**[EZ Speech Writers No. 15146]**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Remarks by Mr. John Shade to the students and staff of the [name] Middle School in connection with the school’s celebration of “Leader-ship Week.”

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

[GESTURING TO CHARLOTTE WATSON] THANK YOU SO MUCH, [CHARLOTTE/MS. WATSON], FOR INVITING ME TO SPEAK TO YOUR STUDENTS AND STAFF HERE THIS [MORNING/ AFTERNOON] DURING LEADERSHIP WEEK. I FEEL BLESSED AND HONORED TO HAVE THIS OPPORTUNITY.

NOW, I WANT TO TALK TO YOU A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE WHOLE IDEA OF LEADERSHIP, BUT ODDLY ENOUGH, I WANNA START BY TELLING YOU WHAT “LEADERSHIP” *ISN’T*.

FIRST OFF, LEADERSHIP ISN’T POWER. JUST BECAUSE YOU’RE A KING OR AN EMPEROR OR A GANG LEADER OR SOME OTHER KIND OF HIGH MUCKAMUCK, THAT DOESN’T MAKE YOU A LEADER. IF PEOPLE HAVE TO FOLLOW YOU OR DO WHAT YOU TELL THEM TO DO BECAUSE THEY’RE AFRAID THAT SOMETHING TERRIBLE WILL HAPPEN TO THEM IF THEY DON’T, THEN YOU’RE NOT A LEADER. YOU’RE A TYRANT OR A DICTATOR OR A BULLY OR A BOSSMAN; BUT YOU’RE NOT A LEADER, FOR LEADERSHIP HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH POWER.

ANOTHER THING LEADERSHIP IS NOT IS ***FUN***. NOW THIS MIGHT SEEM STRANGE TO YOU, BECAUSE IF PEOPLE ARE FOLLOWING YOU BECAUSE THEY *WANT* TO, AND NOT BECAUSE THEY’LL BE HIT UPSIDE THE HEAD IF THEY DON’T, HOW CAN THAT ***NOT*** BE FUN? ISN’T IT FUN TO HAVE PEOPLE DO WHAT YOU TELL ‘EM TO DO OF THEIR OWN FREE WILL BECAUSE THEY LIKE AND APPRECIATE WHERE YOU’RE LEADING THEM? OF COURSE, THIS IS A GOOD AND A GRAND FEELING, BUT IT ISN’T ALWAYS *FUN*. BECAUSE SOMETIMES, WHAT A LEADER MUST ASK HIS FOLLOWERS TO DO IS VERY HARD OR VERY PAINFUL OR EVEN VERY DANGEROUS TO DO.

HAVE ANY OF YOU EVER HEARD OF A MAN BY THE NAME OF JOHN BROWN? [IF ANY HANDS ARE RAISED:] GOOD FOR YOU! [IF NO HANDS GO UP: WELL] JOHN BROWN WAS A WHITE MAN BACK IN THE EARLY EIGHTEEN-HUNDREDS WHO DESPISED THE IDEA OF SLAVERY — ABSOLUTELY HATED IT. HE THOUGHT THAT SLAVERY WAS A TERRIBLE, TERRIBLE THING, AND A SIN AGAINST GOD. HE WAS WHAT WAS CALLED BACK THEN AN “ABOLISHONIST,” AND THE ABOLISHONISTS WERE PEOPLE WHO WANTED TO END SLAVERY FOREVER.

NOW A LOT OF THE ABOLISHONISTS JUST TALKED ABOUT ABOLISHING SLAVERY, BUT JOHN BROWN ACTUALLY TRIED TO *DO* SOMETHING ABOUT IT. SO HE GATHERED UP A GROUP OF OTHER ABOLISHONISTS, WHITE AND BLACK, AND LED THEM ON A DARING RAID AGAINST A U.S. MILITARY POST AT A PLACE CALLED HARPER’S FERRY, IN VIRGINIA. IT WAS A BRAVE AND COURAGEOUS THING TO DO, BUT IT WAS ALSO CONSIDERED TO BE TREASON AGAINST HIS COUNTRY. WHILE HE AND HIS MEN HELD THE POST FOR SEVERAL DAYS, THEY WERE EVENTUALLY DEFEATED. THOSE WHO WEREN’T KILLED DURNG THE BATTLE WERE CAPTURED AND THEY WERE CONVICTED OF MANY CRIMES.

JOHN BROWN WAS AMONG THEM. HE HAD PUT HIS IDEALS INTO ACTION, AND WAS A GREAT AND BRAVE LEADER, BUT HE WAS EXECUTED FOR HIS CRIMES — HANGED, ACTUALLY, LIKE SO MANY SLAVES WERE BEING HANGED IN THE SOUTH DURING THOSE horrible, horrible YEARS. WOULD YOU CALL THIS “FUN?” JOHN BROWN’S ACT OF LEADERSHIP AND DEFIANCE WAS MANY THINGS, BUT IT CERTAINLY WASN’T WHAT YOU’D CALL FUN.

SO LEADERSHIP ISN’T POWER AND IT IS ISN’T FUN, AT LEAST NOT THE WAY WE USUALLY THINK OF FUN. AND ANOTHER THING LEADERSHIP ISN’T IS ***SELF-SERVING***.

YOU DON’T BECOME A LEADER JUST TO MAKE YOURSELF FEEL GOOD. YOU DON’T BECOME A LEADER TO MAKE MONEY. AND YOU DON’T BECOME A LEADER TO BE FAMOUS OR TO GET YOUR NAME IN THE NEWSPAPERS OR SEE YOUR FACE ON THE TV. THAT’S NOT WHAT LEADERSHIP IS ABOUT. FOR LEADERSHIP IS NOT ABOUT ***YOU*** AT ALL; LEADERSHIP IS ABOUT ***OTHERS***. IT’S ABOUT THE PEOPLE YOU’RE LEADING. IT’S NOT JUST ABOUT ***YOUR*** DREAMS AND ***YOUR*** GOALS AND ***YOUR*** ASPERATIONS. IT’S ABOUT HELPING YOUR FOLLOWERS REALIZE ***THEIR*** DREAMS AND ***THEIR*** GOALS AND ***THEIR*** ASPERATIONS.

I THINK THE BEST WAY I CAN ILLUSTRATE THIS CENTRAL ASPECT OF LEADERSHIP IS BY TELLING YOU SOME OF THE THINGS THAT OTHER PEOPLE HAVE SAID ABOUT THIS TOPIC DOWN THROUGH THE AGES, AND I WANT YOU TO LISTEN VERY CLOSELY FOR THE ONE COMMON THEME THAT APPEARS IN ALL OF THEIR OBSERVATIONS.

I’LL START WAY BACK WITH AN ANCIENT CHINESE WRITER AND PHILOSOPHER BY THE NAME OF LAO TZU, WHO DIED 500 YEARS BEFORE CHRIST WAS BORN. LAO TZU SAID: *“A leader is best when people barely know he exists, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves.”*

BILL BRADLEY, THE FAMOUS BASKETBALL PLAYER FOR THE NEW YORK KNICKS AND ONE-TIME PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE SAID:  *“Leadership is unlocking people's potential to become better.”*

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, THE SIXTH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES PUT IT THIS WAY: *“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.”*

THE GREAT WORLD WAR TWO NAVY ADMIRAL, CHESTER W. NIMITZ, SAID: *“Leadership consists of picking good men and helping them do their best.”*

PRESIDENT RONALD REGAN SAID OF LEADERSHIP: *"The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things. He is the one that gets the people to do the greatest things."*

AND THE GREAT MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., ONCE OBSERVED THAT *“A genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus but a molder of consensus."*

I COULD QUOTE HUNDREDS OF OTHER FAMOUS PEOPLE TALKING ABOUT LEADERSHIP, BUT I THINK YOU GET THE POINT. AND WHAT WAS THE ONE COMMON THEME, THE COMMON FOCUS, THAT YOU COULD PICK UP FROM ALL OF THESE QUOTATIONS?

THE ANSWER IS: ***OTHERS!*** YOU BECOME A LEADER NOT TO HELP YOURSELF BUT TO HELP OTHERS. LEADERSHIP IS ***OTHER***-DIRECTED. LEADERSHIP IF SELF-***LESS***. LEADERSHIP IS GENEROUS AND GIVING AND RISKING, ALL IN THE SERVICE OF HELPING OTHER PEOPLE ACHIEVE A HAPPIER AND MORE FULFILLING AND MORE PRODUCTIVE LIFE.

NOW, LET ME ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT WHETHER ANYBODY IN THIS ROOM COULD POSSIBLY BECOME A LEADER OR SHOULD EVEN ***WANT*** TO BECOME A LEADER.

NUMBER ONE: DO YOU HAVE TO BE A GENIUS TO BECOME A GOOD LEADER?

THE ANSWER IS NO. BEING SMART HELPS TO SOME DEGREE, BECAUSE AS A LEADER YOU’VE GOT TO BE ABLE TO FIGURE OUT THE BEST WAY TO GET YOU AND THE FOLKS YOU’RE LEADING WHERE THEY WANT TO GO. BUT *ANYONE* CAN BECOME A LEADER, NO MATTER WHAT YOUR IQ IS, AS LONG AS YOU GENUINELY CARE ABOUT OTHERS.

NUMBER TWO; DO YOU HAVE TO BE BORN INTO PRIVILEGE OR AN EDUCATED HOUSEHOLD TO BECOME A LEADER?

THE ANSWER IS NO. WHERE YOU COME FROM DOESN’T REALLY MATTER. YOU FAMILY’S WEALTH OR YOUR FAMILY’S POVERTY DOESN’T MATTER. WHAT MATTERS IS WHAT’S IN YOUR HEART AND YOUR ABILITY TO SEE A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR EVERYONE.

NUMBER THREE: DO YOU HAVE TO BE THE MOST POPULAR KID IN SCHOOL TO BECOME A LEADER?

THE ANSWER, ONCE AGAIN, IS NO. IN FACT, THE MOST POPULAR KIDS IN SCHOOL A LOT OF TIMES MAKE LOUSY LEADERS BECAUSE THEY’RE OFTEN JUST IN IT FOR THEMSELVES, JUST IN IT FOR THE FUN OR THE POWER OR THE GLORY OF IT, AND NOT BECAUSE THEY WANT TO MAKE THE LESS POPULAR KIDS IN CLASS FEEL BETTER ABOUT THEMSELVES, OR MORE ACCEPTED, OR MORE A PART OF THE GROUP. THIS ISN’T TRUE OF EVERY POPULAR KID, OF COURSE, BUT WHENEVER A POPULAR STUDENT GOES OUT FOR A LEADERSHIP ROLE, IT’S NOT ALWAYS FOR THE BEST OF REASONS OR FOR THE BETTERMENT OF OTHERS; IT’S JUST A WAY TO INCREASE HIS OR HER OWN POPULARITY.

NUMBER FOUR: DOES IT MATTER WHERE YOU ARE IN LIFE TO BECOME A LEADER?

THIS ANSWER IS ALSO NO. FOR WHETHER YOU’RE STILL IN SCHOOL OR YOU’VE BECOME THE HEAD OF A HUGE CORPORATION . . . WHETHER YOU’RE WORKING ON AN ASSEMBLY LINE OR SERVING AS A MEMBER OF THE PEACE CORPS IN BANGALADESH . . . WHETHER YOU’RE A GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE OR A SHOP STEWARD IN A UNION — IN EVERY WALK OF LIFE, IN JUST ABOUT EVERY SITUATION YOU MIGHT EVER FIND YOURSELF IN: YOU CAN BECOME A LEADER. THE ONLY QUALITY, THE ONLY ATTRIBUTE YOU NEED TO HAVE TO BECOME A TRULY EFFECTIVE LEADER IS, VERY SIMPLY, TO CARE ABOUT OTHERS AND TO HAVE A DEEP-SEATED DESIRE TO HELP THEM REACH ***THEIR*** GOALS AND ACHIEVE ***THEIR*** DREAMS.

AND FINALLY, NUMBER FIVE: DOES EVERYONE *HAVE* TO BECOME A LEADER TO HAVE A TRULY SUCCESSFUL LIFE?

AGAIN, THE ANSWER IS NO. NOT EVERYONE’S CUT OUT TO BE A LEADER. NOT EVERYONE’S COMFORTABLE IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE — A ROLE WHICH, AFTER ALL, CARRIES WITH IT A GREAT DEAL OF RESPONSIBILITY AND, SOMETIMES EVEN, A GREAT DEAL OF RISK. SO WHILE ANYBODY IN THIS ROOM ***CAN*** BECOME A LEADER IF YOU WANT TO, NOBODY SHOULD FEEL THAT HE OR SHE ***HAS***TO BECOME A LEADER. AFTER ALL, IF EVERYONE IN THE WORLD WERE A LEADER, WHO’D BE LEFT TO FOLLOW?

NOW, I’D LIKE TO CLOSE MY LITTLE TALK THIS [MORNING/ AFTERNOON] BY QUOTING SOMETHING THAT PRESIDENT HARRY TRUMAN ONCE SAID AND THAT I THINK IS VERY, VERY TRUE AND VERY, VERY IMPORTANT. PRESIDENT TRUMAN TURNED OUT TO BE ONE OF THE GREATEST PRESIDENTS THIS COUNTRY HAS EVER HAD, AND THIS IS WHAT HE SAID ABOUT LEADERSHIP: *“NOT ALL READERS ARE LEADERS, BUT ALL LEADERS ARE READERS.”*

IF YOU DON’T READ, YOU CANNOT LEAD. SO STAY IN SCHOOL . . . DO YOUR HOMEWORK RELIGIOUSLY . . . AND, AS PRESIDENT TRUMAN SAID: *READ, READ, READ!*

THANK YOU ALL VERY MUCH FOR LISTENING.

**# # #**