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There are fewer leaders and more followers in this world. Is that accurate? If that statement were modified and read, there are fewer leaders and more followers at *any given moment in time*, and then it approaches accuracy. To me, everyone...anyone, is either leader or follower given a specific setting, circumstance, maturity level or problem in which they are involved.

For the purposes of this course and this program, our minds are settled upon “educational leadership” and that would be perfect except that the paradigms and theoretical frameworks that are often grounded in leadership models outside of education are then modified to fit into the *motis operendi* of the learning community. True any principles of leadership may be applied to any model however the very unique public education structure is such that even marginal leaders (let us not say ineffective) are alive and well in a system that is not set-up to remove them or possibly even help them.

Well, all that, to now note in a few hundred words or less what kind of leader I am. If I were thorough I would denote here my leadership roles in every capacity: as wife, mother, minister, teacher, administrator and citizen of the world. Further, that in each of those roles I also assume that of follower at any given time, given the scenario.

I was born to lead. When I was a child, I led the neighborhood children to perform garage plays, develop unique and complicated games and create solutions to local problems. As a teenager, I led groups of peers to stand for injustice, rally for righteousness and release creativity for sheer enjoyment. In college, I led classmates to complete assignments, prepare for exams and ignite thinking. That was when I was a non-sanctioned leader. All throughout my young adult-hood, I developed a keen sense of right and wrong and struggled as we all do to lay down *self* and in the words of Spike Lee, “do the right thing.”

After several whirls on the merry-go-round of determining where my strengths would be best applied, I became an educator. As those words appear on this page there is a juxtaposed emotion that is evoked in me. There is both great hope and great disdain. When my leadership role was exercised in the classroom, it was with a never-ending stream of creativity, love, inspiration and growth that I could hardly call it a job. It was an over-flowing pump in which the more it was tapped, the more it poured forth. I shared freely, helped freely, received freely. I became a leader among my peers, under leadership that was both enabling and empowering. I was notable.

When I shifted to the world of educational administration the view became tighter, more rigid, and much less creative. It was easy at first; there were many little messes to clean up, and systems to improve. If only applying efficient systems and creating structures for advanced operations were all that is necessary to lead and build and *affect* lives. That was a pleasure. It impressed my central office superiors; it impressed both the faculty and staff at the home-base. It even spread to other buildings to help improve their systems. It was the silence of the partner that I was to facilitate with, that was

curious. However, I was raised “to thine own self be true,” and continued knowing that what is right is right no matter who acknowledges it.

It was when I realized I had moved from an environment where there was trust, to one of natural distrust that I began to labor in my soul. I recognized quickly that the rosy-colored glasses I had as a teacher-leader were to be shelved for another place, another time. I walked into a culture that was deep in angst, deep in factionalism and entrenched in a blame-game mentality. Wouldn't it be grand to say my leadership juices began to flow and I rose to the occasion and affected change? Not so...instead I cried for quite some time, perhaps months. When I came to my senses, I sought Providence on why I was in a place of such despair. Of course the answer: to make a positive difference, for the “peeps.” The discovery of where the distrust came from was the greatest challenge and one I was compromised in attempting to remedy.

I would like to say it has been a joy, a challenge an incredible opportunity to grow and learn. I would like to say it and I do in fact feel it, but it has in no way been easy. My role of educational leader has tapped into all my leadership roles to date, from when I was a child, to teenager to young adult, to teacher, to wife, mother and minister. The journey has been exactly that a journey. If I was heading west on the Oregon Trail, I could say I encountered enemy tribes, disgruntled members of the group, leaders that look out only for their own, sickness and despair. That describes the journey and much more.

I consider that though the journey appears stalled, right here and right now however as long as circumstances and people's needs and children's live hang in the balance then the journey continues though there is no movement of location.

*I wrote the all the above before the great and terrible *Sandy*. It reads as a stream of thought and real and heartfelt. Since then life has truly changed but my view of leadership does not, it is still about those who are willing to rise up and do the right thing in the wake of whatever may come. Period.