

This I Believe Essay

This essay should reflect the culmination of your thoughts about leadership. It is based on the NPR series “This I Believe”, but with a twist. Rather than crafting a statement about your beliefs in general, you are asked to write a concise summary of your beliefs about leadership, using the quotation from Warren Bennis (we discussed this on the first day of lecture) as the starting point:

“The point is not to become a leader. The point is to become yourself, and to use yourself completely – all your gifts, skills and energies – to make your vision manifest. You must withhold nothing. You must, in sum, become the person you started out to be, and to enjoy the process of becoming.”

- Warren Bennis, On Becoming a Leader

What do you believe leadership is/should be?

What is your vision?

How are you becoming yourself/the leader you want to be?

These questions (and quotation) should not be directly addressed, but rather used as a starting point to help guide your thinking about what to write. Your ideas, though you do not need to cite sources covered, should be based/expressed within the framework of the material we discussed in class. You should draw on your homework reflection essays to guide your writing. Your essay should be 500-600 words (about 2 pages double-spaced), turned in through Blackboard (it should NOT have your name on it, only your ID number in the header).

Suggestions from <http://thisibelieve.org/>: This I Believe Essay Writing Suggestions

Writing your own statement of personal belief can be a powerful tool for self-reflection. To guide you through this process, we offer these suggestions:

Tell a story about you: Be specific. Take your belief out of the ether and ground it in the events that have shaped your core values. Consider moments when belief was formed or tested or changed. Think of your own experience, work, and family, and tell of the things you know that no one else does. Your story need not be heart-warming or gut-wrenching—it can even be funny—but it should be *real*. Make sure your story ties to the essence of your daily life philosophy and the shaping of your beliefs.

Be brief: Your statement should be between 500 and 600 words. That is about three minutes when read aloud at your natural pace.

Name your belief: If you cannot name it in a sentence or two, your essay might not be about belief.

Be positive: Write about what you DO believe, not what you do not. Avoid statements of religious dogma, preaching, or editorializing.

Be personal: Make your essay about you; speak in the first person. Avoid speaking in the editorial “we.” Tell your truth; this is not an opinion piece about social ideals. Write in words and phrases that are comfortable for you to speak. We recommend you read your essay aloud to yourself several times, and each time edit it and simplify it until you find the words, tone, and story that truly echo your belief and the way you speak.