

ACTIVITY 2.1

LEADERSHIP FOUNDATIONS 1: FOLLOWERSHIP

This discussion builds a foundation for leadership. Specifically, cadets explore the concept of followership. They study important vocabulary such as attitude, integrity, and self-discipline. More importantly, the cadets explore why learning how to follow is an essential step on their road to becoming leaders. This activity is the most academically-focused aspect of Great Start; instructors should follow the lesson plan closely as cadets will need to understand the material to pass the Achievement 1 written exam. Although not directly related to the academic content of this discussion, a series of drill and ceremonies labs serve as companion activities in this study of followership.

Suggested Instructor

A cadet officer or a senior member should lead this discussion

Duration

30 min

Objectives

1. Describe why cadets need to learn how to follow before they can learn how to lead
2. Explain what integrity, attitude, and self-discipline mean, in your own words
3. Describe why listening and reading are important communication skills for followers

LESSON OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

What is a follower? If a leader says you are a good follower, what does that mean?

Anticipated Response

You follow directions and cheerfully obey orders; you listen to your leaders; you follow the rules; you contribute to the team; you put the team's needs ahead of your own.

Do you think that you need to be a good follower before you can be a good leader?

Anticipated Response

Yes. Before you take responsibility for other people, you have to learn to take responsibility for yourself; a good way to learn leadership is by watching other leaders, and following their guidance; every leader is also a follower – even the president has a boss: the people.

TRANSITION

Your textbook defines followership as reaching a specific goal while respecting authority, having a positive attitude, and showing integrity and self-discipline. Let's look at each of those concepts.

ATTITUDE

What does "attitude" mean? If someone says you have a good attitude, what are they saying?

Anticipated Response

Attitude is your state of mind, it is how you see the world; being cheerful or optimistic or grumpy or depressed are all different types of attitudes.

Leaders want their followers to have good attitudes. Maybe you want your friends and relatives to have good attitudes, too. Why? Why is attitude so important?

Anticipated Response

Your attitude affects everything you do; if you have a bad attitude, you won't be productive and won't reach your goals; attitudes are contagious – people with good attitudes are fun to be around, while people with bad attitudes drag the team down.

How can you develop a positive attitude? Once you have a good attitude, how can you keep it?

Anticipated Response

Try to learn from your mistakes; don't be too hard on yourself; try to see the good in other people; try to have some fun in everything you do; etc.

Also, you should try to **understand the reasons behind what is being asked of you**. For example, you might not like homework, but you know that it's a necessary part of learning, and you need good grades if you want to succeed in life. Knowing the reasons for rules and the reasons why people want you to do certain things will help you develop a good attitude.

INTEGRITY

Another aspect of followership is integrity. What does integrity mean?

Anticipated Response

If you have integrity, you adhere to a strict code of conduct; you do not lie or cheat; you do what is right even when no one is looking.

Why is integrity important?

Anticipated Response

If you lie once, people will doubt everything else you say; if you cheat once, no one will trust you with anything; if you are quick to sacrifice your integrity, you will lose respect for yourself.

SELF-DISCIPLINE

Self-discipline is yet another part of followership. What does it mean to have self-discipline?

Anticipated Response

If you have self-discipline, you have the ability to focus on your goals and keep working until you achieve them; you do a job because you know it needs to be done, even if you'd rather not; you can control your emotions; you stay cool under pressure; you are able to sacrifice short-term wants so that you can fulfill your long-term goals.

The concept of **self-management** is another way to look at followership. Your text explains that self-management is basically your ability to take charge of yourself, to manage your own affairs. If you have good self-management skills, you show up at CAP in the right uniform, you get your homework done on time, you can manage your time efficiently, you are able to juggle the different activities you're involved in and still fulfill your responsibilities.

TRANSITION

Finally, there are two communication skills you need to master if you are to become a good follower, and ultimately a good leader: listening, and its companion skill reading.

LISTENING

Do you think that listening skills are important to followers? Why?

Anticipated Response

Listening is an important way that you take in information; leaders often give instructions orally, so you have to listen well to follow them; if you do not listen well, you could easily misunderstand someone and fail to achieve your goals.

Is listening the same as hearing? What's the difference?

Anticipated Response

Listening is active and involves concentration, while hearing is passive and your thoughts are not necessarily focused on what is being said.

How can you become a good listener?

Anticipated Response

Don't rush to judgment; focus on what the person is saying, not how well they are saying it; don't try to think of what you'll say next, but concentrate on the ideas the other person is trying to convey; ask questions if you don't understand the person's ideas or the vocabulary they are using.

READING

Do you think that reading is an important skill for leaders and followers?

Anticipated Response

Yes; reading is another way to take in information; leaders often communicate in writing, so you need to have good reading comprehension to follow their thinking; reading is an important part of studying and learning.

What is the most important thing about reading?

Anticipated Response

Comprehension - the ability to understand the author's main points.

CONCLUSION

Attitude, integrity, and self-discipline are the building blocks of followership, and therefore leadership. If you want to lead, you need to be able to stay positive and see the good in every situation; you need to be honest and show you are worthy of trust; and you need self-discipline to enable you to work hard so you can achieve your goals. Likewise, if you can listen well and discipline your mind while you are reading, you will grow as a follower and as a leader.