

# PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY OF LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY

Benchmark Personal Philosophy of Leadership and Advocacy  
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## PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY OF LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY

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### **Benchmark Personal Philosophy of Leadership and Advocacy**

Leadership is a dynamic that has so many different ideas of how it should be carried out in practice. These range from those who believe in an authoritarian perspective where the person in charge must micromanage people for anything to be accomplished to the laissez-faire perspective that says what will be will be and simply allows fate to dictate the outcomes. Chang and Barrio (2022) state that counselor educators are leaders by the very nature of who they are and the many roles they serve in. They go on to state it is unfortunate that there is not more research of leadership as it specifically applies to the role of counselor educators. The role of being a leader should be a natural aspect of life for the counselor educator and for those who claim an adherence to Christianity. I have seen this modeled well while in the PhD. Counselor Education and Supervision Program at Liberty University.

My philosophy is one that is grounded in the Christian principles founded in the Bible and as namely demonstrated by Jesus himself. Leadership and advocacy can take on many faces but still be coming from the same heart for the people being served. One such idea comes from what are commonly known as the B attitudes in Matthew 5. These help us to understand the idea of humility through words like vs. 5 “blessed are the meek”. Being meek is often confused with being weak, however, it is strength under control. I often tell the story of my dad’s Stingray Corvette he had back in the early 1970’s. He knew he could outrun just about anyone but learned to be meek (probably to avoid tickets) by being content knowing he could if he needed to, but the real strength was found in the restraint and resisting the occasional challenge to his ability to outperform others. Jesus walked around with access to our all-powerful and great God. Our

## PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY OF LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY

church sings the song, “Ten Thousand Angels” which says that Jesus rather than going to the cross, could have called ten thousand angels to destroy the world and set Him free. This for me is the ultimate example of power under control. Jesus cared enough about His people that He was willing to go to the crural cross for us because the immense suffering being required was bigger than the moment. Jesus humbly submitted to the moment while leading mightily in the process. This is the type of leader I desire to be in all circumstances.

God’s people anticipated that Jesus would take over the earthly throne to rule from a position of authority and traditional top-down leadership (Isaiah 9:7; Luke 1:31-33 NET). However, Jesus confused many because he is King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 17:14) yet chose to walk along side of His people. When he came to earth, Jesus lived in a humble home where they used the less expensive sacrificial animals needed to observe their spiritual rites (Luke 2:22-24 NET). Philippians 2:7-8a said Jesus “emptied himself by taking on the form of a slave, by looking like other men, and by sharing in human nature. He humbled himself...” (NET). These scriptures paint a beautiful picture of what a servant leader should look like. I demonstrate this in my counseling sessions by taking on the stance that my clients are very intelligent and are the expert on who they are and where it is they are desiring to go and become. I come along side of them to help them on this journey of discovery and help them navigate in the direction of their preferred future hopes with a caring and compassionate demeanor.

Philippians 2:3-5 says “Instead of being motivated by selfish ambition or vanity, each of you should, in humility, be moved to treat one another as more important than yourself. Each of you should be concerned not only about your own interests, but about the interests of others as well. You should have the same attitude toward one another that Christ Jesus had...” (NET).

## PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY OF LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY

Many people who find themselves in roles of leadership either do not know or have forgotten these principles. I strive to be self-observant and do my best to remain humble even when I know without a doubt that I may know more, be better trained, or any other fact of reality that could potentially give me a swollen headed mindset and choose to show the other person the respect and honor they deserve but may not have had the same blessings of being trained or exposed to the same level of experiences that I have. It helps to keep me humble to compare myself to Jesus as the standard rather than comparing myself to other individuals. I believe without a doubt that leadership through a posture of humility is the best way to lead people.

Jesus was aware that though He was on earth and is the eternal King he would need to approach mankind on a level where He would be able to assist them with the big picture purpose of His mission on earth. Jesus humbled Himself to serve rather than to be served (Matthew 20:28). This concept demonstrates to me that Jesus considered the preferred future approach where He came to earth knowing what difference it would make to obtain the goals he had laid before Him and, as previously mentioned, Jesus put the mission above His individual status, comfort, experiences, health, wealth, pride, etc. My desire is to work at an institution of higher education that is founded on Christian principles. There I will be seeking to lead in a Jesus like manor to promote the overarching principles of the institution and to send out every student I am blessed to come along side of in my work as a counselor educator well equipped to serve others.

Sometimes it may be thought that Jesus style of leadership means being a passivist. However, we see Jesus demonstrate firm action at times. One such action was when Jesus drove out the merchants who were taking advantage of the people who were going to make their sacrifices to the Lord at the temple. Being a servant leader does not mean you do not take a

## PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY OF LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY

stand, but it means that you have clearly expectations, empower people to be successful, while also calling them out when not performing well or being obstinate towards the overarching established goals. When the ultimate task was at hand for Jesus to fulfill His purpose on earth, Peter rebuked Jesus. Jesus responded to Peter (His friend and follower), “You are a stumbling block...” (Matthew 16:21-23 NET). There are indeed times to let people figure some things out so they can grow through the challenge of struggling with a task and learning from the underperformance or the triumph and times when the bigger picture may not be fully realized by the subordinates and the leader must take on a firm and definitive stance. A simple way to state my position of leadership is to take a balanced approach where goals and objectives are clear while also supporting those being led in growing themselves toward their desired future selves while promoting the objective of the larger program or organization.

Chang and Barrio (2022) state that a leader has a vision to help direct themselves and others as to where they are heading. As a counselor educator, this will be a crucial part of my work with students to help them to see the vision of where a particular subject is intending to help them to arrive at as they progress through the materials studied and various assignments. A key leadership role is also knowing when to advocate for students. While being an active leader in my individual classes and various task, I will simultaneously be led by the larger system which is the program and the institution and advocating for progress and growth therein. The program must also be looking at the bigger picture to see that it is serving its own needs well while also contributing to the field at large who it, as a program, is in place to be providing the future leader workers and those who will carry out the day to day task that make the field of counseling the very important field that it is today. Both individually and as a program we should be considering

## PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY OF LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY

areas where we should take a stand to advocate for changes in the field. I will need to be aware of how my part as a counselor education leader will help the whole and to act accordingly. Often people forget their role in their community, church, friend group, school, work, etc. is vitally important. I am reminded of the encouraging words found in 1 Corinthians 12:12-26 where it reminds us of how valuable each body part is even though some are not seen or obvious but still a critical part of the whole body.

The ideals shared above are all fine and good to know, but if I do not put them to action it will be a true waste of knowledge and expertise. I am currently on the path to complete my PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision in May of 2026. My desire is to continue to grow in my Christian faith and values and for this to help me move forward to my preferred future desires that I hope and believe does align with God's future hopes and desires for my life. My desire is to become part of a core faculty at a Christian grounded university and to help their counselor education program to have a strong emphases on the integration of Christian principles alongside counseling theory and shaping student scope of practice to be inclusive of Christ centered modalities and interventions when working with clients who profess a desire to live according to God's Words found in the Bible. I will also have to learn when it is appropriate to step into advocacy roles myself or to find others who are better equipped or positioned to help.

These principles work as I have seen throughout my own life. When we live like Jesus (not that I do it perfectly but am intentional to try) we will find that people will find us more approachable, and we will have a sincere interest in the betterment of others for this moment and throughout their lives. As a counselor educator, I want to speak life, light, and love into their very souls to be able to send them out into a hurting world equipped well for battle to bring joy into

## PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY OF LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY

the lives of themselves, their homes, their communities, and specifically the clients they will sit with throughout their careers.

After completing my PhD and moving into a faculty position, I hope to not only to teach but to do some research that will help people to experience mutually satisfying sex with their partners. I am becoming more convinced that God created sex not only for procreation but for physical pleasure. My primary focus is to help Christians who may have a lack of information, no information, or poor information due to the extremely limited sources of good wholesome and God honoring information about sex. Sex as created by God and used as He intended is a beautiful act that brings two individuals to experience oneness. Because of things like the porn industry and debased minds, sex has been tainted and therefore has become a taboo topic that is often avoided due to embarrassment. I want to be a tool, a leader, and an advocate to help correct this disparagement of a Godly coming together of two persons who are created in His image.

Jesus is the ultimate role model of leadership and advocacy. My desire is to implement this type of leadership into my professional life as I have strived to do in my personal, church, community, and work life. Leadership and advocacy are essential in God's Church and in the professional world of counselor education and counseling. Well equipped people are more likely to see opportunities and to be willing to fill roles that become apparent or when opportunity comes calling. Some people see God as an authority in the sky who is waiting to smack them for messing up and believe that God has given us a bunch of rules to watch us fall. What a difference it makes when you realize He is the true and living God who desires that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9) and that He desires to be in relationship with us. The rules He has given us are because He knows what is best for us and desires the best for us. It is the case that living

## PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY OF LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY

according to His instructions is the way to live the best life possible. I hope anyone I lead will see my heart for them and that my desire for them is to live the best life possible and to have the best impact for good possible.

### References

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