

# Pacific Northwest Collegiate Leadership Conference 2019

## Gratitude, Leadership, and You

ANDREW BECK: My name is Andrew Beck, I use he and his pronouns. I am the coordinator for leadership and diversity initiatives for housing and residents life. If at any point you all have questions, please up let me know, raise a hand. Yell at me, whatever works to get my attention, and we'll keep moving on.

So we're going to go through our outline. First things first. I'm going to tell you a little about myself, and why I chose this topic to present to you all about today.

--a little bit. We'll talk more about that when we get there, obviously. It's a video I'll be showing, and we'll do a little bit of debrief on that. And then we're going to talk about gratitude. We're going to have another video about the science of happiness. And we're going to do a little debrief on that, and then there will be some time at the end for questions. Does that sound good?

AUDIENCE: Yeah.

ANDREW BECK: Great. So a little bit about myself. I'm originally from Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Why I tell you that is because if you've ever been in the Midwest-- is anyone from the Midwest or been to the Midwest? A few hands, all right. We have a thing called Midwest nice. So being nice to everyone all the time. When we walk by each other on the street, we'll say hi, even if we don't know the person. We'll hold the door for 50 feet because the other person is behind us and they don't have to run-- all that stuff it is very stereotypical.

And then, work ethic. I grew up in a little bit of a farming community. Anyone a farming community person in here? So yeah, you know the work ethic of getting up in the morning, milking the cows, going and getting the field, making sure things are going right. So that's a little bit about me.

I did my undergrad at North Dakota State University, if anyone knows where that's at. I have a bachelor's degree in human development and family science. I did my graduate school at Kansas State University. And I have a master's degree in counseling and student development. So basically, fancy words for helping college students get through college is what my degrees are in.

I've been an RED. Does anyone know what an RED is? Residential education director. I've done that. I did that for 3 and 1/2 years here at WC right for grad school. I was in Stimpson Hall. And [INAUDIBLE] if anyone lived there, or is living there now. And then, currently serving as a coordinator for Leadership and Diversity Initiatives [INAUDIBLE].

Basically, what I do with that job, I advise our residence hall association, if anyone knows anything about that. And I do a bunch of projects for housing and residence life. So there's four things when I'm working with people that I always like to talk to them about, and things that I expect from people that I work with. So I call them my four tenants.

The first one is communicate. If something's not making sense, you need to tell me. I can read your faces sometimes. And when you have that look of, I don't know what's going on, I'll try to stop and explain stuff more. But if you have questions, please let me know. The second one is use common sense. A lot of times the people I'm like-- I'm not trying to dive really deep into anything. Use something out of a very big textbook that doesn't make sense. I'm going pretty surface to mid-level on things. So just think about it, reflect on it.

All right. Do your job. You're here in a presentation. So be paying attention. Be trying to comprehend what I'm saying. And then lastly, don't be a jerk. That's always a good one, I think, to remind people of, is we're all at different points. We're all trying to learn. So those are four things that I live by.

I'm a self-proclaimed nerd. I do play D and D. I like games. Gaming systems. I recently bought a Switch and that's been my outside life for a while. So if anyone wants to talk about games, I'm hoping to start Breath of the Wild after this, actually. So anyone got some hints, let me know.

Community service and others focused. I've been in a lot of different student organizations that dealt with community service and serving others. And I think that gratitude and leadership are two big tenants of things that I've done within those. And that's why I'm passionate about those. I was in a group called Blue Key Honor Society, which was all about service. And then I also grew up in Boy Scouts, and I'm an Eagle Scout. So that was a lot of others focus. How can you help other people?

And then, I'm just average at sports. I feel like people always ask me. I'm 6' 8", and they're like, did you play football? No sorry. I was short in my high school, which I know sounds weird being 6' 8". But I would not have made-- I was too small. It's weird, I know.

All right, so before we start the first video. If you know-- I have three videos I'm going to show you today. If you know any of the videos-- oh, wait. That's later, but I'm going to get there anyways. I'm going to show some videos. Please do not spoil it if you've seen the video, all right? Other people are learning. So if you know what's going to happen, great. Sit with that, think about it, and then let everyone else experience.

All right, so what does leadership mean to you right now? Anyone in the room. What does leadership mean? Or online. Helping. Is that what you said? Helping others? Yep. So connecting people together and help everyone get to your main goal. To direct the group. Influencing others, yes. I saw a hand somewhere over here. No? Great. Oh, yes. Creating a path for others to follow.

I forget what my next point is. Yeah. So I think people have done pretty well with defining it. If you want to give examples, you can. For me, leadership is very different depending on what I'm doing, right? If I'm in a student group and I'm the president, that leadership role to me looks very different than if I'm working on a group project in a class, right?

Because have you ever been in a group project where someone just takes charge and you're like, actually no, I don't want to do that. That sounds terrible. Anyone had that experience, right? That's not good leadership. That's not being a good leader, right? And I think group leadership is very different than being the person who is like, I'm in charge of this, and I'm the one who's accountable to making sure this is done, right?

So leadership is going to be varied on what you're looking at. Today, we're going to be looking at more of self-leadership and how you lead with yourself. And leading for others, not really-- I mean, role model. Role modeling in a group, right? That's going to be really helpful in a group setting. But we're going to be really talking about yourself and how you lead other people.

So who thinks of themselves as a leader? Raise your hand. Who thinks of themselves a leader? Got a few hands. All right, great. Who thinks of themselves as an influencer? Not Instagram influencer. That's not what I'm going for. You think you have influence on other people in your lives. OK, a few more people. Great.

So who wants to be a leader? If you didn't raise your hand, who's like, I want to be a leader? Hopefully that's everyone. You're at a leadership conference, that would make sense. That's why you're here, right? So I already talked about that. But yeah, we're going to go ahead and pop into the first video here. This one's called lollipop moments by Drew Dudley. Has anyone seen this Ted talk? A few people. OK, once again, don't spoil it for other people. Please and thank you.

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

- I want to just start by asking everyone in the audience here a question. How many of you are completely comfortable with calling yourselves a leader? See, I've asked that question all the way across the country, and everywhere I ask it, no matter where, there's always a huge portion of the audience that won't put up their hand. And I've come to realize that we have made leadership into something bigger than us. We made it into something beyond us. We made it about changing the world.

And we've taken this title of leader, and we treat it as if it's something that one day we're going to deserve. But to give it to ourselves right now means a level of arrogance or cockiness that we're not comfortable with. And I worry sometimes that we spend so much time celebrating amazing things that hardly anybody can do that we've convinced ourselves that those are the only things we're celebrating.

And we start to devalue the things that we can do every day. And we start to take moments where we truly are a leader, and we don't let ourselves take credit for it, and we don't let ourselves feel good about it. And I've been lucky enough over the last 10 years to work with some amazing people who have helped me redefine leadership in a way that I think has made me happier. And with my short time today, I just want to share with you the one story that is probably most responsible for that redefinition.

I went to a little school called Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick. And on my last day there, a girl came up to me and she said, I remember the first time that I met you. And then, she told me a story that happened four years earlier. She said, my day before I started university I was in a hotel room with my mom and my dad. And I was so scared and so convinced that I couldn't do this, that I wasn't ready for university, that I just burst into tears.

And my mom and my dad were amazing. They were like, look, we know you're scared, but let's just go tomorrow. Let's go to the first day. And if at any point you feel as if you can't do this, that's fine. Just tell us, we'll take you home. We love you no matter what. And she said, so I went the next day, and I was standing in line getting ready for registration. And I looked around and I just knew I couldn't do it. I knew I wasn't ready. I knew I had to quit.

And she says, I made that decision. And as soon as I made it, there was this incredible feeling of peace that came over me. And I turned to my mom and my dad to tell them that we needed to go home, and just at that moment you came out of the student union building wearing the stupidest hat I have ever seen in my life. It was awesome.

And you had a big sign, promoting SHINERAMA, which is students fighting cystic fibrosis. A charity I've worked with for years. And you had a bucket full of lollipops. And you were walking along and were handing the lollipops out to people in line, and talking about SHINERAMA. And all of a sudden, you got to me and you just stopped and you stared. It was creepy. This girl right here knows exactly what I'm talking about.

And then you look at the guy next to me, and you smiled. And you reached in your bucket, you pulled out a lollipop, and you held it out to him. And you said, you need to give a lollipop to the beautiful woman standing next to you. And she said, I have never seen anyone get more embarrassed faster in my life. He turned beet red. And he wouldn't even look at me. He just kind of held a lollipop out like this.

And I felt so bad for this dude that I took the lollipop. And as soon as I did, you got this incredibly severe look on your face and you looked at my mom and my dad and you said, look at that. Look at that. First day away from home, and already she's taking candy from a stranger.

And she said, everybody lost it. 20 feet in every direction, everyone started to howl. And I know this is cheesy, and I don't know why I'm telling you this, but in that moment when everyone was laughing, I knew that I shouldn't quit. I knew that I was where I was supposed to be, and I knew that I was home.

And I haven't spoken to you once in the four years since that day. But I heard that you were leaving, and I had to come up and tell you that you've been an incredibly important person in my life. And I'm going to miss you. Good luck. And she walks away. And I'm flattened. And she gets about six feet away, she turns around and smiles and goes, you should probably know this, too, I'm still dating that guy four years later.

A year and a half after I moved to Toronto, I got an invitation to their wedding. Here's the kicker, I don't remember that. I have no recollection of that moment. And I've searched my memory banks because that is funny and I should remember doing it. And I don't remember it. And that was such an eye opening transformative moment for me to think that maybe, the biggest impact I'd ever had on anyone's life, a moment that had a woman walk up to a stranger four years later and say, you've been an incredibly important person in my life, was a moment that I didn't even remember.

How many of you guys have a lollipop moment? A moment where someone said something or did something that you feel fundamentally made your life better. All right, how many of you have told that person they did it? See? Why not? We celebrate birthdays where all you have to do is not die for 365 days. And yet, we let people who have made our lives better walk around without knowing it.

And every single one of you, every single one of you has been the catalyst for a lollipop moment. You have made someone's life better by something that you said or that you did. And if you think you haven't, think about all the hands that didn't go back up when I asked that question. You're just one of the people who hasn't been told.

But it is so scary to think of ourselves as that powerful. It can be frightening to think that we can matter that much to other people. Because as long as we make leadership something bigger than us, as long as we keep leadership something beyond us, as long as we make it about changing the world, we give ourselves an excuse not to expect it every day from ourselves and from each other.

Marianne Williamson said, our greatest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our greatest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light and not our darkness that frightens us. And my call to action today is that we need to get over that. We need to get over our fear of how extraordinarily powerful we can be in each other's lives. We need to get over it so we can move beyond it. And our little brothers and our little sisters and one day our kids, or our kids right now, can watch us start to value the impact we can have on each other's lives more than money and power and titles and influence.

We need to redefine leadership as being about lollipop moments. How many that we create, how many that we acknowledge, how many of them we pay forward, and how many of them we say thank you for. Because we've made leadership about changing the world, and there is no world. There's only 6 billion understandings of it. And if you change one person's understanding of it, one person's understanding of what they're capable of, one person's

understanding of how much people care about them, one person's understanding of how powerful an agent for change they can be in this world, you change the whole thing.

And if we can understand leadership like that, I think we can redefine leadership like that, I think we can change everything. And it's a simple idea, but I don't think it's a small one. And I want to thank you all so much for letting me share it with you today. Having a great day at Ted. I'll see you later.

[END PLAYBACK]

ANDREW BECK: All right, what are people's initial thoughts after that? You just watched that, some of you for second, third, fourth time. A lot of you first time, right? Initial thoughts, reactions? That's insane. That was sweet. There's no way you've affected someone's life like that. All right, all right. All right, so then one of his last questions to the group, how many people had someone change their life like that? Not that you've done it, that someone has influenced your life like that in your lifetime?

Raise your hands. Everyone can of one person that's had a pretty profound impact on your life, right? Now, how many of you have told that person that they did it? A few of you. OK, great. I'm glad that you did. For those of you that didn't, we're going to work on that in a little bit when we talk about gratitude.

But what do you think about that definition of leadership, right? It's not about changing the world, it's about influencing one person at a time and that changes their world, right? What are your thoughts on that? The kind of leadership you'd like, behind the scenes work. Yeah, definitely.

So it sounds more practical, all right? You can change one person at a time, which then leads to bigger changes and then could change the world. But when you think about, I'm going to change the world, that can just be overwhelming. That can be too much. Yeah. More personal, connects people. Definitely, yeah. Let me get back to the PowerPoint.

So we did all that. Yeah. So for those of you that told the person that they had a major impact on your life, what did that feel like? Anyone want to share?

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE] don't read too much into it. I was in a really good point, and my chemistry teacher in high school was like, hey, are you OK? [INAUDIBLE] just that someone asked me if I was OK was really cool. And so I told him that, and he was like, don't read too much into it.

ANDREW BECK: Yeah, I'm not sure what that means. Sorry. That would be a little awkward.

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE] OK.

ANDREW BECK: Yeah. OK, other people want to share?

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE]

ANDREW BECK: Yeah, so I think telling people is something that is going to probably make you feel better. And we're going to move into our other video. But first, before we do that, I want to talk about gratitude real quick. So the definition that I found on Google was the quality of being thankful, readiness to show appreciation for, and to return kindness. Does anyone else have a definition that they like when they think of gratitude?

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE]

ANDREW BECK: Yep. Your definition if you had to define what gratitude is.

AUDIENCE: The acknowledgment of someone making a difference in your life, whether it be quietly acknowledging it or actually telling them.

ANDREW BECK: Acknowledging that someone's done something for you in your life. Yeah, definitely. So what I want you to do-- I'm going to give you a list of things. I'm going to come back to it. I have a short quote. So we're going to have you do these things. So once you think about someone who's had a great impact on your life, whether you've told them or not, does not matter.

And then, I want you to pick someone then who you haven't told before, OK? So try to think of another person if you've told them. If you can't, that's also fine. You can tell the same person more than once. It's going to still work, don't worry. And then, someone-- or maybe something you rarely tell. So I want you to reflect on that. And before you do that, I want to show this quick video. Does anyone know who Jimmy Valvano is? A few people.

OK, he was a basketball coach for North Carolina State University. He basically took his basketball team, which wasn't supposed to make March Madness, wasn't supposed to make the championship, and somehow won the whole thing. And now, there's a-- he had cancer, he passed away. And within the sports world is a pretty big cancer foundation called the Jimmy V Foundation.

But when he was diagnosed, and shortly before he passed away, he accepted this award. And this was part of his speech. As always, quotes resonate with me a lot, so this is one thing that, as I'm reflecting on things, this is something I want you to think about.

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

- And when people say to me, how do you get through life or each day the same thing? To me, there are three things we all should do every day. We do this every day of our life, you're going to have wonderful-- number one, is laugh. You should laugh every day. Number two is think.

You should spend some time in thought. And number three, is you should have your emotions moved to tears. Could be happiness.

Think about it. If you laugh, you think, and you cry, that's a full bed. That's a heck of a day. You do that seven days a week, you're going to have something special.

[END PLAYBACK]

ANDREW BECK: Yeah, so I don't know if you've done any of those three things yet today. Hopefully, I think most of you laughed at the last video. So that's number one down. So number two is reflect. So I want you to spend a little time in thought here. I'll probably give you about 5 to 10 minutes. Think about that person that's made an impact on your life, and then as you're reflecting,

I want you to write a letter. That's why you have the pen and paper. Yes, it's old school. I get it. But write them a letter. To whoever, body, sincerely, love, whatever you want, your name. Does that make sense? I want you to write them a letter about how they've impacted you, and if you have a specific event, like this one time you did this one thing for me and it really changed who I was, write about that for the next 5 to 10 minutes. Does that make sense? Great. If you need a piece of paper or a pen, please let me know. I got extras.

[SILENCE]

ANDREW BECK: How is everyone doing? Need a few more minutes? Yeah, OK. We'll give you just a few more minutes, and then I have another video. So if you write through the video, that will also be fine.

[SILENCE]

ANDREW BECK: All right. It's looking like most people are done. So I'm going to go ahead and let's start this video, this next one. This one's called the Science of Happiness Gratitude. Has anyone seen this video before? A few people? OK, so you know what's about to happen. Once again, please don't spoil it.

SPEAKER 3: Sorry, the video is quite old, so you can film it, but [INAUDIBLE].

ANDREW BECK: What are your first initial thoughts after that video?

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE]

ANDREW BECK: Surprisingly difficult how hard it is to express your gratitude towards people. Yes.

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE]

ANDREW BECK: Surprised about the phone call. Definitely. So how would you feel if I told you right now it's your turn? You're going to go call that person that you just wrote about? What are your feelings? Everyone's like, please don't, right? We don't have time for that. Don't worry. Yeah.

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE] I probably would cry just a little.

ANDREW BECK: Yeah, so you'd give them the letter to read, but you wouldn't want to talk to them. OK.

AUDIENCE: I was wondering if there's something to that. [INAUDIBLE]

ANDREW BECK: So probably going to feel better if you-- even the study, right? The people who left a voicemail or wouldn't call, or for some reason didn't make the phone call, their happiness is 2% to 4% happier, right? But the people who talk that person was jumping up to anywhere from 4% to 16%. Thank you.

Yeah, so this is something that I actually do every Sunday night. I don't call the people all the time because a lot of my friends will never pick up. They would die if I call them, right? That's where we're at in society right now. So I usually will send it over Facebook Messenger, Snapchat, or whatnot. Or I will write them a letter, and actually send it to them. That's just my weekly thing to kind of like, all right, Sunday. Dreading Monday morning. So I want to make myself feel a little bit better, but I also want to tell people, like from the first video, I want to know how important they are to me. And I've had some portion of my life influenced by them, all right?

So yeah. So why am I talking about this today? Why do you think it's important that one leadership isn't anything that you all already don't do, right? You're already all leaders, and why is gratitude important to that? Any thoughts?

AUDIENCE: So you never forget where you came from.

ANDREW BECK: Never forgetting where you came from. Yeah.

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE]

ANDREW BECK: Yeah. I think, even within your student groups or within a friend group, if you're doing this, you're expressing gratitude, and you're telling people how much they mean to you. That's only going to make you, that other person, and your group stronger, right? That's only going to make people feel better. People who don't know that they've done something great probably aren't feeling too good about themselves, right?

People being reminded, hey, you are a good person. This is what you've done for me. That is something that's going to influence them a lot as well as hopefully influence yourself, all right?

A lot of things-- when I was in my undergrad and I was in a bunch of different student groups, a lot of things that we always talked about was what are you doing in that group to help out, right?

So I joined a fraternity my first year, and I was in that fraternity for four years. I was also in student government and some other things for four years. And we always talked about your first year in that group, your job is to learn, right? You got to learn how the group works, you got to learn what we stand for, what we do, and why we do it.

All right, and the second year, you're still learning a little bit, but hopefully, you're influencing things, right? Now, you're able to like, all right, I know how we do things. I can help people understand that, and I can help push us further, do different things, right? Third year you're probably a leadership role, right? Maybe the president, maybe you're the treasurer, maybe you're some other higher up position, and you're making decisions for that group.

And then, your last year is always influencing the first and second year people, right? That is the mentor year. You need to be the person who's telling other people you're doing great at this, and I think you'd make a great X, Y, or Z, right? So a lot of times when I'm talking about leadership, especially in group settings, that's the progress I'm seeing with students.

The first year learning, second year learning and influencing, third year you're the leader, you're the person in charge, making calls, and the fourth year you're helping people become the leader, all right? And that's something I want you to think about as you take that away.

Yeah, so questions about anything that I've talked about today? Questions or thoughts? I'll give it-- I know we're live streaming the back, so I'll give it a few seconds here. So if they have any typing in anything. Did people find this helpful? Do people feel better after writing their letter?

I'll also make you-- every time I do this presentation, I always make a deal. If you write the address that you want that send to, and your return address, and you leave it up at the front, I'll mail it for you. I'll take it to the post office, I'll put a stamp on it, all right? So if you want to do that. Take a few minutes look up the address that you might need to send it to. Put your return address and leave at the front. I'll do that, all right?

I'm not going to read the letter. Don't worry, I'm just going to put it in the envelope and send it. I'm not going to like, oh, they forgot the comma here. I'm not good at English with that. So yeah. All right, last call, any questions? Any from the livestream? Anybody? No. All right, well thank you for coming. Hope you all have a great rest of your day.