**LEADERSHIP SPEECH**

**FOR**

**CARLTON LAMPKINS**

Hello everyone and welcome. I want to thank \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for giving me the opportunity to take some time and explore a subject that has had a profound effect on all of us in every phase of our lives, and that is the importance of leadership and how to advance the mission and effectiveness of an organization with inspired leadership, vision and excellence. From the time we are children, whether we realize it at that young age or not, we role play and train to be leaders. We learn in our youth whether we are meant to follow or guide, and as we get older, we learn to distinguish if we are natural leaders in the various areas of our lives. We have opportunities to test the waters in school - who in this room was ever class president or head of the audio visual squad or basketball team? We test the waters with our friends as we continue to grow up- one of the earliest games I can remember is "follow the leader." And as we get older and enter our teen years and adulthood, we learn to be conscious of the issues and opportunities in our neighborhood, religious institutions, and community as well as in our family, and we begin to grasp the essence of social conscience and responsibility. As that fire becomes ignited from within, those who are true leaders begin to realize that there's really no one else out there and the job needs to be done, and slowly but surely, or quickly and impulsively, leaders are born and then shaped by circumstance, mentor influence, practice, and inner strength. The thing about leadership is that ultimately it's really about teamwork. A leader without a team is really.... A solo act!! Come to think of it, an **ineffective** leader is also probably a solo act, but here today, as I lead this discussion, I want you all to know that here at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, our mission is to explore how to be effective, honorable, adaptable and resilient leaders. We're here to inspire tomorrow's leaders and to nurture them and encourage them to step forward, understand the power of accountability, and ***LEAD***.

Sometimes we tend to witness leadership at a distance, as if leaders were part legend. We know that for world leaders like the President of the United States, before greatness comes potential great problems. I heard a story that provides a unique perspective on leadership. Let me take you back to April 12, 1945. World War II was finally over and although Franklin D. Roosevelt lead our country and its troops through the Great Depression and a devastating war, this was the day his own life adventure came to a close. Vice President Harry S. Truman was summoned to the White House and as he was guided to First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt's sitting room, he was given the sad news of the President's death. Of course he was devastated by the news of the passing of his partner and colleague, and he offered his condolences to Mrs. Roosevelt. He approached her, expressed his sadness and said, "Is there anything I can do for you?" to which Mrs. Roosevelt replied, "Is there anything ***we*** can do for ***YOU***?" Let's face it, ***YOU'RE*** the one who's in trouble NOW!!!" ***(Wait for the laugh***)

Of course when Truman signed on to run for Vice President, he understood that there was a distinct possibility that he may indeed become the President, but can you just imagine what went through his head that day? I'm sure he realized that life as he knew it was over and it was his turn to lead a country healing from war- a country that loved it's now deceased President who served for an unprecedented three terms. That's quite a challenge to accept!!

By all accounts, President Truman was a humble, down to earth, no-nonsense leader. We have him to thank for the expression, "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen." He also said, "Men make history and not the other way around. In periods where there is no leadership, society stands still. Progress occurs when courageous, skillful leaders seize the opportunity to **change things for the better."** That sounds like words to live by whether one is running a country or leading an organization.

It's been said that there are ten basic qualities present in effective leaders and they are:

* **INTEGRITY** - I think this is self explanatory. I don't know about you, but I tend to have a bit of a problem entrusting my life or my hard work to someone that might be shady!! Napoleon Bonaparte, known as one of the great leaders of all time, once said, "Great ambition is the passion of a great character. Those endowed with it may perform very good or very bad acts. All depends on the principles which direct them." If you ask me, I'd much rather be guided by a person that thinks and cares and wants to fulfill the mission honorably. Give me a show of hands- who agrees?? Good! Because if you don't, there's probably room at ***(Name a rival organization or one that has a bad reputation and wait for the laugh***) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_!!!!!
* **VISION -** We've all heard the expression, "It's like the blind leading the blind."Well...that's how **NOT** to lead. On the other hand, Jonathan Swift said, "Vision is the art of seeing what is invisible to others." I'm not referring to hallucinations, mind you ***(Wait for the laugh***). A true leader identifies a situation, assesses it globally, from different perspectives, and can anticipate the steps to creatively and completely address conception, action and resolution.
* **COMMUNICATION** - An authentic leader does not operate in a vacuum. A true leader has the gift of effective communication. He or she doesn't just talk, they listen and empathize. They have the ability to place themselves on the other side of the conversation or command and know how to convey a directive so that the recipient is inspired to respond and complete a call to action. President Dwight Eisenhower once said, "Leadership is the art of getting someone else to do something you want done because ***he*** wants to do it." .... And that, my friends, takes ***effective*** communication!!
* **RELATIONSHIP** - Understanding the human condition and how to empathize and guide a team is key to effective leadership. A true leader knows how to navigate the line between friend and comrade, partner and facilitator.
* **PERSUASION -** that'sthe ability to encourage and inspire almost invisibly. It's an art and a talent and an authentic leader knows how to "rally the troops" and motivate.
* **ADAPTABILITY -** I love the expression, " Adapt or die." Think about it. An effective leader is one who is kinetic. A true leader realizes that nothing in life remains as it is, and that means that there is no room for narrow mindedness in a true leader. Think globally and react to each situation with an open minded a willingness to succeed.
* **TEAMWORK -** It's been said that "There's no "I" in "team" and guess what? There's no "I" in "leader" either!!! Leaders don't fuel their actions with ego, they encourage with inspired confidence.
* **DECISIVENESS *-*** A true leader has the courage of his or her convictions and the passion to commit to a plan of action. I once heard this bit of inspiration, "Lack of decisiveness is probably an undesirable trait.... On the other hand, maybe it's not." ***(Wait for the laugh***). I'm sure you get the point!!
  + **ABILITY TO PLAN AND FOCUS** - in this day and age, I am sure we are all finding more and more distractions that conspire to divert us from our mission. A trait of successful leaders is the ability to consider all conditions, devise a plan, and maintain a laser focus on achieving the desired goal. Of course that same effective leader has to be aware of, and responsive to, a litany of responsibilities and tasks in need of attention and completion and all has to be included in the context of remaining focused. It sounds impossible, but it's manageable. Take all of these characteristics and add resilience and determination. Napoleon Bonaparte also said, "The truest wisdom is determination," and he should know....just ask Josephine!!! ***(Wait for the laugh***).

Consider these traits as the core of the roadmap to use to inspire creative and effective leadership. Use this as a foundation as you identify the next generation of people that will allow our organizations and communities to thrive because someone cared and accepted the responsibility to make a difference and create a winning atmosphere.

I would say that the opposite of leadership is complacency, apathy, isolation. As caring, concerned, and committed teams within a group or organization, I encourage everyone to work together to identify and nurture the people that will know how to find the path, clear the brush, and place one foot in front of the other to establish the steps to success in projects, concepts, and ultimately the optimal functioning of the entire organization. Let's face it, the alternative can get very messy. It's been said that "if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." ***(Wait for the laugh***).

I want to acknowledge each one of you for being here, and I applauded you for taking the time to consider what it might take from you and with you to be an effective and inspired leader, one with vision, a plan and the resourcefulness and willingness to guide an organization**-ANY** one actually, to new levels of success. Ultimately, we are all leaders-some of us just don't know it yet!! And although others of us may lead in smaller arenas and in less traditional terms, leadership is a philosophy, a state of mind and a discipline. In its most tangible form, leadership supports families, communities and commerce, military and faith based groups. In other terms, it is a state of being. It is a context for excellence, empathy and effectiveness. In life, each one of us eventually gets our turn to step into the shoes of one who "inspires the troops" to action, and the chance to lead provides the opportunity of a lifetime. We learn about ourselves and just how strong and resilient we can really be. We learn how to multitask, inspire others, and mentor those that will follow in our footsteps. We are given the opportunity to win, and if we don't, it's an even greater chance to learn. Leadership is not perfection, it's **WILLINGNESS**. A willingness to be uncomfortable, accountable, and aware, and no matter what when we lead and discover our own abilities and surpass them, we all win, and so do the organizations we serve.

I want to thank you again for this opportunity and I look forward to serving with you and **FOR** you. Remember the words of the English writer named Douglas Adams. He said, "To give real service you must add something which cannot be bought or measured with money, and that is **sincerity** and **integrity**." I know you all have what it takes to be great and inspiring leaders!!

Thank you all!!