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Professor Morris

LDR 101

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### **Personal Leadership Narrative**

Growing up as a relatively quiet kid, I never saw myself as much of a leader. The lead was always taken by people who didn't think twice about voicing their opinions, who faced no semblance of anxiety around the idea of making themselves vulnerable. These were the people who would constantly end up driving the conversations and inspiring others with their own thoughts & actions. I wondered how these people could effortlessly take charge like this without feeling insecure in their own ideas. Confidence seemed to be integral to leadership, and that was the one thing I could never really manage to muster up.

For the majority of my childhood, I looked at leadership as a trait with this "you've got it or you don't" type mentality. In my mind, I was always going to be the person who let the opportunities to lead pass me by. I simply didn't have the personality type that I thought was essential to leading anyone or anything in any capacity. There was a point in time where I didn't even take leadership within my own personal life. When you're so scared of your own actions & words being criticized, it's easy to become compliant to whichever way life wants to pull you. I felt incapable of making my own decisions because of my total lack of confidence in any area of my life.

After so many years of living like this, it became exhausting to continue to be paralyzed by self doubt. I got tired of letting other people take the lead and make my decisions for me. It really did take me a while, but I eventually came to terms with the fact that leadership, in any

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capacity, starts with having the courage to begin to look past the self doubt you may harbor. This is easier said than done, but to become a leader you don't have to push everything to the side at once. Anyone can start taking baby-steps outside of their comfort zone that are necessary to take charge of not only their own life, but also the world around them.

For me, it was hard to let go of this concept that leadership starts and ends in a place of fearlessness and confidence. Good leaders aren't necessarily people who do not experience any self doubt. Taking inspiration from Stacey Abram's words in *Lead from the Outside*, leaders are the ones who are able to quiet their internal fears, whether they stem from their own negative perception of themselves or have seeped into their subconscious through the negative perceptions of others. Overcoming these doubtful voices is usually where leaders' confidence comes from.

If you're able to reach into your own passions and knowledge in order to overpower fear, the idea of displaying leadership starts to become far less intimidating. At first, it felt unnatural for me to overlook my own doubts, since listening to them was all I really knew. But as I grew more confident in my own ability to tune into my strengths, it became far easier for me to take charge when it really mattered. Remembering that everyone struggles with their own insecurities is something else that helped me overcome the fear of being ridiculed and judged for using my voice. Everyone, like me, was so wrapped up in their own self image that they didn't really care what anyone else said or did. And if they did care, it always came from a place of personal insecurity. I had to learn to overlook the possibility that someone would disagree with me for

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making a mistake or having a different opinion. If you live to please yourself and not to please others by taking a backseat, people will respect you and follow your lead.

I hope that my time here at Agnes Scott College will help me further develop my potential as a leader. There are still times when I stay quiet and play it safe due to my own doubts. I have a long way to go in terms of silencing my insecurities, and I hope that receiving my higher education at an institution like this will help me overcome these feelings. I feel that an Agnes Scott education is going to provide me with the tools I need to truly take control of my future and go after my loftier goals without hesitation, which is part of the reason I decided to attend this school in particular. I'd love to see myself grow and thrive as a leader here, and because of the lessons I've learned in the past, I know that is possible.