternal life.

B: Bearing is the level to which something bad can be tolerated; goes hand and hand with tact. When tack fails you, your ability to maintain your facial expression, the straight forwardness of your eyes, the stiffness of your shoulders, the straightness of your spine and the confidence in your voice is bearing. It can be difficult when the person you are at odds with has the upper hand but imagine Queen Esther standing before the King, fatigued from fasting. All eyes were on her. We know what happened to Vashti. The King did not play, and Queen Esther had serious business to attend to. She had the bearing to speak clearly and make known her request. Now look to Electa, smiling as she kissed the cross, suffering down in the dungeon; waiting on a certain death. Can you hear her testimony for a living Christ? Now cast your eyes up on the clear blue sky. Witness Adah as she boldly lifts the

veil declaring that she was not a criminal. These are great examples of bearing; keeping your cool when all about you is falling apart.

U: Understanding is being sympathetically aware of other people's feelings, tolerant and forgiving; knowing that it is not about you. As a leader, it must be about those we are leading. Seek first to understand, then to be understood. This is perhaps the quintessential trait of a servant leader

You are a servant of the people. Put others before yourself. Ruth understood that Naomi did not have a male to take care of her and that Ruth's friendship would be vital for Naomi in her time of distress. Adah understood that she had to honor her father's vow to God.

C: Courage is the ability to do something that frightens you. It's the strength in the face of pain or grief, but it can be hard to summon, especially when you need to make an unpopular decision. It requires a belief in oneself and the situation; most of all a strong God. You must become comfortable with being uncomfortable, I'll say it again: "Become comfortable with being uncomfortable.: This will ensure that you can summon courage when it is most needed. Luke 5:4 Jesus told Simon to "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught." Although they had been fishing all night and were tired, they were obedient. Jesus stressed them beyond their comfort zone and they were rewarded with blessing pressed down shaken together and running over. Ruth was uncomfortable when she laid at the feet of Boaz as was Adah when thrice she lifted the veil from her face. According to the book *Our Heroines*, (Martha Zoercher). "The story of Electa tells of courage of women that did much to raise the standard of womanhood at a time when those standards were very low. Additionally, in the book *Our Heroines we learn that* "Mordecai was wise in the ways of kings and court matters and instructed Esther as well in ways of courage and loyalty". Courage was in no short order amongst our Heroines.

K: Knowledge is information, and skills acquired by a person through experience or education. It's the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject: Being knowledgeable will aid with one's courage and bearing. If you are well versed on the topic, it is more difficult for the opponent to get you off balance. Being well versed on a topic, makes it more difficult for the speaker to be side-tracked by person(s) in the audience. No one will ever know everything; so, the presenters should be very careful thorough, confident and well prepared before opening any doors. The most important subject one must understand is one's self. A presenter must know her weaknesses and work hard to improve them. A presenter should be aware that one can never rid herself of all weaknesses; because no one is perfect, save for Jesus the Christ. However, a strong knowledge of self will save a person in a pinch. Knowing oneself and studying the opponent, will enable one to come out ahead. Esther's knowledge of how to approach her husband, the King, was the key to saving her people from extirpation. She knew

that she must wait for the King to extend his golden scepter towards her before she moved and then wait for him to speak before she made her request known.

L: Loyalty is a strong feeling of support or allegiance. Loyalty is a two-way street but as a leader, the main concern is downstream to subordinates. What do they need to do their jobs? Has everything been given to them to ensure their success? After all their success is the success of the leader and of the organization. The length of tenure in the Order does not equate to how loyal one is. A new sister can be just as loyal as a sister who has been around for a long time. Seniority and longevity are not indicators of loyalty. Longevity issues can play tricks on the mind and sometimes confuse the issue of loyalty. When making appointments, I submit that maybe ~~you~~ the person in charge should think on this a little more. Know the Sisters and Brothers of the chapter and employ them according to their capabilities. According to the book *Our Heroines* (Martha Zoercher), “The violet is associated with this “Adah’s” Ray (Star point) because it is associated with loyalty and meekness”. Adah is the epitome of loyalty. The author of the *2nd Mile*, (Terry, 1963) wrote, “The ritual story is clear in this act, and we only give her the fact that the loyalty of Adah to her father has not been excelled in history”.

She uses the word loyalty several other times to describe the acts of Adah. Esther was loyal to her people and her King. It was not a conflict that she chose to go to the King and petition for the lives of the Jews. According to the book *Our Heroines*, (Martha Zoercher) “Mordecai was wise in the ways of the kings and court matters and instructed Esther as well in ways of courage and loyalty”. Adding this knowledge to her fasting and prayer, she was able to maintain her loyalty to the Jews and the King.

E: Enthusiasm is an intense and eager enjoyment, interest, or approval. It is written all over the person’s face. It can be seen in their actions, not in their words. Don’t listen, watch. Enthusiasm yields sacrifice. We sacrifice family time to attend the events and meetings, like Electa. She sacrificed her family for her belief and love of Christ. Electa was prepared to die in defense of the cross and enthusiastically defended her chosen religion. We all chose to be leaders in this great order. Therefore, like Electa, the enthusiastic leader prepares her agenda, inspires others and uses personal experience to make the organization better. Now, I did not say she take things “personal”. I said, “she draws on her personal experience to make the organization better”.



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