

REAL LIFE LEADERS - INPUT

INTRODUCTION

A good way to allow participants to integrate their learning is to invite real-life leaders who can share with others insights about their journey of leadership. This section provides tips and resources to help in the structuring of the interview. The purpose is to enable the sharing of a personal narrative that is entertaining, imparts valuable knowledge, and reveals the full range of dynamics at play in leadership work (rational, emotional, ethical, moral...) .
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Note:

If you are organising a course: Think of different individuals that you can invite to speak to your participants, people who show extraordinary leadership capacity and who can share stories and experiences that may be relevant to your learning group.

If you are an individual: Find two or three people you consider great leaders and ask if you could shadow them for 1 morning or afternoon. Take note of what you see. What catches your attention? If you had the chance to interview them, what would you like to ask?

MAIN IDEAS

Before the event:

- Choose the topic for which you want to interview a person: Vulnerabilities in leadership, how to address conflict, transmitting purpose, etc. Try to facilitate connection with module content.
- Search for people who have excelled or who have failed (or both) in this area (and who are hopefully good speakers).
- Prepare a set of main questions and back-up questions beforehand.
- Debrief the person interviewed about the group he will be talking to.
- Encourage them to include real life stories and examples that engage both the minds and hearts of participants. (Check the handout for insights on storytelling)
- You can practice the flow of the interview with the person before the real interview if you have time. Let them know the questions beforehand so they can sketch what they want to say and more importantly tell them what you want to get from the interview. **Note:** There is always the risk of over scripting the interview, watch out for it.

Information about the setting:

- Finding the right location. In-person interviews are much better than using online software communication tools
- Distribution of the room is relevant. It is best if there is no furniture between the leader and the crowd. Everyone should be able to see the person completely.
- Sound check before the interview to be sure that everyone can hear from where they are sitting.
- Having available a roving microphone is good for the questions and answers.

During the event

- Introduction about the speaker (even if the participants are already debrief beforehand). Printing a small bio of the person helps.
- Review again at the beginning what the goal/purpose of the interview is.
- Do not continuously interrupt the speaker (you may gently intervene if they are going out of topic).
- It is good at the end to give the speaker a small token of appreciation.

Note: For more tips and insights refer to the handout or additional list of resources at the end of the document.

EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS

- What are you proudest of having achieved as a leader? Where have you felt most lost, or most needed support whilst you were leading?
- What have you learned about your own leadership from these experiences? What would you do differently as a result?
- If you could look back, what leadership advice would you give to yourself when you had your first leadership role?
- What was the most rewarding part of your experience in (your organization)?
- What are the relevant moments of your life that you consider have shaped how you lead others? Or who have been your role models as leaders?
- What are the top 3 qualities/character attribute you think a leader needs to have and what's the best way to build them?
- When does a leader fail? What do you consider as the most dangerous leadership temptations?
- You have been working in (organization/country) for some years now, in a complex/conflict zone. How do you see the mission of the Society reflected on your work there? What are the biggest needs of the people there?
- How do you manage to keep a group of volunteers and staff motivated in an environment of crisis and desolation?
- What kind of criticism you most get?
- What skills, knowledge and behaviours do you consider relevant for your team to develop in order to carry-out their task as best as possible?
- During our learning experience we are talking about what the ignatian tradition has left us (the exercises, the constitutions, the magis, inner freedom,...) how do you see this tradition helping you and your team in your work?

EXPECTED LEARNINGS AND OUTCOMES

1. Connecting with real experiences of leadership
2. Growing in awareness as to the challenges and graces of leadership work
3. Realizing the power of purposeful storytelling and personal narratives

REAL LIFE LEADERS - HANDOUT

Insights for Interviews and Real Life Leaders Speech

Storytelling Insights - Useful tips from TED talks (for the leader being interviewed)

How can we speak powerfully to make change in the world? ([link](#))

- You want to take the listener on the same emotional journey that you experienced
- A number of habits that we need to move away from: Gossip, Judgment, Negativity, Complaining, Excuses, Exaggeration, Dogmatism (confusing facts with opinions)
- Four powerful cornerstones:
 - **Honesty:** being true in what you say, being straight and clear
 - **Authenticity:** being yourself, standing in your own truth
 - **Integrity:** being your word, doing what you say, being somebody people can trust
 - **Love:** not romantic love, but wishing people well
- Tap into the toolbox you have:
 - **Your register:** locate your voice, are you talking from your nose, throat, chest? We associate depth in voices with power and authority
 - **Your timbre:** we prefer voices which are rich, smooth and warm. Work on your breathing and posture to improve the timbre of your voice.
 - **Your tone:** speaking all on one note is really quite hard to listen to (That's where the word "monotonic" comes from, or monotonous, monotone). Also, singing while speaking and ending every sentence as if it were a question is not also recommended.
 - **Pace:** We can show our excitement by esaying something really quickly, or we can slow right down to emphasize, and at the end of that, use silence. We don't have to fill it with ums and ahs. It can be very powerful.
 - **Pitch and volume**

TED's secret to great public speaking ([link](#))

- There is one thing that all great TED Talks have in common: Your number one task as a speaker is to transfer into your listeners' minds an extraordinary gift -- a strange and beautiful object that we call an idea.
- Ideas really matter. If communicated properly, they're the most powerful force shaping human culture.
- Four guidelines to go about that task:
 - **Limit your talk to just one major idea and link your entire talk to it**
 - Ideas are complex things. Slash back your content so that you can focus on the single idea you're most passionate about, and explain that one thing properly.
 - Give context, share examples, make it vivid.

- **Give your listeners a reason to care. Get their permission to welcome you in.**
 - Stir your audience's curiosity. Use intriguing, provocative questions to identify why something doesn't make sense and needs explaining.
 - Spark a desire to know more by revealing a disconnection in someone's worldview
- **Build your idea, piece by piece, out of concepts that your audience already understands.**
 - Use your audience's language. Start where they are.
 - Stay away from terms and concepts they may be unfamiliar with.
 - Use metaphors to show how the pieces fit together.
- **Make your idea worth sharing.**
 - "Who does this idea benefit?" if it only serves you or your organization, then, the audience will see right through you.
 - Share ideas that have the potential to brighten up someone's day or change their perspective for the better or inspire them to do something differently

The secret structure of great talks ([link](#))

- A single idea can rewrite our future. But an idea is powerless if it stays inside of you. The only difference between ideas that are adopted and others that are rejected is in the way they were communicated.
- Communicating an idea in a way that resonates can change the world.
- The way that ideas are conveyed the most effectively is through story.
- In powerful stories, the presenter isn't the hero, the audience is the hero of the idea. The speaker only helps the audience move from one thing and into a new special idea,
- In its most simple structure, it's a three-part structure of a story:
 - 1) A likable hero who has a desire,
 - 2) they encounter a roadblock and
 - 3) ultimately they emerge and transform.
- Keep the audience interested by starting with what is (the status quo) and moving back and forth between what is and what could be, and ending with the resolution and transformation.

Insights on how to conduct an interview (for the planning team)

- Research your real-life-leader.
- Decide on a goal/purpose for the conversation.
- Plan the interview.
- Tell your subject how much time the interview will take.
- Prepare any content you will refer to during the interview.
- Share directions but don't send advance questions (the result will be too scripted).
- Send a reminder 3 days in advance.
- Have a short elevator pitch ready.
- Establish rapport and break the ice. Never plunge in with tough questions at the beginning.
- Relax your subject and humanize the interaction by starting slow and personal.
- Keep your questions open-ended.
- Be courteous to your subject.
- Ask what you don't know.
- Don't be afraid of uncomfortable silences and pauses.
- Let the conversation take its natural course. Don't read through your questions one right after another.
- Maintain eye contact when asking questions.
- Be specific, keep your questions on point and direct.
- Make your interview interesting.
- Manage time well. Keep the interview as short as possible.
- Invite the audience to ask their own questions.
- Let the interviewees wander a bit--but be careful.
- Listen, really listen. Each answer could lead to more questions or carry an answer to a future question you were planning to ask.
- Listen for hints that suggest questions you had not thought of.
- Ask about feelings. "How do you feel about x? What was it like to do y?".
- Get them to talk about what really energizes them and consoles them.
- Don't be afraid to ask deep questions "Why do you care about this issue?", "What was a defining moment in your leadership that changed everything".
- Avoid intrusive questions. Some questions are necessary while others are not.
- Let the interviewee ask their own question.
- Close with a thank you and follow up information.
- And most importantly, remember that the interview is a conversation with you, so be yourself!

REFERENCES

The above has been compiled and summarized from the below blog entries and links:

- <https://jobmob.co.il/blog/celebrity-interview/>
- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/shelisarael/2012/04/14/8-tips-on-conducting-great-interviews/#5d23331056f1>
- <https://content.wisestep.com/interview-celebrities-tips-ask-right-questions/>
- <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/how-conduct-journalistic-interview/>
- <https://matadornetwork.com/bnt/13-simple-journalist-techniques-for-effective-interviews/>
- <http://www.columbia.edu/itc/journalism/isaacs/edit/MencherIntv1.html>
- <https://www.articulatemarketing.com/blog/how-to-interview-someone>
- <http://www.sparkminute.com/2011/11/07/30-tips-on-how-to-interview-like-a-journalist/>

REAL LIFE LEADERS - RESOURCES

GENERAL RESOURCES

Title	Author	Publisher	Year	Link
Summary of tips of how to carry an interview (Handout)				
10 ways to make the most of a celebrity interview	Jacob Share	Job Mob	2009	Link
9 tips on conducting great interviews	Shel Israel	Forbes	2012	Link
Interview Principles	Columbia			Link
13 simple journalist techniques for effective interviews	Sarah Stuteville	Matador Network	2013	Link
How to speak so that people want to listen	Julian Treasure	TED	2013	Link
The secret structures of great talks	Nancy Duarte	TED	2011	Link
20 Questions to Ask Other Leaders	Michael Hyatt		2009	Link

QUOTES

- “Your number one task as a speaker is to transfer into your listeners' minds an extraordinary gift -- a strange and beautiful object that we call an idea”. - Chris Anderson
- “When the heart is touched by direct experience, the mind may be challenged to change” - Peter Hans Kolvenbach
- “The test of leadership is not to put greatness into humanity, but to elicit it, for the greatness is already there” - James Buchanan
- “Give your listeners a reason to care. Get their permission to welcome you in. Stir your audience's curiosity. Use intriguing, provocative questions to identify why something doesn't make sense and needs explaining. Spark a desire to know more by revealing a disconnection in someone's worldview.” - Chris Anderson
- “A single idea can rewrite our future. But an idea is powerless if it stays inside of you.” - Nancy Duarte