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Yolanda F. Johnson's

Leadership Principles

Leadership is a gift, and when we are stewards of leading others, it is important to remember to keep meaningful principles in mind to help you not only achieve but maintain your highest and best in your leadership journeys. Following are the key principles for leadership from Yolanda F. Johnson.

Remaining a Lifelong Learner Is a Primary Key to Success:

I have a long background in performance as a professional soprano. One of the things we are always taught is that the most successful singers always have a teacher or coach, regardless of how far they've gone in their careers. ***Once one believes she is above having that integral objective perspective given by a trusted source or above embracing innovation, the decline inevitably begins.*** Also, be accountable, at least to yourself and your inner network. If you're managing a team, acknowledge if something has gone awry.

Authenticity Is a Must:

Love you. Be you. You are unique and amazing, and there's no one else in the world who brings the talents, skills, and insights that you can, the way that you can. Your audience may not be someone else's audience. Do what speaks to you and speak it to those who appreciate receiving it.

You Create the Definition of Success:

Success for one individual is not necessarily the same for another. If you are authentically leading, helping other people will be a part of this definition in addition to any other important benchmarks, such as financial and career success. This is because we all have unique goals and dreams. This also helps us to rejoice and celebrate when others achieve their definitions of success.

Develop and Maintain Your Trusted Inner Network:

If you trust and confide in everyone, you'll just have a large group of



“Fundraisers are beacons of light and hope, illuminating the path to the good work needed in the world today.”

— Yolanda F. Johnson



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people knowing your personal business. So, keep a broad network generally, but be careful who is in your inner network. Surround yourself with those who uplift, i.e., talented folks who can celebrate with you. Choose people who don't just want what you have but who can both receive your support and support you in return. Keep honest, creative, smart people of integrity whose values align with yours around you.

Your Trove of Fabulousness Must Be Kept Full:

We all have what I call a "trove of fabulousness." Metaphorically speaking, imagine it is a really beautiful leather weekender bag, a la Mary Poppins, where it is endless, and you can continue pulling out wonderful things you believe about yourself.

Pragmatically Optimistic Active Visionary:

Stay alert. Stay woke. Stay hopeful, yet realistic. Dream! I am a pragmatic optimist. I hope for the best but try to prepare for various outcomes. Don't just plan and visualize: put steps into place to actually make it happen and realize your vision. This helps you to also stay the course when times are hard and difficulties arise.

Always Discern Between True Leadership vs. Consensus Building:

I finally realized what it was that made me so uncomfortable with some leaders with whom I've worked. They did not actually lead; they simply kept the peace and consensus. There is certainly an important place for consensus, teamwork, good communication, and collaboration. However, sometimes leadership requires something more than that, even if it takes you out of your comfort zone. At the top of the list: treat others with respect, but speak your truth in love, and try not to let fear hold you back.

Caring for Ourselves Is the First Step in Being Generous, and in Leadership:

We must rest. We must regroup and give ourselves the space to think creatively, to reimagine, to thrive, to cry, to hurt, to celebrate, to grieve, to heal and achieve. Do you know what you really enjoy doing? Please schedule it in your calendar at least once per week in some shape or form. When we care for ourselves, we can better care for our teams and our communities. We can also craft a leadership style that is uniquely ours and which achieves the greatest impact and the greatest good.