*- In your own words, what is leadership? Why do leadership skills matter?*

Empathy is leadership, empathy that is achieved through listening before leading. In order to bring others to follow, it is helpful that they know that they will be understood and that their needs will be attended to. This also helps prevent revolt. When people do not feel they are being heard they will talk louder. In society, when people do not feel heard they will take to the streets to get the message across. That is why is important to listen to the meek voice and not wait until a riot occurs b for one responds.

As a side note, to the previous classroom discussion on leadership types, being authoritarian, democratic, or laissez-faire. Unfortunately, how this is presented to the audience seems to suggest that a person is pigeonholed into one of the three categories. I would take a different view, and instead of looking at them as a defined personality type, look at them as tools to use. In other words, a leader needs to have a toolbox of skills, including all of those noted, and be skilled as to when and how to use the tools in their toolbox. One of the reasons why leaders fail is when they apply the wrong style, for example trying to evacuate a sinking ship, the captain would not request the passengers take votes on what method is the best to get off the sinking ship.

*-What past and/or present experiences have you had so far that have helped you develop your leadership abilities? What did you learn from these experiences? Why does that learning matter?*

My past experiences have been quite broad and diverse from co-captain of sporting teams to team lead on community-based addiction intervention programs. Over time I have been able to identify barriers to succeeding as a leader and strengths that have helped me succeed. Even though I have progressed over the years I still need to polish my skill sets. The most important thing I have learned about leadership is to know when it is appropriate to be the leader and when to just support a leader. Supporting a leader can be just as important as being one. As we discussed in class leaders are not born but they develop. One must apply the skills they are taught to develop mindfulness and skill-based memory.

*-What future experiences would you like to have to continue developing your leadership skills? How will these experiences help you grow as a leader?*

There are always opportunities for leadership, either those currently in existence through clubs, organizations, and programs and then there are those that are self-directed. My plan is to not only use my skills formally through campus activities but also use leadership skills in day-to-day interactions. Every day there are situations that arise no matter how small that require leadership intervention. For example, offering up a seat for someone else, holding open a door, or helping a fellow student work on a project. Continuing to put myself in leadership roles will hopefully allow me to apply leadership skills on an unconscious autonomic level. Most successful leaders don’t need to think about leading, they just do.