

## Week 5, Lesson 1

Hi, welcome back to Political Leadership. I'm Kathleen Schafer. This is week 5, lesson 1 and I'm sure by this point in the course all of you are looking forward to this week where we're really going to slow down the pace a bit. We started at the end of last week to do that. This week is really designed for you to put the final touches on your leadership profile and to provide an opportunity for you to reflect on all of the different concepts, skills, that you've been reading about and learning about yourself during the last few weeks.

As we discussed in the last lesson, you now have some ideas about how you are going to maintain your fitness as a leader and indeed as an individual. What we're going to be talking about a bit today is the idea of how we're going to put these plans together and why they're important for you. We're going to spend a little bit of time talking about the leadership profile that will be due at the end of this week and why I'm asking you to engage in this activity.

I know for many of you, just as we discussed before, this idea that, you know, so often we simply respond to the world around us and what's required of us. You're in this course, you have the readings, you have the videos to watch and you have the assignments to complete, and that's what you're doing. What I'm asking you to do this week and what I hope that you will do by having less readings to do, less videos to watch, is to take that time that you would normally spend and put into this course and spend it thinking and reflecting about yourself and who you are as a leader. One of the key aims of this course is to give you that opportunity to really understand who you are and what you're about. Because once you can see what your leadership talent and skills are and how you can put them effectively out into the world, you're going to be able to look and see that same thing in other people, and indeed that's ultimately what leadership is about.

So what we're going to be doing with these leadership profiles is providing you the opportunity to put all of these ideas and concepts that we've been learning about you, into one place because I believe it is so important that we have a written plan; a written document that we can refer back to. Time and time and time again as you move through your leadership challenges, you're going to face all kinds of different things that you had no idea that you'd ever have to face. And often in times of stress, in times of challenge, when there are things that you're looking around and you're not quite sure how to handle, being able to go back to something that you've written, that reflects, you know, who you are, your talents, your passions, your skills, can be so useful and valuable. Because its often at those times when we're feeling disjointed and, you know, floating off amongst all of the crap that is flying around, this really gives you an opportunity to say I'm going to come back to who I am and what I'm about. This is a tool and a skill that you can use from here on out because you're going to constantly face these different challenges and what this is going to allow you to do is to have something that you can go back and say, now I'm not...I don't have to get caught up in everything that's going on around me. What I can do is I can really come back to who I am. And ultimately leadership becomes about people who are able to move themselves from the storm and stand in the eye of the

storm and to be calm, clear, centered and grounded. That's when...think about any leader that you look at and admire, you can go back to examples of how he or she was able to maintain that sense of clarity, to maintain that sense of who they were, what they were about, even amidst all kinds of crisis and turmoil. So what this plan is, is this is to give you not only a road map for where it is that you want to go, but to give you something to reflect on and refer back to to help you stay grounded into who you really are.

Now last week you spent time thinking about your different skills and talents that came out of the Myers Briggs, the Enneagram, the Strengths Finder and what that hopefully allowed you to do was to see the similarities that you found between and among those different styles and some of the differences that might have come up in the different tools. It's very interesting to begin to see how, yes, there actually is a pattern to our behavior, that there are things that are consistent about how we look at them. And one of the beautiful things that I have found in working with these systems for the past many, many years, is that different situations bring out the strengths of either one of those tools and it really allows you the ability to say, oh I see what's going on. This person is coming from a logistical perspective and I'm a strategic thinker. Or I see how this person is really exhibiting the unhealthy characteristics of a 3, this helps me to understand what's going on. So the first part of this exercise was allowing you that sense to see how these different theories work with one another and how you can use them differently on a day to day basis.

What I'm asking you to begin to focus on this week is to how you're going to now...now that you've identified these different talents and skills and qualities about yourself, how you're going to put them into action and to practice. You all have a copy of this leadership profile that you'll be filling out, so let me give you a way to go about...a suggest way of going about putting this together.

What I would suggest that you do is that as you sit down to work on this, is that you first reflect on those qualities and skills that we talked about and really think about how they apply to who you are and how you're putting them into the world on a day to day basis. Secondly, go back and again look at the four rocks that we talked about; the physical, the mental, the emotional and the spiritual. See which areas, which of those four areas come a little bit more naturally to you. Think about the ones that may be a little bit more challenging to you. One example may be if you take the emotional piece, we talked about that as kind of being a little bit more of the heart piece of who you are as a leader. Well for those of you in the Myers Briggs who have a T, especially if you have a strong T, you tend to operate more from the head. You operate more from the thinking perspective. So that emotional piece may be a bit more challenging for you and that may be something that you need to focus on a bit more in terms of buffering those skills in you as a leader. Conversely, if you have that strong F, well probably that emotional piece comes very naturally while the thinking, the mental piece, may require a little bit more focus. And those are the kinds of distinctions that I'm asking you to think about so that as you go through this you don't need to give everything the same weight. Some of these are going to be more natural to who you are. But what I'm asking you to think about is how you can make sure that you're balancing all of these day to day.

So we focused on your talents, your strengths, your abilities. You've thought about the four rocks that you want to put in to maintaining who you are as a leader and how focused, and how you can stay grounded in who you are. And then the next piece I'm going to ask you to think about is how you would put all of this into your own words. We talked a little bit in the last week about putting that stump speech together about really being able to articulate who you are. And I have found that over time as I come up with three to five words that really describe the qualities about me, that it's so helpful. Because again when you can identify in yourself the qualities that you bring as a leader, it helps other people to see that in you. And you can do that very easily in conversation as you're working with groups and teams, as you're putting that leadership out in the world to create that change, what you're able to do is that as you articulate it people can see it. As people can see it in you, you can then move forward with what you want to do. So this really becomes, for those of you who like the campaign skills, this is really your message and how you can communicate who you are and what you're about, very clearly and very succinctly. And the more that you do this and the more that you focus in on the right things and communicate that right message to the right people, all kinds of opportunities for you as a leader will begin to open up, just like they would for a candidate. You know, the campaign mantra is, put the right message to the right people, 3-5 times in the last two to three weeks of the campaign. It's the same idea, that if you're constantly showing different pieces of you to different people in different ways, it's hard for people to have a strong sense of who you are and what you're about. What I'm suggesting through this is that now that you have this in depth understanding of who you are and what you're about you need to be able to very clearly articulate it to others so that they too can understand that. Again, put yourself in the candidate's role. That's what I'm talking about here; being able to clearly and succinctly put that message out to people. So that's really what this next question is about.

Number four is about the whole idea of your unique skills. And many times ...we referred back to this before, but many times when people talk about or think about unique things sometimes it's difficult for them because they think well, you know, my talents or my skills aren't unique. But really makes you unique is the combination. You know, the fact that somebody is an effective presenter, the fact that somebody can organize things very well, the fact that somebody can write very well. You're correct in that, you know, in and of themselves there are lots of other people who possess similar talents and skills. The difference is that each one of us has a very unique perspective on how we're putting those out into the world. The passion that fuels that, the change that we wish to create. And if we really want to be able to put our best leadership foot forward that what is important is that we understand what we can do differently than anyone else. I've worked with hundreds and hundreds of people throughout the years and I can tell you that every single person has something unique to offer and that what is so amazing and powerful is that when people really understand what makes them unique, boy, they're on fire. They're unstoppable because then they know that every time they go in to work with a group they know that when they are within an organization that it doesn't make them better than others, but they really have a sense of what it is that they can contribute. And again, once you can articulate that very clearly it's very easy for people to then tap in to

those skills and talents and one of the things that is a challenge to so many people is they come in and they talk with me and they say gosh I can do all these things but I just never seem to have a job or be in a position where I can exhibit my talents and skills. And one of the first things we discover very often is the fact that they're not communicating what their talents and skills are to those around them. So if they aren't able to articulate it how are other people going to be able to reach out to them. You know so often we become frustrated because other people can't see in us those things that we see in ourselves. Well again, leadership is about putting it out there. I once heard someone describe giving an introduction, giving your name as giving a gift to someone. You're giving them the gift of telling them who you are. Well I'd like to take that a little bit further. I'm suggesting as a leader the gift that you can give to everyone in which you are involved with and who you meet, the gift of telling them not only your name, who you are, but telling them what you're about; what you have to offer, what service you can give. And that's where all things then become possible. Because then people can say oh, I see that in you. You're right, you do have those talents, you do have those strengths, you do have those skills. Here's how I think we can best put them to use. Now, instead of being upset or feeling disjointed because other people don't see who you are or what you're about, you've opened the doors. And again, one of the things that is sometimes difficult for people here is this idea that they feel that maybe it reveals too much of them. I work with clients on doing presentations; I call this being real. And one of the effective keys to presentations is being able to be real in front of an audience. One of the things that's key to being an effective leader no matter where you are, is being real in front of everyone. And so what it means is being able to walk in your power and who you are and when you do that, when you are authentic, that's when people can connect to you. And we've talked about, in different examples of this in the political arena, and when elected officials and other leaders are authentic, when they are able to communicate very clearly who they are and what they're about, that's when people can connect to them. And we've seen in this campaign in 2008 how challenging that authenticity has been for Senator Clinton. That she really hasn't been able to fully be in her comfort zone in front of audiences and to really show the full spectrum of who she is and what she's about because she keeps feeling that she needs to present herself in a certain light and a certain way. This is one of the most compelling examples we have of somebody who is so very talented and so very capable yet not being able to maintain the leadership mantle that she really can be that leader because she's not totally comfortable in allowing people to see who she is and what she's about. The same is Al Gore in the last election. You know here is somebody who, again, so many amazing leadership talents and strengths to offer and yet wasn't able to exude that comfort in front of people. So that's the piece of what I'm asking you to think about in this exercise, is how you can understand and be grounded in your unique talents, strengths and skills. Again, this doesn't make you better than, what it does is it makes you who you are and how much fun is that, to be able to show people who you really are and have them see you for who you really are. Whatever those strengths are, whatever that passion is, whatever is that unique combination, that's what's going to get you where you want to go. Trying to be something you're not, never will. And so again, that's what I want you to focus on in this question.

Now that you've identified this passion, this talent, this skill, this uniqueness in you and you're able to articulate it, this comes to the next challenge and this is often the part that really trips people up. It's how do you want to put that out into the world. How is it that you want to lead? We've been talking during the last several sessions about the fact that leadership begins right here, right now and with you. Everyone has an opportunity to lead from where they're at and part of that leadership is knowing what are the changes that you want to create in the world. We may all have things that we would like to see be changed and be different and so often, you know, we come up with these very grand ideas. I'd like world peace, I'd like to stop global warming, I'd like to, you know, get rid of taxes. And so we think that that's the change that we really want to create and yet we think well how am I possibly going to be able to do that right here and right now. And so we feel like well we can't actually be a leader right now so we have to wait until we're able to achieve a certain position, a certain title, run for office. And the problem with that kind of leadership thinking is that it always postpones our power and our ability to create change, when in fact the change that you can create can start right here and today. So what I encourage you to think about is that whatever it is that you'd like to see change; it can be global warming, it can be economic issues or health policy or whatever it is, I want you to bring it down to some very concrete ideas about what you can do today, what you can do tomorrow, what you can do this week, what you can do this month to begin to create that change now. And think about the difference and the dynamics about the power that that creates for you because its very disempowering to think about the fact that, well maybe someday when I run for congress and I can actually write a bill and perhaps get it passed, I can actually do something about global warming. When if you start to change how you look at that and how you exude that leadership that you have, you can say, wait, I can begin to do things right now. I can work within my community. Maybe there are some ways that I can begin to change what's going on with the people I deal with every day, that will begin to have that impact. I can tell you from working with, again, numerous people throughout the years, where I have seen the most amazing shifts and changes is when people really grab hold of this idea. And I can tell you first hand that I have watched people change policies in their cities that have led to policy changes in their counties, in their States and I am sure will lead to National changes as well because what they did is they started where their power was. They started in the here and now, and they started with the steps that they can take today. Because that's where you can act, that's where the power to act lies, that's where the power to lead lies. It doesn't begin in thinking that the change can happen someday out there, somewhere. It begins right here and right now, and that's what these questions are really about. Its about how can you begin to create that change today.

The questions that follow that one about what you need to help make that vision a reality, what are the resources you want to bring to the table, really begin to speak to the idea of the intelligences that we talked about back in the Myers Briggs and the Keirsey. Depending on where you're at, what else do you need to bring to the table? As we've discussed, you know, nothing happens without team, without community, without collaboration and you're going to need all four of those intelligences to create the change that you want. This part of the exercise is to help you to identify again what else you need to bring. You know what the talent is that you bring; you know which one of those

intelligences is natural and inherent in you. Now begin to recognize the strengths of bringing those others with you to the table to create this. And all of a sudden, again, you're freed up from having to think well I can't do all this because I can't do all of these things, and instead you're really able to say I can go see this talent, this skill in someone else and I'm going to help them be the leader that they'd like to be because I see it in them and I'm going to ask them to join me. That's leadership.

So this week is really about you beginning to understand how to put this into practice every day for yourself and what we're going to be looking for in these plans is to see what kind of passion and energy you're able to put forward to create that plan that's going to actually create some change in your community. We obviously don't have enough time in this course for each of you to go out and begin to put these into practice, but I am very much encouraging you to do this and to look at this exercise as an opportunity for you to put a plan together that you will put into practice. That this is not just some mental exercise for you to do and then to push aside. I put the challenge out there to each one of you, as you put this plan together that you are really thinking about something that you'd like to change and that you are going to take the lessons that we've learned throughout this course and to put them into practice immediately. That's how you're going to change. That's how you're going to be able to develop even more into the leader that you want to be. You wouldn't be here if there wasn't some part of you that was yearning to go out and do something in the world. This is the first step. This is the piece where you need to reflect, where you need to take a look at all of these different facets of who you are and what you're about and you need to be able to think about how you're going to do this right away. And if you're able to do this I assure you, within the next few months, you're going to see some dramatic changes.

So enjoy this. Take the time that it takes to reflect, to allow yourself that gift of silence, to allow yourself that gift of introspection that we don't give to ourselves. And I believe wholeheartedly that with that gift you're going to come up with some amazing things and you are going to create amazing changes as leaders in your community.