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Midterm Paper

My Leadership Philosophy

As we have observed over the past 7 months during the coronavirus pandemic, leadership is an essential thing in our lives. Leadership is incredibly prevalent in our everyday lives. Whether it be going to class with our professors, taking responsibility in your apartment, voting for the presidential and local elections, or playing sports. There are certainly characteristics that leaders should exhibit in every way, but it also depends on the situation and the audience. For example, being the head coach of a football team and being a supreme court judge, both are big roles of leadership in their respective fields, but both parties use different styles of leadership.

I think in general, leaders should be motivated, driven, confident, communicative, and maintain integrity. Realistically, I could list hundreds of traits effective leaders should have, but those are some of the most important. An effective leader can also unite their audience through their style. A good leader can also inspire even during trying times.

One leader that has inspired me over the years is Baltimore Ravens’ head coach, John Harbaugh. He’s been the head coach in Baltimore since 2008, right around the time that I started becoming a huge Ravens fan. Not only has he inspired me, but he has also been a good and effective leader. He has been successful in Baltimore, winning the Super Bowl in 2013, but also with a 131-82 career coaching record. Some of the ways he’s demonstrated being a great leader have been during difficult times for the Ravens. In 2015, the Ravens finished 5-11, and fans were mad. People though John Harbaugh should be fired, and Joe Flacco traded. However, John Harbaugh improved himself and his team after that, and last season recorded the best record in franchise history and helping his quarterback win MVP. And after a loss in the first round of the playoffs last year, Harbaugh worked hard to improve the team and inspire the players to improve. And now they have started the season 5-1, something the Ravens have only done twice before in franchise history. John Harbaugh’s work ethic and desire to get better is inspiring and admirable. A leader should be able to carry their group through adversity and improve once they move past that. Time and time again, Harbaugh has done that. Harbaugh is also a moral leader that holds players to a certain standard. In the middle of the 2014 season, reports that running back Ray Rice was on camera beating his wife in a hotel. Immediately after those reports, Harbaugh and the front office acted swiftly and indefinitely suspended him from the team. Once the footage itself came out, Rice was released by the team. Harbaugh made it clear in the locker room and publicly that there was no tolerance for any misconduct of that kind by players or staff. Despite Ray Rice being one of the best players on the team, Harbaugh made it clear that it is more than just football. Harbaugh’s leadership here displays a style everyone should emulate. When the reports came out, Harbaugh acted rapidly to get ahead of it, but did not overreact immediately. Once the whole story came out, he acted appropriately and made it clear to the team what is expected of them. Harbaugh did not cover anything up and was transparent through the whole scandal. As a leader of his stature, transparency is key. Something else that is admirable about Harbaugh is his mentality. He is a coach of one of the best football teams in the NFL, and one of the best coaches, and while he is a very serious person, he loves having fun. During press conferences after he often makes jokes and always has a smile. In the locker room after a win he’s always dancing with the team and messing around. He has the ability to flip a switch to be serious when he needs to be, and fun when he wants to be. His ability to have fun with the team allows them to relax and trust Harbaugh more because they build a special relationship with Harbaugh. His leadership style and persona are truly admirable.

As I’ve said previously, leaders come in all shapes and sizes. Not all football coaches act like John Harbaugh, but still are successful. Harbaugh is someone that stands out as an effective and moral leader to me. His ability to inspire, communicate with others, motivate others, and have success are all qualities of an effective leader.