



Friends Society

LEADERS' GUIDE

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A lot! Hundreds of student volunteers have gained skills and experiences that have help them enhance their careers after FS.

They have learned leadership, management, teamwork, communication, organizing, problem-solving and so on while at FS.

'Leadership' includes set of many skills that help students prepare for careers.



Learning is an active process. We learn by doing. Only knowledge that is used sticks in our mind.



FS is a laboratory where student volunteers can experiment and learn to be a leader.

FS provides many opportunities for students to assume formal and informal leadership roles.

This booklet explains the key aspects of applying leadership at FS.



1. WHO IS A LEADER

Anyone who wants to convince (influence) others to do something

A leader may, or may not, have a formal title or a position.

At Friends Society, a leader may have a position such as Secretary, Group in charge, Chairperson, Trustee, and so on

OR

A leader may be a student, a volunteer, or a staff member who has ideas and suggestions, and wants to convince others on their team of their importance and value.

2. MEASURES OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

How can one tell whether a leader is effective?

A leader is effective when -

- People feel comfortable approaching, contacting, or calling the leader
- They feel comfortable having discussions with the leader and that the discussions are open and frank
- People are happy to be a part of a team or an activity led by the leader; they are enthusiastic / excited about what they do, and they come up with many new ideas and suggestions
- The work environment is positive, and everyone enjoys being there; people are working well with each other as one team, there are no cliques
- Work is getting done timely and well

3. LEADERSHIP BASICS

A What is Leadership

It is the ability to –

- Convince and influence others
- Get things done and accomplish objectives working with others
- Be strategic as well as tactical; be interested in detail yet see the big picture
- Create positive working environment, motivate others, get them excited about what needs to be done
- Create cohesive and effective teams
- Create opportunities for others to grow and develop various skills
- Be friendly, tough, flexible, patient – as specific situations require (practice situational leadership)



B Authority vs. Influence

These are very different concepts or styles of leadership.

Authority: means power given to someone because of their position or title. Person with such positional power can demand from others an action or compliance with a requirement. In such case, the leader is the “boss,” shows superiority over others, is inflexible, and gets forced (unwilling) actions from others.

Influence: means ability to convince others and obtain their willing participation on whatever that needs to be done. To be able to influence others, the leader will explain reasons for why it is important, listen to ideas and suggestions of others, keep an open mind, be flexible, freely give credit to others, respect others, and basically be one of the team members.

“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more – you are a leader.” – *John Quincy Adams*

3. LEADERSHIP BASICS (continued)

C Communication

Communication is a thread that binds people together. And, it is the most important skill for a leader's success - **best leaders are first-rate communicators**. A leader must be good at all forms of communication (verbal, written, and non-verbal). Key characteristics of effective communication are:



- **Clear** (unambiguous message); **concise** (as short as possible); **suitable for the target audience** (level of difficulty and complexity); and **suitable for the purpose** (whether to inform, instruct, influence, convince, educate, and so on). And, it is timely.
- Know that “**how you say something is as important as what you say**” – sometimes, more important. This implies tactfulness. Choosing proper words, tone of voice, timing, and even knowing when not to say anything – are all necessary aspects of effective communication.

LISTENING – ‘really’ listening is a critical part of all inter-personal communications. Effective (active) listening is a skill and it can be developed with practice.

Five components of effective listening are:

1. Pay attention (CRITICAL): ‘be present’ and pay full attention
 - No distractions (sit still – no fidgeting, not look at clock or watch or phone, don’t doodle)
 - Do not interrupt - allow time and opportunity to the speaker to think and speak, accept pauses and short silences because the person may still be thinking about what to say
 - Be ‘seen to be listening’ – make eye contact, nod your head, smile, lean forward slightly
 - Pay attention to the frame of mind and body language of the speaker.
2. Withhold judgment: While listening – keep an open mind, suspend any judgment, hold criticism, don’t argue, don’t sell your point right away – first, just listen
3. Reflect: Mirror information and emotions of the speaker by paraphrasing key points of what you heard
4. Clarify: Seek clarification by asking open-ended, clarifying and probing questions
5. Summarize: Restate key points, or themes, from what you heard; summarize what you understood



3. LEADERSHIP BASICS (continued)

D Decision making

Decision making is a process of selecting the best of all possible alternatives while having insufficient information and when the outcomes are uncertain. Decision making is a **key skill** for any leader. And, it is important for all – everyone must make decisions in their lives.

Leaders, and us all, at times **delay** making a decision for various reasons, such as one may feel paralyzed by uncertainty, a desire to be kind or fair to the person who may be affected, or a desire to make absolute best decision and waiting for more information.

A leader's role is to help the organization move forward by making timely decisions, without undue delays. People lose confidence in a leader who can't or won't decide. Often, a delay in deciding causes more harm than whatever fallout one was trying to avoid, and hard decisions quite often get more complicated when someone delays making them.

What should leaders at FS do?

- Gather as much facts and information about the situation that requires a decision; analyze it and identify the best available option. However, the leader must not get stuck on the cycle of over-thinking and know when to stop gathering or waiting for more information.
- If confused, write down 'pros' and 'cons' of each alternative; review them and decide
- Weigh evidence available with your own intuition. The "gut feeling" is often useful, particularly when one is not getting emotional about the issues and can remain calm.
- There may be emotions involved. If so, manage your emotions: recognize your own emotions and emotions of others; don't allow yourself to be blinded by the emotions; realize that the intensity of emotions will pass quickly.
- Have self-confidence.

"Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others." -Jack Welch

4. CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE LEADER

An effective and successful leader typically exhibits the following characteristics

Personal characteristics:

1. Is friendly, smiles a lot, is relaxed (not too serious or intense); is approachable
2. Is humble, has low ego, has no sense of self-importance
3. Is considerate of others, respects all
4. Is understanding, can empathize with others
5. Is polite, says 'thank you' and 'please' often
6. Works hard, is not lazy
7. Is responsible, keeps commitments, shows up on time, is dependable

Communication characteristics:

8. Is effective communicator
9. Keeps messages simple and understandable, does not use big words or abbreviations
10. Keeps message to the point and concise – does not ramble

Characteristics related to how she or he gets things done:

11. Is flexible, yet can be firm when needs to be
12. Is mature and thoughtful – is not impulsive
13. Is patient and yet, can create a sense of urgency when needed
14. Is strategic
15. Is intelligent and smart
16. Is principled and moral person
17. Is good at networking and building alliances

"Nearly all men can stand adversity,
but if you want to test a man's
character, give him power."

-Abraham Lincoln



5. TEAMWORK



Leader's success depends largely on other people doing what needs to be done. At FS, this means teams (EC, activity groups, teams for special events, and so on). Volunteers in these teams need to work together cohesively and cooperatively, and to collaborate. Such teamwork does not happen by itself. **Team leaders create, nurture, and maintain team spirit.**

So, what does a leader need to do? Following are key aspects of an approach a leader should take while working with volunteers and teams:

- Be friendly and approachable; make others feel comfortable working with you.
- Become one of the team members - do not act as a leader (certainly not as a 'boss'). Treat everyone with respect; show common courtesies (say often, 'thank you,' 'please,' 'good work') – be polite and considerate.
- Be relaxed, not always be in hurry, and spend time 'hanging around' with the team, have fun with them.
- Provide clear and specific direction about what needs to be done, ambiguity leads to frustrations.
- Ask for ideas, opinions and suggestions; listen carefully, discuss pluses and minuses. Tell everyone whose idea it was, make that person 'feel like a million bucks.' Also, recognize the good work done by the team.
- Encourage and allow team members to take initiatives.
- Expect senior members to take younger members under their wings and guide them as needed.
- Support and facilitate group's work; be a resource for them.



*"A team is more than a collection of people. It is a process of give and take."
- Barbara Glacel & Emile Robert Jr."*

*"Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success."
- Henry Ford*

6. VOLUNTEERS - A Few Thoughts

Every leader at FS must realize the importance and key characteristics of volunteers (who mostly are students). This is necessary for FS to succeed as a youth / student-based organization. Key characteristics of volunteers:

- Volunteers are “heart and Soul” of Friends Society; without volunteers, there won’t be FS.
- Finding a good volunteer is like finding a buried treasure.
- Volunteers can choose to stay or walk away at any time without any real loss to themselves.
- A neglected, or mistreated, volunteer won’t return to FS.
- Leaders need to make specific efforts and plan to attract and retain volunteers.
- ‘Life happiness’ to all of us (unexpected things come up, priorities change, not feel well, study becoming overwhelming, etc. - and sometimes, we simply forget) – this is normal. Leaders need to understand this and show flexibility with volunteers. Inflexible and strict adherence to rules and procedures is a quick way to lose volunteers.
- Committed volunteers also mean a committed donor in the future. Volunteers are twice as likely to donate to the organization they volunteer at , as compared to non-volunteers.



7. HOW TO MOTIVATE VOLUNTEERS

The process of motivating volunteers really begins when a potential volunteer walks through the gates and it continues throughout her or his association with FS. Efforts for motivating volunteers should be on-going. Motivating others is a complex process and requires specific and planned efforts. Also, remember that motivations changes over time.

Ideas for how to motivate volunteers are presented on the next page:

“You never get a second chance at first impressions”
(Unknown)

7. HOW TO MOTIVATE VOLUNTEERS (... continued)

1. Show them the impact of their work

- Gather and publish information that shows impact of FS: (1) statistics related to no. of visits, no. of beneficiaries who attended, no. of hours, and so on; (2) gather testimonials from beneficiaries; (3) comments heard by volunteers; (4) other indications of effect of activities (increase in attendance, etc.); (5) testimonials from the parents of children who receive service; and other such indicators.
- Gather, and publicize, stories from volunteers about how individual beneficiaries were helped (such as, “he was very shy and did not talk to anybody; now he has become more social, talks to others and is reaching out to others”).

2. Create a culture of appreciation

- Thank, thank, and thank again; give (or send by mail) handwritten ‘Thank You’ notes
- Give recognition to volunteers for the work they do – do so frequently and appropriately. Be sincere, timely, consistent in recognizing contributions. Recognize all volunteers, not just the top performers.
- Create a culture at FS where recognition of volunteers’ contribution becomes a norm and routine.

“Feeling gratitude and not saying thank you is like wrapping a present and not giving it” (unknown)

3. Build a community (bind together everyone at FS)

- Create a spirit of community among all volunteers, staff and senior members (trustees and past members).
- FS song that all sing together at the end of all large events: “Kabhi alvida naa kehna”
- Talking about “unwritten conventions” at FS
- Celebrating events together; “Friends Day”

“Act as though a volunteer is a guest in our home”
(Unknown)

4. Make volunteers feel important

- Show respect for them, do not take them for granted; treat them as ‘young adults’ – not as kids
- Ask for and listen to their ideas and input; apply what is agreed to; if an idea is not practical, explain the reasons why not; freely give them credit for the ideas that are accepted.

5. Treat volunteers right

- Respect their time; start and end on time – do not drag out meetings
- Be accessible to them; work hard to ensure that volunteers feel comfortable coming to you with questions, concerns, and input
- ‘Get your hands dirty’ – roll-up your sleeves and join volunteers working side-by-side with them

7. HOW TO MOTIVATE VOLUNTEERS (... continued)

6. Communicate

- Explain clear, concise, goals and explain tasks in detail
- Introduce new volunteer or staff to others;
- Stick around at the end of meetings or events and chat with volunteers
- Set up a scrap book for all to write messages, etc., publish its content

7. Give them something in return for their time

- Opportunity for self-development, learning skills that will help them in their careers; for bringing out their hidden or latent talents
- Sense of satisfaction of having helped others, making a difference in their lives
- Opportunity for making friends, networking; fine-tuning socializing skills; socializing with friends

“Treat your employees (volunteers) like brilliant, hard working adults and you’ll have brilliant and hard-working adults treat them like toddlers, and your days are going to be spent changing diapers” (Christine Gibbs)



Dale Carnegie's 10 - Keys to success



**Dale Carnegie
(1888 - 1955)**

1. Take a chance - All life is a chance.
2. Be enthusiastic - If you want to be enthusiastic, act enthusiastic.
3. Learn to love your work - Do what you love, love what you do.
4. Learn from your mistakes - Develop success from failures.
5. Do not fear 'fear' - Inaction breeds fear and doubt.
6. Learn to prioritize - Make good use of your time.
7. Do the hard jobs first. The easy jobs will take care of themselves.
8. Persistence is the quality that most frequently leads to success.
9. We determine our happiness. It is governed by our mind.
10. Remember that everything you do sends a message.
Determine the message you want to send to the world.

If you don't like
something,
change it.
If you can't
change it,
change your
attitude about it.
Don't complain.
--Maya Angelou

"I have learned that people will forget
what you said, people will forget what
you did, but people will never forget
how you made them feel"

Maya Angelou

