

We must become the change we wish to see. Gandhi

Leadership Plan

 Philosophy:

On the subject of Core Values.....

“There are two ways of spreading the light; to be the candle or the mirror that receives it.” - Edith Wharton

In every situation I have the ability to first be inspired, educated and creative in my own life, choices and ambitions. And secondly, to inspire, educate and empower others to be creative and self-directed in their own choices and ambitions. Inspiration, drive, ambition, self-empowerment are all choices. In my experience a person who is ambitious with out balance is often a detriment and may cause more harm than good. A person, who is impeccable in their integrity, is trustworthy and maintains a solid sense of the larger vision and purpose is able to contribute in ways that enhance and change the world in ways that are beneficial.

Fortunately, I am positioned professionally where I can contribute to the growth and development of others, while I am inclined toward my own academic, personal and professional growth. For the past several years I have continued along a path of self- knowledge, external knowledge and a blending of these two facets. In the future, I see a continuation of this kind of blending and balancing. I anticipate that regardless of the occupation and career choices I make, I will find ways to contribute in socially responsible ways, while keeping my own personal growth agenda clearly in focus and moving forward.

On the subject of Education, Learning and Instructional Technology.....

The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking your complex overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks, and then starting on the first one. - Mark Twain

Education is a luxury that many people have convinced themselves they cannot afford or cannot do. Our formative experiences of education put our ideas about education into a plain pine box and for many this is where education and learning ends. It is not until the learner is willing to unearth the pine box and change their formative references of education and learning that real learning can begin.

If I continue on the path of learning as if I were still in our formative learning years, I will not understand how learning is core to our personal and professional growth. A love of learning cannot take place from the old frameworks, rather it must be nurtured and grown from the debris and rediscovered.

When learning is rediscovered it takes the wisdom and care of great instruction and great instructors to facilitate and nurture the learner to aspire beyond the old and grow into the new. In other words learning cannot be nurtured using the old methodologies, as this will beat the learner back into the old framework. Rather the student must be uplifted to realize that learning is a personal and professional development issue that requires constant attention, action and creativity.

Learning, when applied in new and interesting ways can help the student to realize how essential new knowledge is to the development of a full and enriching life of knowledge, research and long-term understanding of a culture and society. The person who has acquired knowledge and understands how critical education is to the growth of a society will find ways to contribute to the academic culture of the society, beyond their own personal agenda for growth and knowledge.

On the subject of passion.....

The secret of health for both mind and body is not to mourn for the past, not to worry about the future, or not to anticipate troubles, but to live in the present moment wisely and earnestly. (Quote attributed to Buddha) -

To realize passion exists in the present is a good starting place. Over the past eight years I have awakened to an understanding around passion. Passion is not an idea, rather it is an experience of taking every moment and finding what is pure, genuine, expansive and delicious. Every moment – whether challenging or difficult has the pure possibility of the divine. When I notice what is not perfect or less than I desire I shift my perception away from my passion and into a space that attracts hardship and further challenges. When I reawaken into the divine and realize every moment is like the dew on a blade of grass or a cricket breaking the sound of silence, I notice what is around me in ways that enhance my perception of beauty, joy and fulfillment. In exploring passion I rediscover what becomes muted in the busyness of life. I awaken to the possibilities and richness of the moment.

In working with passion over the past several years I have waned in and out of slumber and wakefulness. I have slept through many hours of intense work, forgetting how the stress and complicated business structures made me lose passion for the creative endeavors I was undertaking. When I shift back into wakefulness I notice once again how amazing it is to be a creative force in the lives of others, how divine it is to be planting, sowing and harvesting the fruits of

the earth in a labor of love and endearing connection to the bounty available in every moment. I live a fuller and more satisfying existence that is within integrity, truthfulness and is about living in the moment as a whole being rather than a separated individual toiling alone and with great sacrifice. I notice when I am living my passions I am more nurturing, giving and creative as I am inspired to take risks and actions that add value and create a more satisfying relationship with the environment and others around me. I am rewarded with many blessings of perception, understanding and fullness that are faded memories when I forget and live without passion.

On the subject of Professional and Personal Growth.....

-It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare, it is because we do not dare that they are difficult. - Seneca~

Personal and professional growth happens for one of two reasons: 1) the pain of the existing situation forces the individual to change. 2) A personal perception changed, such that the person understands the potential and possibilities that could not previously exist. In my own professional growth the second application is often more true. As I expand my own understanding and horizons, I am no longer the same person. In fact I cannot ignore what I now understand and am challenged to extend beyond the comfortable and known and move into spaces that are often much more revealing of what I do not yet understand. In the professional growth arena I have never been shy about moving forward and stepping out. I find my own challenges are often rewarded, once I have pushed through the points of resistance and overcome my own limitations. Only after I have moved beyond the places of discomfort can I see why it was so critical to change, grow and expand.

In the aspect of professional leadership, growth and developing skills I find that these are moving targets. Today, I recognize a need for practical experience in the instructional learning environment. Tomorrow, I may recognize new software technologies, stronger foundations in client management or a shift in the culture for which I am designing. I find the idea of identifying one aspect or professional area of improvement to be quite limiting as every day I am confronted with areas of improvement, opportunities for growth and professional alliances that shift, change and develop. I continue to reach out to communities of practice in fields of business, coaching, e-learning, instructional learning technology, and design. I align with individuals and strategic alliances that can create a mutually beneficial relationship that is not co-dependent, rather is supportive of our exclusive and shared visions of work, career, business and trends and issues. The evolution of personal and professional growth continues, it is only a matter of how much and how rapidly. I have a long-term commitment to my own personal and professional growth. My agenda and focus changes as the need for new understandings and professional or personal knowledge grow, evolve and redirect my attention and action.

 Framework

On the subject of key issues.....

Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young. - Henry Ford

In the area of learning and technology there exist opportunities to expand our knowledge, to perfect the understandings we have gained in our industry and to reflect on our practice to provide additional thought and guidance to our peers and colleagues. We have yet to scratch the surface of understanding of our industry and application as the Internet and the World Wide Web has completely changed everything.

As I examine the works of my predecessors I gain perspective on how learning applications were applied pre Internet. These applications are helpful to understanding my role and responsibilities as an instructional designer and instructional technologist. Now we are on the brink of a new frontier with a gaggle of excited professionals all exploring design, techniques and technologies. This profession has been defined, but the boundaries are not stagnant. Rather the complexities grow, shift and change as new technologies are developed, new standards are introduced and issues of accessibility change the way we think about our roles and responsibilities.

The field is wide open for discussion, reflection and professional design. I am not limited to the evaluation and opinions of my predecessors. Instead I have the opportunity to take their knowledge, understanding and reflections and use these as guideposts to help me find my way through the menagerie of perplexing and continual change I experience in this field. I am able to learn from their explorations and build on these foundational works to expand my own understanding and application with the profession. I am able to find kernels of truth and extend these ideas into further research and knowledge sharing to find new solutions and applications for improving on the models.

On the subject of Leadership and Innovation.....

The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them. (Quoting: Albert Einstein) -

Leadership is done with the wisdom. A good leader will listen to the opinions of others to discover the knowledge and learn about the resources available to problem solve and find the solution. The leader will sort through the facts, fiction

and find knowledge that is useful to help to find the creative solution. And like any good expedition, the leader will guide the team to resolve the problem expeditiously, using the best tools and resources around to finally address the issues.

Good leaders do not work in a vacuum and neither are they alone on the playing field. Rather they know how to extend the resources of the talent and apply the talent to the situation at hand. They do not look at each resource as inadequate; rather they take what is available and find ways to mine the creativity, resources and talent into new ways. In reality a good leader uses the skillfulness of creativity, and communication to distill the available resources into a workable solution.

In the industry of Instructional Technologies we only need to read the current writings of industry professionals to see where the innovation and leadership is being applied. We can extend our knowledge by exploring additional technologies and tools for learning, while keeping our feet safely buried in the soil of our original teachings in constructivist theories. In the arena of Web Based Learning we can explore how theory, practice and industry are being intertwined to create new learning resources. Meanwhile, we must look carefully at these applications and see where the research and data indicate these technologies impact learning in the way we would desire. We can rely on our professional networks, organizations, schools and trade conferences to keep us updated on the trends, issues and evolution of change and innovation in our field.

To be an innovator we must look beyond our daily routine and extend ourselves professionally to network and share with other professionals. We must continue our education in the field and related conversations to keep aware of the changes in our industry. We cannot afford to bury our heads in our work, as we will miss the constant changes that are impacting our work. As professionals we must contribute to the learning community of our industry, be proactive in learning about the issues and expand our knowledge by exploring the issues that are central to our profession.

 Action

On the subject of importance of passion.....

"Genius is only the power of making continuous efforts. The line between failure and success is so fine that we scarcely know when we pass it: so fine that we are often on the line and do not know it. How many a man has thrown up his hands at a time when a little more effort, a little more patience, would have achieved success." Elbert Hubbard -

Strategies for personal and professional growth are a laundry list of details that include: reading professional magazines, writings and articles, taking more coursework in the industry, attending conferences, seminars, subscribing and participating in professional list-serves, networking with professionals in related industries and the instructional field to name a few. In living the passion the experience becomes an instrument of the knowledge gained from the many events and actions mastered over the course of a year or several years.

In retrospect I feel the most valuable contribution I can make in living my passion is taking the actions that will result in real authentic learning and empowerment of people. To take my knowledge and invest it in authentic learning environments that enrich the lives of another is one level of fulfillment of my passion. Another level would be to master my art and craft and find new and innovative ways to inspire, lead, coach, mentor and instruct adult learners. I feel my interests in technologies, tools and methods of motivation are keys areas of development to master and take action in living my passion.

The art of instruction, whether leading or designing is meant to be an empowering experience for the artist, the master craftsman and the student. In my work my actions are the combination of practical application of learning more and learning how to apply this knowledge in a way that benefits the learner, while expanding my own experience in the craft.

On the subject of personal knowledge gained.....

“If we look at a field as our life, the crop we harvest is our experience of life. If we don't consciously sow our thoughts, the seeds we plant may just be weeds from our past so that we repeat the same patterns over and over. If we sow new thoughts and tend the field with care, we can realize the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, right in the field of our life.” (From: Mary Manin Morrissey)

Academic thought, personal reflection, and expansion of understanding in a field of study are all pieces of knowledge I have gained by participating in the ILT Graduate Program. In my original desires about the program, I wanted to gain an understanding of how to take ideas, content and training and redevelop these fragments of curriculum into programs I could use with clients in virtual learning environments. Over the past two years my academic knowledge extended into learning management systems, virtual learning communities, knowledge management systems, designing a virtual learning environment, web- based learning and design learner supports. What I gained was a lot of practical and theoretical knowledge that I can apply to most learning environments, especially virtual learning environments. What I also discovered during the program was that the skill of being a self-directed learner is essential to participating in graduate programs.

In retrospect I have a greater respect for the work of the designer and the technologist and a bit more expertise in creating learning for web based learning environments. Likewise, my applications are stronger as I have the wisdom of the theory and methods to back up my decisions and approaches.

At a core level I wanted to create artifacts for my own professional use with clients and in my own business. The program and goals of instruction did not often lend well to this desire. Instead I have a grouping of artifacts demonstrating my abilities to design for a variety of learning environments.

I wanted to attain further education and was able to participate in a grouping of coursework that broadened my knowledge and understanding of the industry, field and areas of further exploration and research. I have already noticed how the two years of experience in this industry have reshaped my perspective when I work on projects, work with clients, work with technology and work with instruction. I can no longer look at the same content or information without dissecting the images to see how they contribute to the message, or how a web site is designed for usability, or look at instruction and determine whether the analysis has been done well enough to create an instructional design.

On the subject of change models.....

“A few years ago, geeks, academics and soda -fueled computer jocks populated the Internet. Today, everyone – CEOs to seventh-grade students to weekend technology fiends –wants to get online. And people don’t just want to surf. They want to carve out a unique personal space: They want a web site.” Asha Dornfest

In the pursuit of academic knowledge and understanding I have been a witness to additional theory, models and understanding how fluid this learning environment and industry are predisposed. I recognize the immediacy of the issues are changeful and in flux. There are core ideas of study and research that require additional understanding, but the world we are working in today will not be the same instructionally or technologically in a few years. The rate of change in instruction because of technology allows us to manage new projects understanding that the best we can do is create with the given tools, frameworks and technologies of our clients or business partners. In reality, the frameworks have not settled and the technologies and development of new learning environments are not stable. The reality is we are in a period of adjustment where frameworks are being built and dismantled in the same room.

When change becomes such a constant companion we must find ways to stay on course and set the stage for future projects and endeavors. We can delve deeply into the literature to remind us how to design and work in the culture and learning environment we are designing. We can explore the new technologies,

learn from other's experiences and share our own world view as we develop a deeper understanding of what is needed and what is excess and does not contribute to the value of learning. Additionally, we can set an agenda, a plan, a map and stay on course – keeping mindful that much of what we create may need to go through more transitions as technology, organizational change and environmental influencers redirect our tasks and focus on priorities and learning objectives.

I have come to realize that the industry of instructional technology has a changeable nature and is mostly driven by budgets, politics and people. The learning is at best a consequence of a rationale idea, unless diligent designers and administrators take ownership and care to watch over and guide the instruction as one would watch a small child in development. The reality is it takes a solid professional or group of dedicated professionals to tow the line and keep the priorities around learning and quality instructional products to make the instruction and learning a meaningful product beyond the recent budget cut or inter-departmental crisis. After experiencing the instructional technology realm I am even more aware of the need for professionals to hold onto the values of analysis, thoughtful development and planning and management of learning projects to include appropriate training, evaluation and measurement of learning outcomes. As a professional in this industry I now have a higher regard for the values and commitment designers must have to make sure real authentic learning is transpiring and that the goals of the institution do not undermine the success of the learner.

On the subject of revising personal and professional development plans.....

"There is no such thing as a 'self-made' man. We are made up of thousands of others. Everyone who has ever done a kind deed for us, or spoken one word of encouragement to us, has entered into the make-up of our character and of our thoughts, as well as our success." George Burton Adams (1851-1925)

Perhaps as a final comment and personal reflection about the idea of personal leadership plans and personal development plans is this:

Personal and professional development plans are like an organic résumé – for these documents to be truly effective and useful they must be rewritten, redesigned and repurposed to keep fresh, alive and current. The landscape of a person's professional life is changeable and does not happen in a vacuum. There are many life events that change the nature of our professions, work and commitments or priorities. In my own case I continue to have new ideas and concepts of what I would like to create, design and build. In my professional life I will use my talent and skills to add value to my world and the lives of adult

learners. I will build new tools and technologies to help individuals in a variety of ways through coaching, teaching, business building and web learning. Today, I know the path before me and I have a reasonable map to guide me. Tomorrow, I may need to make a course adjustment due to life changes, career requirements and even a desire to learn and examine further academic understandings. I understand the requirements of personal and professional leadership plan as a starting point for adults on an academic path to examine their values, state the influencers of their knowledge and understanding resynthesize this knowledge into a framework that can be acted upon.

The concept of a leadership plan is a worthwhile investment for adult learners to pursue. In the case of the work I do with others as a coach, consultant and business support I know most people do not know how to get into the deeper values of themselves and translate this knowledge back into why they do the work they do or how to inspire themselves to move fully into their passion and work from a framework of passion, commitment and innovative leadership.

The values of defining personal leadership, change models and innovation are important reflections for the adult learner. Compiling this list of knowledge, reflection and introspection as a closing comment of the knowledge gained and provide a point of reflection as it applies to the professional and personal gains are important strategies for the adult learner to reflect and practice. That being said, the kinds of reflective practice in core values, passion and leading a life based on these principles are a long-term commitment to personal and professional growth. Similar to the résumé, the leadership plan is an evolving document that changes as the adult learner is changing and needs to be an organic document to keep current with the changing ideas and understandings of the adult learner.