

ACCAC Academic Leaders Network

Recalling My Personal-Best Leadership Experience

(adapted from *The Leadership Challenge*® *Workshop*)

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With leadership, as with most things in life, experience can be the best teacher, and it's important to base our leadership practices on the best of what we do—the actions that represent our highest standards.

Thus, using an exercise adapted from *The Leadership Challenge*® *Workshop*, we will have a discussion of your the Personal-Best Leadership Experiences.

PURPOSE OF THIS ACTIVITY

- To help you prepare to tell the story of a time when you did your very best as a leader; and
- To begin the process of learning from your own experience.

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR PERSONAL-BEST STORY

Please prepare your Personal-Best story *before* our session on February 20th, and bring it with you (you can write some notes about it using the questions below OR just come prepared to briefly describe). During our February 20th session you will have the opportunity to share your experience with a few of your colleagues in an informal discussion (about three-five minutes per person).

The outline below serves as a guide in helping you craft or think about your personal-best leadership experience. Take as much or as little time as you want to write or think about this experience—just be sure to consider the suggestions below.

THE EXPERIENCE

Recall a time when, in your opinion, you did your very best as a leader. Your Personal-Best Leadership Experience might have taken place recently or long ago; while you were the “official” leader or manager of a team or group, or when you emerged as an informal leader; when you were working for pay or as a volunteer. The experience might have taken place at work, when you were part of a community group or professional organization, or when you were a student.

1. **Set the stage.** Provide the context by briefly describing the situation: the organization, the people involved, the nature of the project or undertaking, and the challenges you faced. Also describe how you felt at the beginning of the experience.
2. **Describe what happened.** Be specific. What did you do? What actions did you take to address the challenge? To engage others? To keep others motivated, especially when things did not go as planned? What were the results?
3. **Describe how you felt** at the end of this experience and the two or three major lessons about leadership that you learned.

Read over what you have written or consider again the experience you have chosen. Have you used concrete, specific details? Is there anything important missing? Is there anything that is unnecessary? Make whatever revisions are needed so that you will be able to relate your story to your workshop colleagues in five minutes or less.

Please bring this worksheet with you to our session on February 20th.