



HOW TO BE



Rock Star

STUDENT
LEADER



BY JAKE BALLENTINE

How to Be a Rock Star Student Leader

Jake Ballentine

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Special Preview Copy

This is a special preview copy of “How to Be a Rock Star Student Leader” that is especially for you because of your work with student leaders. I hope you and your students enjoy the book and that we can work together in the future. For more information on me speaking at your next event visit: www.jakespeaks.com.

Thank you!

**Jake Ballentine
Using Music to Make a Difference**

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WHAT IS A ROCK STAR STUDENT LEADER?

I have the opportunity to meet student leaders from all over the country at leadership conferences, workshops, and school assemblies. I have noticed that there are a lot of different types of student leaders. There are those who are just there so they can get out of class and get free cookies. Then there are those types of student leaders that are getting the job done, but not much more. They are the student leaders who do what is asked of them but do not take initiative on their own. They do not go above and beyond what is asked of them. Then there are the types of student leaders that are going above and beyond; they are taking initiative and actually leading those around them. They are the student leaders that are there because they want to serve those around them and truly care about those they serve. I call these student leaders “Rock Star Student Leaders!”

When I say “rock star” you are probably thinking of someone with long hair, tattoos and a guitar, rockin’ out in front of a big crowd. Well, I am using the term “rock star” a little differently. I am

using the term “rock star” because in order to be one you need to be great at what you do and be passionate about it. Rock and roll is fun and exciting and so can being a student leader. I want you to bring a rock star level of enthusiasm and excitement to your role as a student leader!

I know that since you are reading this book you are already a “rock star student leader” or well on your way to becoming one! I know that you must actually want to improve as a student leader and you must actually care about those you serve. The great news is that caring about those you serve and having a true desire to improve as a leader are the most important steps to becoming a Rock Star Student Leader! I can teach tips and strategies, but I can’t teach genuine care and desire.

About this book

This book is the ultimate guide to rock star student leadership! You will learn the seven keys to rock star student leadership and how to apply them to your school or organization, and throughout your life. The cool thing is that these keys will not only help you become a rock star student leader but they

will help you live at a rock star level of life. I believe if you want to become a better leader the first place to look is within. When you work to improve yourself as a person you will automatically become a better student leader.

How to get the most out of this book

This book is designed to be used individually or as a group. Either way it has its benefits, but if you are reading it individually the way to get the most out of it is to have a partner who you can discuss the principles of the book with and help keep each other accountable for the action items and new goals you will be making during the course of the book. You can either go through this book as a group or you can take what you learn back to your group. To get the most out of this book don't *just* read it! TAKE ACTION! Throughout this book there are action items, activities, and challenges; make sure you take the time and do them. Growth and change come from action; you get very little out of just reading something. True growth comes from applying what you learn!

I am excited that you have taken the initiative to be the best leader you can be, and I am honored that I am able to be a part of your journey to become a “Rock Star Student Leader!”

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

“You are better than you think you are and you can do so much more than you think you can!”

The first key to Rock Star Student Leadership is: believe in yourself. I’m not sure if you play a musical instrument or if you like to sing but if you do I bet your story is pretty similar to mine.

When I first started out playing guitar I was fourteen years old. I got my first guitar for Christmas and was *so* excited! I played it every minute I was able to. I practiced for hours alone in my room every day. After a few short months I was starting to sound really good. I wasn’t a virtuoso but for a kid just starting out I was sounding great!

The only problem was that I only sounded good when I was alone in my room. As soon as I played in front of people I got so nervous and so scared that I forgot everything! I couldn’t remember the words or the chords and I just froze. The frustrating thing was that when I was alone I had so much confidence and I could move from chord to chord with ease, but when I saw people looking

back at me I became so self-conscious that all I could think about was what they were thinking.

One of my first performances was a talent show and I got so nervous that in the middle of the song I ran off the stage. I was playing great until halfway through. I started looking at all the faces looking back at me and I started thinking, “What is she thinking about me?” “What is he thinking about me?” “Do they think I sound bad?” “Do they think I look weird?” I got so wrapped up in wondering what other people were thinking about me that I completely forgot I was even on stage! Then, all of the sudden I was snapped back into reality and I realized that I had gotten so distracted with my thoughts and insecurities that I had no idea what was coming next. The song came to a screeching halt and I just stopped in awkward silence. Then I did the only rational thing I could think of. I ran off the stage!

Have you ever been nervous in front of people? I am not just talking about music or some other kind of performance; it could just be giving a presentation in class. Or, trying to find volunteers to help with your next activity. Or, just meeting new people. Why do you think people get nervous

in front of others? Write down three reasons you get nervous in front of others.

1.

2.

3.

When you are nervous in front of others, what are you afraid of? Write down three things you are afraid of when you are nervous in front of others.

1.

2.

3.

Discuss your answers with a partner.

I was afraid that people would judge me if I didn't sound good. I was afraid that people might laugh at me or make fun of me. Ultimately, I was afraid that people would reject me. I had worked so hard at playing guitar and singing, and I was afraid that if they didn't like it they would be rejecting me personally.

One day while I was playing guitar alone in my room I started to think that this was ridiculous! I realized that there was nothing different about playing in front of people; it was just the thoughts inside my head that were holding me back. I had been playing for more than a year and I wanted to share it with others. I realized that if I wanted to be able to play in front of others I needed to forget about what people were thinking and just do my best. I decided that as long as I was playing as well as I did when I was alone I would be satisfied with myself. When I did that I began to actually play up to my potential!

I was so excited. I was finally able to play in front of others. It became my favorite thing to do. As I performed more often my fears disappeared until finally I wasn't faking it anymore; I actually had confidence when I was on stage because I believed

in myself, and knew that I could do great in any circumstance!

This isn't just about music or performance; this is about every aspect of your life. We get so nervous and worked up about what other people think about us that we don't live up to our true potential. We start to worry what others will think about us if we try out for that team and don't make it, or if we try out for that play and don't make it. What are they going to think about me if I stand up for what I know is right, or what if I sit with the student that is sitting by themselves at lunch? Your potential is greatness and the first step to reaching your potential is to let go of the fears that are holding you back.

When I was in high school I had a choir teacher that said something that has always stuck with me. He said: "Every kid can sing until someone comes around and tells them they can't." What he was saying is that we are all born believing in ourselves and then somewhere along the way we stop because we start listening to the lies and the put-downs of others. I call them lies because when someone puts you down they are really saying, "I don't feel very good about myself so I am going to

bring you down to make myself feel better.” Or when someone tells you that you can’t do something what they are really saying is, “I wasn’t able to succeed so if you succeed what does that say about me?” There will always be someone out there who wants to put you down or hold you back, but remember that has nothing to do with you and everything to do with them. There is no reason to listen to these voices! Listen to the people that lift you up and forget about the others.

Everyone has something that holds them back, whether it was an experience, something someone said or even something you said to yourself. Let go of whatever it is that is holding you back and believe in yourself because you are truly amazing! Your potential is absolute greatness! You are better than you think you are and you can do so much more than you think you can!

If you want to be a rock star student leader you need to lead with confidence. People want to follow someone that believes in what they are saying. People want to follow someone that believes in themselves. I did a survey of student leaders and advisors from all over the country and asked them what their number one challenge was.

The top response was student participation and involvement. This one key will help you with that student involvement more than anything else.

One thing I have learned in my years as a performer is that no one cares if you mess up as long as you are confident about it! At first I was so worried that if I messed up people would laugh at me and judge me but the truth is that most of the time they don't even notice. If I am being totally transparent I mess up almost every performance but no one even knows because I just keep going with confidence as if I didn't trip up at all. People only notice when you stop in the middle and start apologize for messing up. If you move forward with confidence no one even knows. Occasionally I will make a big mistake and people will definitely notice, but as long as you approach it with confidence no one cares. In fact, it can create some of the best moments on stage. One time I tripped over a microphone stand in front of 750 teenagers and fell flat on my butt! If I acted embarrassed and turned red people would have laughed at me and it would have killed the performance. But when I fell I actually laughed out loud at what just happened and then I got up and made a stream of jokes it. Everyone was laughing and it was a great moment

in my performance. There were several students that came up to me afterwards and asked me if I planned it just so I could tell those jokes. Of course I didn't plan it, but I handled it with confidence so no one cared.

If you are asked to tell the school about an upcoming activity during an assembly and you go up there in a shy manner very few students will want to listen to you, let alone come to your activity. But if you go out there with confidence and tell the school in an upbeat and excited manner that there is an awesome activity that they should attend, they will want to listen and it will be much easier to get your fellow students involved. Enthusiasm is contagious! Be enthusiastic and people will want to follow you.

Learning to believe in yourself will serve you in everything you do for the rest of your life. Believing in yourself is the first step to becoming a rock star student leader. Trust yourself and remember that you are better than you think you are. You can do so much more than you think you can!

BE YOURSELF

“There are seven billion people in the world, but there is only one you.”

The second key to Rock Star Student Leadership is to BE YOURSELF! Think about your favorite band. They are not your favorite band because they sound the same as everyone else; they are your favorite band because they have something different or unique about them that connects with you and moves you! It is the same thing with you being a student leader; it's the things that make you different that will help.

Whether you know it or not, you are a completely unique individual and the things that make you unique are the things that make you so valuable! There are seven billion people in the world but there is only one you! There is no one else that is exactly like you. You are a true original! So, be happy with the things that make you different, celebrate the things that make you different, and be the original that you were born to be!

I know that maybe you don't like the things that make you different. Maybe you think they make you weird or nerdy or awkward. I get that; I have been there before, but the things that make you unique are the things that make you an original. And last time I checked an original is worth a lot more than a copy. Don't be a copy; be the original you were born to be!

Early on in Jackie Chan's career he was asked what it was like to be the next Bruce Lee. He said, "I never wanted to be the next Bruce Lee. I just wanted to be the first Jackie Chan." Don't be a copy of someone else when you can be the one and only you, even if that person is a great role model. You can learn from them but don't try to be them. Just be the very best version of you.

In December of 2007 my grandpa died from cancer. He was an amazing man and I really loved and looked up to him. After his funeral many people came up to me and my family and told us how much of an impact he had on their lives. They told me things like: "Your grandpa helped me get through a really tough time in my life," and, "I don't know where I would be if it wasn't for your

grandpa.” One person said, “Your grandpa literally saved my life.”

After the funeral I started to rethink my future and career choices. At that time I was going to college and working as a musician with lofty dreams in the music industry but when I heard what these people said about him I decided to change my path. I wanted to have the same kind of impact he had on people’s lives. My grandpa spent his career as a psychiatrist doing therapy and counseling with children and families. I decided I was going to do something similar and change my major to psychology, and then get a Masters in counseling and become a family counselor. I started down that path and quickly realized it was not for me. At first I was distraught because I thought I wanted to follow in his footsteps. But then I started talking to my family and other people that knew him best and asked them what it was that made my grandpa such an amazing person.

After hearing everyone’s stories I realized that it wasn’t his career that made him great; it was who he was. I realized that who you are is a lot more important than what you are. He used all of his skills and talents to make a positive impact in the

world around him. Becoming a counselor didn't feel right for me because I was trying to be someone else rather than the best me I could be. I decided I would learn from him but make it my own. I decided I wanted to be the type of person that used all of my skills and talents to promote a positive message and make the world around me a better place. I realized that when I was trying to be him I was hiding the things that made me unique and original. It was at that time I decided I would dedicate my skills in music and public speaking to promote positivity and making the world a better place.

Don't try to be someone other than yourself. If you try to be someone else you are taking away from the things that make you an original. Be an original, not a copy. Dr. Seuss said it best: "Today you are You, that is truer than true. There is no one alive who is Youer than You."

In your role as a student leader it is extremely important that you be yourself. Everyone has different skills and talents, and everyone has something different to bring to the table. The

unique things that you bring will be the things that will make you valuable to your leadership group.

I guarantee there is someone you lead that you can connect with because of one of your unique talents or interests. I know there is something unique about you that you can use in a way that will help you in your role as a student leader. For you, maybe it's a talent in music or art or communication, or maybe it is a talent for organization, or maybe you are good with numbers. Or maybe you are a genuine, kind person that is great at building relationships. Everybody has something different they can bring to the table. You may already know your unique talents and abilities, but maybe you haven't discovered them yet. If you already know your talents and skills work to develop them and make them even stronger. If you haven't figured them out yet, that is okay! Sometimes it takes people a long time to figure this out. Either way, what is most important is that you be you! Be true and authentic to who you are and be the best version of you. Be yourself because everyone else is already taken.

Exercise:

Write down 3 things you are interested in:

1.

2.

3.

Write down 3 things you are good at:

1.

2.

3.

Write down 3 unique experiences you have had:

1.

2.

3.

Write down how you can use your unique skills, talents, interests and experiences to help you in your work as a student leader:

LEARN FROM OTHERS

The third key to Rock Star Student Leadership is to learn from others. It is extremely important to be yourself but that does not mean that you can't learn from others. You should learn everything you can from other people and then make it your own.

When somebody learns to play guitar they learn from someone who already knows how to. A lot of guitar players will say that they didn't learn from anyone and that they are self-taught. All that really means is that they didn't have formal lessons, but I know that they did learn from other people. They probably watched other guitar players, went online and watched video tutorials or got books about how to play guitar. In some way, shape or form, they learned from other people.

I have actually met a few people that were truly self-taught, meaning they just messed around on guitar until they liked the way it sounded. But two things happened. One, it took them an extremely long time to learn the basics. It took them a whole year to get where they could have been in a few short weeks. Two, they have bad habits on guitar.

Their technique is poor because they made it up along the way and they can't unlearn their bad habits so it takes them a lot longer to learn new material. If they just learned the basics from someone that had been there before it would have been a whole lot easier for them.

The best guitar players learn all they can from the greats and then make it their own. They add their own unique style or sound to make something that sounds totally new. Jimi Hendrix is a great example of someone that learned from others and made it his own. His sound was blues that he had learned from the great blues players, plus his own flare. He took what he learned and added something totally new.

This is what the best in any career or subject do. They learn everything they can from those who have been there before them and make it their own by adding their own unique style, sound or twists. The same principle should be applied to student leadership. Learn from others and then make it your own.

As a student leader you should be learning from three different groups of people. The first group is

your mentors. This includes your teachers, advisors, coaches, parents and upperclassmen that have been there before. This group is an extremely valuable resource for you. They've already done it so you can learn from their successes and failures.

The second group is your peers. This would include your fellow student leaders, and student leaders at other schools or organizations. Just because they are your peers doesn't mean you can't learn anything from them. This can be an extremely valuable group as well. In your leadership group you can learn from each other since you all come from different backgrounds and have different skills, talents, interests and experiences to bring to the table. When you are at a conference with student leaders from outside of your group you should take some time to meet these other student leaders and see what you can learn from them. They may be doing something that you had never thought of that could solve one of the problems you are working on.

The third group is often forgotten. It is the people you serve. Most student leaders learn from their mentors and a lot of them learn from their peers but most forget about those they serve. One of the

best things you can do to put on a successful event is to ask the people the event is for what they want. Listen to what they say and then make it happen. If you know what they want and give it to them then involvement won't be a problem. The best leaders represent the people they serve, and there is no way to represent those you serve if you don't know what they want.

I have found that the secret to success in anything is to know what you want. Find someone that has been there before. Learn from them, make it your own and apply what you learn. If you can do that, you will be successful throughout your life.

What can you do to learn more from your mentors?

What can you do to learn more from your peers?

What can you do to learn more from those you serve as a student leader?

DON'T BE AFRAID TO FAIL

“You miss 100% of the shots you don't take.”

-Wayne Gretzky

The fourth key to Rock Star Student Leadership is not being afraid to fail. To be a rock star student leader you need to first believe in yourself and then be yourself. Learn from others then make it your own and apply what you learn. Many people get to this point and get stuck because they are so busy worrying about making a mistake that they don't have time to think about success.

I have bad news for you. YOU ARE GOING TO FAIL! It is true that at some point you are going to fail, but I don't think that is a bad thing. It is only a bad thing if your mistakes lead to you giving up. Everyone makes mistakes and everyone experiences failure from time to time. The real problem comes when people are so afraid to make a mistake that they are not willing to try new things. Not everything you do will be a huge hit. Sometimes movies flop; sometimes songs aren't a hit. But you have to try new things to find what really works. As a student leader you need to be

willing to take action. Sometimes it will go great and sometimes it won't, but you need to be willing to learn from your results and then keep going!

The good news is that when you fail (notice I said when and not if) you are in great company. In the early 1960s after The Beatles had an audition with Decca Records they were told that they did not like their sound and that they had no future in show business. Elvis Presley was told that he should keep his day job as a truck driver. Jimi Hendrix was booed off the stage when he was on opening act. Michael Jordan was cut from his high school basketball team. Oprah Winfrey was fired as a news anchor because they said she was not fit for television, and Walt Disney was fired from a newspaper because they said that he did not have any original ideas. The thing that made these people successful is what they did after they failed. They were willing to get up and keep going.

If you want to be a Rock Star Student Leader you can't be afraid to fail. And when you do experience failure you need to figure out what you can learn from it and then get up and keep going! If you spend all your time worrying about failure you will never have time to plan your success.

Exercise:

Write about a time that you experienced failure and learned from it. What did you learn from it? How did it make you better? How can you do a better job at learning from failure in the future?

WORK AS A TEAM

Even though I was born 15 years after the band broke up, and they were way before my time, The Beatles are my favorite band. Something about them just moves me. I love their unique sound and their diversity in styles. I think the thing that made The Beatles so great was the four of them together – not the four of them individually, but what they were able to accomplish as a group. They brought four minds together and created something much better than they could have ever come up with on their own. Each of them went on to have solo careers and have some great songs but none of them ever reached the level they did together as The Beatles.

This is why it is so important to work together as a team. When you work together you will create something far better than you could on your own. If you try to do everything on your own you will never reach the level you could have if you worked together as a team.

Michael Jordan is a great example of this. Early on in his career he was a phenomenal player but never

won a championship. He did not know how to work with a team. The other teams had a simple and effective strategy to defend against Jordan, just double or triple team him, and the Bulls wouldn't have a chance. It wasn't until Phil Jackson came on as the new coach that things started to change. Jackson taught Jordan how to work with the team and they became unstoppable. They went on to win 6 championships in 8 years. All because they worked together!

Everyone in your leadership group has something unique to offer. All of them can contribute and help make something far better than if you took over and did it yourself. Many student body or organization presidents will step in and do everything because they think that they need to get the job done no matter what. When this happens there are three major problems. One, there is always too much to do and eventually they will burn out. Two, they never reach the group's potential because they did not use the other members of the group. Three, the other members of the group will lose interest because they do not feel valued.

If you are the leader of a group, it is not your job to do everything. It is your job to help the members of your group reach their potential and help the group as a whole do the best job possible. Use the other members of the group and help them become a winning team!

If you are in a leadership group but are not the leader of the group, it is your job to help the group as a whole to reach its goals by doing your very best at the role you are given. Sometimes the best leaders are not the official leaders of the group. They are the members of the group that lead by example by doing their very best with a great attitude.

When you work as a team you will reach heights that you could never have reached on your own. Think about your leadership group and your role in the group. How can you do a better job at working as a team?

Write down three ways you can do a better job working as a team:

How to Be a Rock Star Student Leader

1.

2.

3.

FOCUS ON THE GOOD

“What’s wrong is always available, but so is what’s right!” -

Tony Robbins

When I was nine years old I had a best friend named Winston that lived across the street from me. One day he came over into the backyard with a golf ball in his hand. He stood about four feet away from me holding the golf ball up by his ear and said, “Hey Jake, I’m going to hit you in the head with this golf ball!” I didn’t like the sound of that but he said it one more time and then he reached back and threw the golf ball as hard as he could and hit me right between the eyes! He hit me so hard that it knocked me out cold! I hit the floor and don’t remember anything until about five minutes later when I woke up on my couch looking up at my brother and dad. Winston had fled the scene of the crime and was nowhere to be found. I had a goose egg lump on my head and you could even see the little dimples from the golf ball indented into my skull.

Remarkably, Winston and I remained friends. One night, years later, I asked him if he remembered the

time he hit me in the head with a golf ball. He said, “Yes, I remember that.” I said, “Why on earth did you do that? What were you thinking?” He said, “I was just trying to scare you. I didn’t want to actually hit you in the head with the golf ball; I just wanted to throw it right next to you. But I was focusing so hard on not hitting you in the head that I hit you in the head!” What I learned from this is that whatever we focus on we tend to get. Even though he didn’t want to hit me in the head, he was focusing so hard on what he didn’t want and, of course, that is what he got.

I have learned since then that this applies to every aspect of our lives. Whatever we focus on is usually what we will see. If we are looking for the good things in the world, we are going to find them. If we are focusing on all the bad things in the world, that is all we will see. If you are looking for the good within your school, you will find it. If you are looking for the good within the people around you, you will find it. If you are looking for the good within yourself, you will find it. But if you are looking for the bad, that is what you will find.

Are there bad things in the world? OF COURSE!
But why should we focus on them? As Tony

Robbins says: “What’s wrong is always available, but so is what’s right!” When you focus on the good things in your life and are grateful for them you will find more of it, and I believe whatever we focus on grows. You can see it around you. The happiest people are grateful and have a positive attitude. I am sure you have also seen people that seem to have everything but are miserable because they are ungrateful.

This even applies to the problems in our lives. Unfortunately all of us go through problems and trials in our lives. When you go through those trials you can be fearful and let them break you, or you can choose to grow from the situation. When I go through a trial in my life I like to focus on how it can make me better. I focus on how I will be a better person on the other side because I went through this trial. Ever since I have adopted this philosophy in my life it has made my problems so much easier and I have been a much happier person because I have found meaning in my trials. A true attitude of gratitude is not just about being grateful for the things you have, but also being grateful for the ordeals that shape you.

I believe the true secret to happiness is gratitude. I choose to live a life filled with the attitude of gratitude. I choose to focus on the good, and I hope you will too.

Exercise:

What are 5 things you are grateful for?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

What is a trial in your life that can shape you to be a better person?

How can it help you?

What are three ways that you can focus on the good in your life?

1.

2.

3.

CARE ABOUT THOSE YOU SERVE

“No one cares how much you know, until they know how much you care” -Theodore Roosevelt

The last key to Rock Star Student Leadership is the most important of them all. The seventh key is to care about those you serve. The best student leaders are not there because it looks good on a resume; they are there because they care about those they serve. They want them to reach their potential, they want them to have a great time and do their best. This is such an important attribute for a leader to have. Leadership skills can be taught but no one can teach you to genuinely care about those around you. I don't know if you realize it or not but you, as a student leader, have a huge opportunity to influence the lives of those around you.

In my presentations at schools and leadership conferences I talk a lot about believing in yourself and being confident. I want to make it clear that I don't do this because it is something I think I am perfect at or have never had a hard time with. I do this because it is something I used to really struggle

with and have learned to overcome, and I saw huge changes in my life because of it.

When I was younger I really struggled in school. School was something that was so hard for me, especially reading. I didn't just read a little bit below the reading level of everyone else – I could barely read at all. I didn't even read a book cover to cover until I was almost 18 year old. I was in the special education program and I was considered learning disabled. I did not feel good about myself. I thought I was dumb and stupid and that I was not cut out for success.

It also made it so much worse when other students would tell me that I was dumb and stupid, or made jokes about my reading. It wasn't until later on in my life when I had some great mentors that helped me realize that maybe I did have some people that put me down, but I also had people that lifted me up. They helped me realize that I should listen to the people that lift me up and just forget about the people that were mean. They told me to listen to the people that encourage you and care about you and help you reach your potential. They taught me that if someone is putting you down, just move on because you don't have time for that. They helped

me realize that if someone was being mean, it had nothing to do with me and everything to do with them. And if they told me I couldn't do something they were really saying that there was something they couldn't do.

I decided to start listening to the right people and forget about the wrong people, and I saw huge changes. It's not like I could just all of the sudden read better. It didn't work like that. What happened was that I believed in myself enough to know that I could overcome my challenges. I started seeing tutors and getting any extra help I could. I practiced reading on my own, and little by little I got better and better. Eventually I was able to graduate and do really well in college, and it was all because I decided to start listening to the right people and forgetting about the wrong people. The people in my life are what made the difference for me.

I know that you have someone in your life that cares about you, someone that will encourage you and lift you up. Whoever that person is or those people are, listen to them! Listen to the people that lift you up and forget about the people that put you down! And then become that person for someone

else. Become the type of person that lifts others. You can have a major lasting effect on those around you. You have an amazing opportunity as a student leader to influence those around you. You may not realize it but the people you serve watch you; they see what you are doing and they do follow you. The best way to create positive changes is to lead by example. As you choose to be the right person for the people in your life you will influence those around you to follow your lead.

Who are three people that have been the right person for you in your life?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

In what ways did they help you?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are three ways that you can positively impact those you serve?

1.

2.

3.

TAKING THE LEAD

In section one you learned how to become the best leader you could be. In this section you will actually take the lead. This section gives you a step-by-step guide to take your organization to the next level!

Create a Team Vision

“If you are working on something exciting that you really care about, you don’t have to be pushed. The vision pulls you.” - Steve Jobs

Back in the 1970s a very young and practically unknown Austrian man met with an American newspaper reporter to talk about all of his bodybuilding accolades. He had recently been dubbed Mr. Universe for the second year in a row. At the end of the interview the reporter asked the muscleman what he planned on doing next. His answer? "I am going to become the greatest action movie star that Hollywood has ever seen." And of course that is exactly what Arnold Schwarzenegger went on to do!

To this day, whenever anyone asks Arnold how he managed to “achieve this” or “accomplish that” his answer is always the same: "I had a clear vision." This is something that you as a student leader should learn from the Terminator. It is so important to have a clear vision. When your vision is clear you know exactly where you are going and

it becomes much easier to get there. Stephen Covey taught us that we should always begin with the end in mind. Your vision should motivate you and guide you in everything you do as a student leader. The great and ever quotable Yogi Berra once said that "if you don't know where you are going you probably won't ever get there."

Just like Arnold had a vision for himself and his career as an action star, you need to create a team vision. Every team needs to be united by a common goal. Being united with a clear vision is the first step in taking the lead as a Rock Star Student Leader.

What is a team vision?

A team vision can be expressed in a variety of different ways. It can be a mission statement. It can be a vision board or even a team flag, or some type of art you create. What is most important is what a team vision really represents. A team vision is a representation of the future you want to create.

Why is a team vision important?

As we learned from Arnold Schwarzenegger, a clear vision is a powerful tool to help you reach your goals and create the future you want. As a team, a vision is also important because it will unite you in one purpose. A team is not really a team at all if they don't work together. Your team vision will help you grow together in one cause. It will also be your team's compass; it will guide you to where you need to go. Every time you are faced with a decision as a team you should look at your team vision and decide if this decision will help you get closer to your vision or if it will take you further away. Your vision should be the litmus test for everything you do as a team.

How do we create a team vision?

Your purpose as a student leader is to help those you serve. If you are in student council at your school your purpose is to serve your fellow students. If you are a leader in your state's FFA organization then your purpose is to serve the students that are in FFA around your state. When

you create your vision you should first think about your real purpose. Think about what you can do to make your school or organization a better place for those you serve. Create a detailed picture in your mind of the future you want.

Brainstorm:

The first step is to brainstorm as a team. Get together as a team and describe your ideal future for your school or organization. What would it look like if it was exactly how you wanted? Describe it with as much detail as possible. The more detail, the better.

When you brainstorm, choose someone to lead the discussion and choose someone to act as a scribe. When you brainstorm it is very important to create a safe place. At first there are no wrong answers or even constructive criticism of ideas. Just voice ideas and write them down. Then you will narrow those ideas down. You will be amazed how many more ideas come from your team when you have created a safe place.

Create a purpose statement

Now that you know the future you want it is time to figure out what you can do to make it happen. Write a statement as a team that starts with.

My purpose as a student leader is to:

After “My purpose as a student leader is to:” write the future you want to create and what you can do to create it.

Example:

My purpose as a student leader is to: create a safe environment of inclusion, respect and participation for my student body by providing fun, uplifting, and exciting events that will bring joy, and inspire all who participate.

You may need to refine your purpose statement even further or alter it in the future but what is important is that you, as a team, are united in one purpose!

Team Purpose Statement First Draft:

My purpose as a student leader is to:

Team Purpose Statement Second Draft:

My purpose as a student leader is to:

What to do with your purpose statement?

Use your purpose statement every day. Memorize it and recite it together as a team at the beginning of each meeting. Print it out and post it on the wall where all of you can see it. Get creative, create a banner, flag or poster that has your statement on it that is decorated in a way that inspires you. The most important thing is that your purpose statement is not just a thing you did today and forget about tomorrow. This is something that needs to become a part of your everyday life as a student leader.

Your vision can inspire others:

As a student leader your job is to lead others to be the best they can be. Your job is to help those around you embrace your vision so they can help create that future. Your job is not to do all the work but your job is to create a vision for your school or organization and inspire others to help make it happen. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. taught us that if the leadership of a movement cannot paint a picture of a world that people want to go to, that movement will fail. Make your vision compelling, make it positive and share it with enthusiasm. Make your vision a place that people will want to go. It may take time but eventually people will follow!

DEFINING ROLES

“Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.” -Albert Einstein

Now that you know your team vision, you know where you are going. Now it is time to figure out how to get there. Your next step is to define your team member's roles. As I talked about in the *Work as a Team* chapter in section one, you need to work as a team to be truly successful. A big part of working as a team is defining your team roles. Everyone needs a position and there is no position more important than the other. The bassist is just as important as the drummer and the guitar player is just as important as the singer. It may seem like the singer is out in front but a rock concert just isn't the same without a great drummer.

Every piece is important and contributes to the whole. It is just like the positions on a sports team. Your team can have the best homerun hitter but if you do not have good pitching it won't mean a thing! The same goes with your roles as leaders. When you work as a team you will have great

success and be able to turn your team vision into your reality.

A great example of this is The Avengers. When the Avengers use their strengths and help each other with their weaknesses they are at their best and are able to conquer evil. But when their egos get in the way and they point out each other's weaknesses they fall apart! When they work together they are a team and are an unstoppable force, but when they are divided they stop themselves.

Focus on your strengths

The first step in defining your team's roles is to find your strengths. Everyone has different strengths and weaknesses. The key to success in any venture in life is to build on your strengths and delegate your weaknesses. Before you choose roles, everyone in the group should write down a list of their strengths. Maybe you are a great artist or you are a great communicator. Maybe your strength is that you are very organized, or it could be a variety of other things. Everyone has strengths. What are your strengths? Use the space below to write down

three. This is not bragging; this is being honest with yourself about what you are good at.

1.

2.

3.

After you have written your three strengths share them with your team.

You may already have defined roles in your team, which is great, but if you don't it is time to define what everyone's job is. Most likely you already have a group leader or president and vice president. If you do not, elect a team leader. From there the leader should take into consideration everyone's strengths and assign positions specific to your needs. Examples could include:

- Spokesperson
- Scribe
- Treasurer

- Historian
- Public relations director
- Committee member
- Make your own based on your needs

Some roles will be a permanent position while other roles are for a predetermined period of time.

After you have defined everyone's role in your team you are set up to do great things. When you use everyone's strengths together and work as a team you will be able accomplish things that you would never be able to do on your own.

SET GOALS

“There are some people who live in a dream world, and some who face reality; and then there are those who turn one into the other.” -Douglas Everett

Walt Disney said, “All of our dreams can come true if we have the courage to pursue them.” The problem is that most people do not have the courage to pursue them. Most people have dreams but very few people ever do anything about them. Most leadership groups come up with great ideas to take their school or organization to the next level but very few of them ever do anything about them. You have created a very powerful vision but now it is time to turn that vision into reality, and the way you do that is by setting and achieving goals.

A vision can be gigantic and therefore difficult to wrap your brain around so it is important to break that vision up into smaller pieces. A goal is different from a vision; your goals are meant as steps that move you towards your grander vision. Goals are milestones that you must hit along the way to turning your team vision into a reality.

For a goal to be truly effective it must be S.M.A.R.T. This is a famous old goal-setting acronym that is extremely effective.

A goal should be:

S - SPECIFIC

M - MEASURABLE

A - ATTAINABLE

R - RELEVANT

T - TIME BASED



S.M.A.R.T. stands for:

Specific. For a goal to be effective it needs to be specific and clear. The more specific the better. What do you want to accomplish? Why do you want to accomplish it? What are the specific reasons, purpose, or benefits of accomplishing this goal? Who is involved?

An example of a specific goal is to get 75% of your student body to participate in your next spirit day.

An example of a non-specific goal would be to get a lot of your student body to participate in our next spirit day. It is very important to be specific.

Measurable. One of the reasons it is important to have specific goals is so you can measure them. It is very difficult to measure “a lot” of participation. A lot could mean 50 people or it could mean 1,000 people, where 75% of your school is very a specific goal that you can measure. If you have a way of measuring your goal you are much more likely to attain your goal. After you set a measurable goal you should be able to answer the following questions. How much? How many? How will I know when it is accomplished?

Attainable. This does not mean that you should lower your expectations but it does mean that you should find a sweet spot for your goals. The sweet spot is that your goal stretches you but it is attainable. Going back to our participation example, maybe 100% is not really attainable, or at least not yet, and if you set an unattainable goal you will most likely get discouraged. It is better to set a

goal that is attainable that stretches you and then set a new goal after you reached the first one.

Relevant. Your goals need to be relevant. You may have a great goal but if it does not help you reach your team vision it is not a relevant goal. All of your goals should be contributing to turning your vision into your reality. If a goal does not pass this litmus test then it is not relevant.

Time Based. The last part of smart goals is that your goals need to be time based. When you set a goal you should have a time attached to it. You should know when you want to attain this goal. This gives you a sense of urgency and motivates you to take action. Make sure all of your goals have a finish date attached to them.

When you set S.M.A.R.T. goals you are much more likely to achieve them. You know exactly what you want to achieve and how you are going to measure it. You know that this is an attainable goal and that it is a relevant, worthwhile use of your time. You also have set a time to achieve your goal, which will give you a sense of urgency and motivate you and your team to make it happen.

After you have set your S.M.A.R.T. goals there is one more thing you need. You need accountability. It is very easy to set a goal and then eventually lose excitement about it. It has happened to everyone. It is so important to have an accountability partner. Find a likeminded person that can help keep you accountable for your goals and assignments. You can pair up in your leadership group and help each other make sure you reach your goals. This is something most successful people do. I have been using accountability partners for years and it has been a huge help for me!

What is your why?

This is a very simple yet overlooked question. Why are you working so hard towards a goal? Why do you care? What does it mean to you? Most people start with what they want and then immediately jump to how they are going to achieve it. Most people don't even think about their why. I believe that when someone overlooks their why they are doing a huge disservice to themselves. No matter how motivated you are or how excited you are at the beginning eventually everyone gets burned out

or bored with their goals. But if you have a strong enough why you can get through anything. If you want to achieve your goals, make sure that your reasons are greater than your excuses! Without your why it is very easy to get discouraged and eventually give up. But if you have a compelling why it will drive you.

First, decide what you want and make sure you are setting S.M.A.R.T. goals. Then figure out why you want it. Then you can move onto how you will achieve it. The how is the least important, yet people spend the most time on it. I say it is the least important because it does not really matter how you get there; you just want the result. Think about someone that wants to lose 20 pounds. When they first set the goal they decide that they are going to jog three miles a day until they lose the weight. But then a week into it they realize that they like doing H.I.I.T. training and realize it is more effective for them. Fast forward two months and they have lost the 20 pounds doing H.I.I.T. training. Are they going to be disappointed because they didn't lose the weight by running? Of course not! What matters is the result. Sometimes you will start down a path and realize it was not the best

way. When that happens it is time to change your approach. Your goal stays the same but the approach changes. Tony Robbins said to “be fiercely loyal to your goals but flexible with the way you get there.” Every time you set a new goal make sure your goal is S.M.A.R.T. and that you can answer the ‘what’, ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions.

Exercise: Create a S.M.A.R.T. goal that will help you reach your team vision. Also write down why you want it and how you are going to achieve it.

What do you want?

Write down a goal that is specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time based:

Why do you want it?

Remember your goal is only as strong as your reasons. You become successful when your reasons are stronger than your excuses.

TAKE ACTION

“A good plan executed now is better than a perfect plan executed next week.” -General George S. Patton

In the words of Shia LaBeouf, “DO IT! JUST DO IT!” Hopefully you have seen the former Holes actor’s viral motivational video where he yells motivational cliché’s at the camera. If you have, you are probably laughing right now; if you haven’t you probably think I am weird and have no idea what I am talking about, but that is okay. Do yourself a favor and watch the video. Shia’s point is very simple and obviously meant to be taken as satire but at the same time it really is that simple. Sometimes we just need to take action! By this point you know what you want and why you want it. You have also created goals that will help guide you toward obtaining your vision. You know what to do by when. Now all you have to do is actually do it!

It is time for you to take action! Success is not given to those who sit on the sidelines. Success is awarded to those that take action. It is given to those that get in the game and make things happen. Are you going to make mistakes along the way? Of course you will! But remember, a Rock Star Student Leader is not afraid to fail. General George S. Patton said: "A good plan executed now is better than a perfect plan executed next week." That does not mean you should be lazy and not prepare, but it does mean that you shouldn't wait for everything to be perfect. There will never be a perfect time. It is time to take action!

Jack Canfield, author of *The Success Principles* and the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series teaches a concept he calls ready, fire, aim. He teaches that we should take action right away because a lot of time our site is off and we wouldn't ever know unless we took action. So he says to take action and then see how off you are and adjust. It is never too soon to take action!

Create an action plan

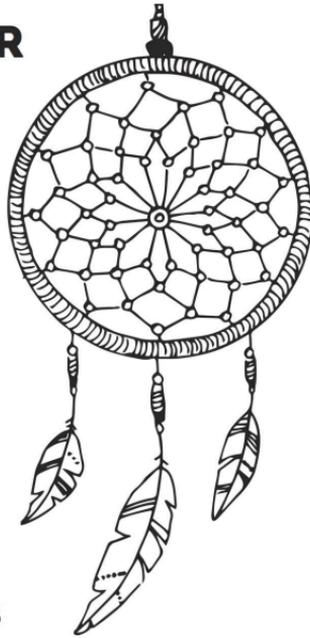
One of my lifelong heroes is Walt Disney, and he said "if you can dream it, you can achieve it." Of

course, he is right about this. The history of the human species has proven that time and time again. But Walt's motivating little couplet is glancing over one important thing. He mentions nothing of the sometimes gigantic gap between the dreaming and the achieving! There can be a seemingly endless chasm between the vision that exists in your mind and actually seeing that vision turned into a reality. But do not despair. There is a bridge that can safely be relied upon to transport you from the one side of the canyon to the other. That bridge is your action plan. A great model for an action plan is what I call the dream catcher.

The dream catcher will help you turn your dreams or your vision into your reality. It will help you break down your vision into smaller goals strategies, action steps and measurable results.

Dreams go in and results come out!

DREAM CATCHER



How to turn dreams into goals

The great thing about the dream catcher is that it is something you can use in your work as a student leader as well as throughout your whole life!

Dream

(Note: for this purpose I am using the word dream and vision interchangeably.) Right down your team vision in the space below. Every aspect of your dream catcher should be working towards your team vision.

to your ultimate vision. Write down one goal that will help you reach your team vision.

Once again remember to set S.M.A.R.T. goals.

A goal should be:

- S - SPECIFIC**
- M - MEASURABLE**
- A - ATTAINABLE**
- R - RELEVANT**
- T - TIME BASED**



Goal:

Strategies

Decide what strategies you will use to help you reach your goal. A strategy is your game plan or method to reach your goal. Your dream, vision and goals are all examples of “whats” while your strategies are the “hows.” Basically this means, “What specific things should we do to reach our goal?”

Write down the strategies you will use to reach your goal.

Strategy #1:

Strategy #2:

Strategy #3:

Action Items

Action items are a to-do list with focused direction. These are the items that need to be accomplished to put your strategies into action. Action items should be short-term in nature. These are the things that need to be accomplished in the coming weeks and months. Brainstorm your list of everything that needs to get done. Organize that list into things that need to be done in the next 3 months, things to do this month, and things to do this week.

What action items need to be completed in the next 3 months?

Action Item #1:

Action Item #2:

Action Item #3:

Action Item #4:

Action Item #5:

What action items need to be completed this month?

Action Item #1:

Action Item #2:

Action Item #3:

Action Item #4:

Action Item #5:

What action items need to be completed this week?

Action Item #1:

Action Item #2:

Action Item #3:

Action Item #4:

Action Item #5:

Steps

Steps are broken down even further. They are similar to action items but they are what you need to do today. This is where the rubber meets the road. They should be reviewed and updated daily.

What are the steps you need to take today?

Step #1:

Step #2:

Step #3:

Measure results and evaluate

Measuring your results is extremely important! By doing so you will know what is working and what is not. Record everything you do. Measure, evaluate, reevaluate and adjust as often as necessary.

Accountability

The last part of an effective action plan is accountability. Just like I mentioned in the S.M.A.R.T. goals section, it is extremely helpful to

have a likeminded person that can help you stay accountable.

Now go out and follow Shia LaBeouf's advice and DO IT!

DON'T GIVE UP!

“At 211° water is hot. At 212°, it boils. And with boiling water, comes steam. And with steam, you can power a train. The one extra degree makes the difference.” -Sam Parker

You have created your team’s vision, learned how to set goals, created an action plan and are now taking action! This should be the easy part right? Well, you would think so but this is actually the hardest part. At the beginning everything is fresh and new. Everything is exciting and fun but then after a while it is very easy to get burned out.

Most people fail at their goals. It is not because they do not have dreams or goals or even because they had a poor action plan. It is because they got burned out and gave up. There is a fantastic book called 212 Degrees. In this book the author Sam Parker says “At 211° water is hot. At 212°, it boils. And with boiling water, comes steam. And with steam, you can power a train. The one extra degree makes the difference.” He goes on to explain that most people are much closer to their goals than they think and they end up giving up when they are just one degree away.

Successful people do not give up when things get hard. They keep going until they reach their goal no matter what. I am a huge fan of the multi Grammy award-winning band Zac Brown Band. In 2008, the Zac Brown Band seemed like they came out of nowhere and were a huge “overnight success.” But whenever Zac Brown is asked about his overnight success he explains that he was not an overnight success because he had been touring full-time for thirteen years before he made it big. Thirteen years! That is amazing! I am sure there were times he wanted to give up but he stuck with it and now he has won multiple Grammys and sells out stadiums worldwide!

You are probably much closer to your goals than you think you are. Maybe you just need to keep going a little longer. Or maybe you still are far away from your goal but I bet if you look back at where you came from you will see that you have come a long way!

Over the last year I have been going through a major health change in my life. As I am writing this I have lost fifty pounds. My goal was to lose seventy pounds so I can be back at the weight I

wrestled at in my senior year of high school. I am still twenty pounds away from my goal and sometimes it feels like it is so far away! Sometimes it feels like I will never get there. When I feel that way I pull out my old belt and put it on. It is huge on me! I can't even use it on the smallest belt size. I put the belt on at the second to largest belt hole, which is the way I wore it. When I do that I can see a very obvious physical example of how far I have come. I know that I still have a ways to go on my journey but when I use this example it keeps me from getting discouraged and motivates me to keep going.

Find something that can help you avoid discouragement. It's your biggest enemy! When someone gets discouraged all they want to do is give up. The only thing that is going to guarantee failure is giving up. Avoid discouragement at all costs; do whatever you can to change your mindset. The best thing you can do is to find an example or reminder of how far you have come. Find something like my belt to help you stay motivated and keep going.

It is not always easy to go after your goals. The reason most people don't do anything about their

goals is that it is hard. There is an easier way of living that does not require nearly as much out of you. When you just go with the flow it is much easier. But life isn't about what is easy; it is about what is worth it! There is a great quote from the movie Rocky Balboa that illustrates this concept perfectly. In the movie Rocky is talking to his son and says:

“Let me tell you something you already know. The world ain't all sunshine and rainbows. It's a very mean and nasty place and I don't care how tough you are it will beat you to your knees and keep you there permanently if you let it. You, me, or nobody is gonna hit as hard as life. But it ain't about how hard ya hit. It's about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward. How much you can take and keep moving forward. That's how winning is done! Now if you know what you're worth then go out and get what you're worth. But ya gotta be willing to take the hits, and not pointing fingers saying you ain't where you wanna be because of him, or her, or anybody! Cowards do that and that ain't you! You're better than that!”

Your goals matter. What you do as a student leader matters! Don't get discouraged, don't get burned out! Keep going no matter what!

LIVE A ROCK STAR LEVEL LIFE!

Now that you have learned how to take the lead as a student leader it is time for you to become a leader for your entire life – not just as a student leader but with your career, with your family, in your community, and wherever you go. A leader does not necessarily mean that you are given a position of power. It is more about who you are than the title you are given. I know that if you have implemented the things you have learned in this book then you already are that type of person.

You are set up to be a leader for life. Not only are you equipped to be a great leader throughout your life but you are also ready to live a rock star level life. The whole purpose of this book is to help you live your life at the next level. The principles here will help you live the life that you deserve. Yes, this book is designed to help you become a Rock Star Student Leader but the real purpose of your role as a student leader is to help you to become the type of person that is going to take life head on and lived at the highest level. Most people live so far below their potential. Most people are complacent with whatever comes their way and just “go with

the flow.” But you are better than that. Don’t “go with the flow!” Don’t follow the crowd. Be your very best. Live the life that you deserve and live up to your potential! It is time for you to live a rock star level life.

First, you learned how to become a leader. It is not only about becoming a leader to others it is also about becoming a leader in your own life. It is about becoming the type of person that is going to live up to their potential.

Believe in yourself:

You need to believe in yourself. You need to believe in who you are and what you are doing. If you don’t, no one will follow you, but more importantly you will not follow yourself. You will not believe what you say, you won’t believe in the things that you are doing and when you set a goal you are not going to believe you can reach it. You need to believe in yourself so you can make things happen.

Be yourself:

You need to be yourself. Be who you are and be the very best version of yourself. You don't need to be the best, you just need to be your best. Be who you are. You have unique talents and unique skills. Use what makes you who you are to become the best person you can be. Don't try to be someone else, just be the very best version of you. I promise you that you have unique talents and skills that you can use that will make you successful. Jack Canfield said: "Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you alive. Because the world needs more people that are truly alive."

Learn from others:

I believe that the true secret to achieving anything is to find someone that has done what you want to do, learn what they did and then do it. You need to make it your own and do it in your own way but learn from them and do what they have done. Success is not that complicated. We make it so much more complicated than it really is.

Do whatever you can to continue to learn throughout your life. Go to school, read books, attend seminars, listen to podcasts. Always continue to learn. I read, on average, two books a month. I attend seminars regularly and always invest in my own education. Whatever field you decide to go into get the most education or training you can in that field. If you do, you will always be successful. There is an old saying that is very true. It says, “The more you learn, the more you earn.” The more you learn, the more successful you will be.

Don't be afraid to fail:

This is important as a student leader but is even more important in life. Do not be afraid to fail. You have to believe in yourself enough to take chances. You need to take chances in order to be successful. I am not saying that you should be reckless but you do need to take chances and look at failure as a learning experience. You do not truly fail unless you give up. When you fail, fail forward. Learn from these experiences and keep going.

If you want to live a rock star level life you can't be afraid to fail. And when you do experience failure you need to figure out what you can learn from it and then get up and keep going! If you spend all your time worrying about failure you will never have time to plan your success.

Build the right team:

To be a Rock Star Student Leader you need to work as a team, and you need to build the right team. Surround yourself with the right people. You need to create your own band. These are going to be the people that lift you up. They are going to be the people that encourage you and strengthen you. As I said earlier, you have strengths, skills and talents that make you unique. But we all also have weaknesses. You need to surround yourself with people that balance you out. You need to find people that can make up for some things that you are not so good at. Successful people know what they are good at and use them to their advantage. They also find the right people to make up for their weaknesses.

You also need your support team. I believe that every person is a combination of the five people they spend the most time with. You are who you hang out with. If you hang out with successful people, you will be successful. If you hang out with people that are going nowhere, you will probably go in the same direction. This may sound harsh but it is true. Surround yourself with the right people that will help you get where you want to go.

We see this a lot in sports. In high school we played a team that we always beat every time, year after year, and knew we would because they were not very good at all. It was sad to play them because they just didn't have it together. Most of our games ended in a mercy rule, which in high school baseball means the game ends when one team is leading by ten runs after the fifth inning. But one day in my senior year we knew we were going to beat them, because we always did, and we were treating this game like it was no big deal. After a few innings of a zero to zero score we started to get concerned. For some reason we just couldn't score. We got even more concerned when they scored two runs, and the score was two to zero. Finally we came back and won the game three to two but there is no reason that game should have

been that close. We beat them by at least ten runs every other time we played them but this game was a very clear example of playing down to your surroundings.

We did not play like ourselves that day. We played at the same level of our competition. The same thing happens in life. If you surround yourself with high achievers you will elevate to their level. Surround yourself around the right people.

Focus on the good:

Always, always, always focus on the good in life. Focus on what is right. As Tony Robbins says: “What’s wrong is always available, but so is what’s right!” Focus on the good and it will grow. You will find more of whatever you focus on.

I am not just saying to focus on the good that is already there. I am saying that you should use the good to motivate and excite you. When you have a challenge or are going through a hard time don’t think about how hard this is; think about what you are going to gain on the other side and how you are

going to become a better person because you went through this challenge.

When you have a goal that you want to reach think about why you want it. Think about what you are going to gain from achieving the goal. How is it going to help you? Why is it important to you? It is so important to me because I am going to gain something. I am going to look this way. I am going to feel more empowered. I am going to have control over my destiny. I am going to have the energy I need to achieve what I want in life.

Whatever it is, focus on what you are going to gain from your goal, not on the sacrifice you have to make. Focus on why you are making the sacrifice and let the why drive you.

I have found that the happiest people live with an attitude of gratitude. They are always happy because they are always grateful. You can't be grateful and unhappy at the same time. Start every day with thinking about what you are grateful for. Focus on what is right in your life instead of what is wrong. I choose to focus on the good and I hope you will too!

Serve others:

The last tip in becoming a Rock Star Student Leader was to care about those you serve. To live a rock star level life you need to find a way to serve others. You need to find a way to give back and always care about those around you. This is the most important tip because if you don't have this, you don't have anything. Nothing matters more than the people around you and giving back to them.

You need to give back in life. Sometimes we think about giving back as something you would do after you have already achieved big success. But I am saying that you should give back at all times. If you are a person that is focusing on the good then you know that you already have so much. Even if you haven't reached all of your goals, you still have so much. If you are living with an attitude of gratitude you already know this.

Giving back can be very simple. Gandhi says that we must "be the change we wish to see in the world." If there is something you want to see changed, start doing something about it now. Don't wait for someone else to do something

about it. Do something now. If you want to see something change, make that change within yourself. Do whatever you can do to embody that change. If you do that, people will follow and you will make a difference in the world.

How to Create the Life of Your Dreams

You have learned to become the type of person that will be a leader throughout life and will live a rock star level life. You have learned to be the type of person that will live a life that is worthy of who you are. You are prepared to live at a higher level. You are worth it, you are worthy and you deserve a rock star level life! Now it is time to do something about it! It is time for you to take action and just like you took the lead as a student leader it is time for you to take the lead in your life! In the words of Henry David Thorough, it is time for you to “Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life that you have imagined.”

Create Your Vision

You created a team vision but now it is time to create your own vision. What do you want in life? Why do you want it? Be as specific as you can possibly be. Your vision can be so powerful. It can drive you to achieve great things. It is so important to have a clear vision!

Take some time create your vision. Don't hold anything back. What do you really want and why do you want it? Later on we will get to how you will achieve it, but for now just focus on what you want and why you want it.

How to Create Your Vision

Describe your ideal life five years from today with as much detail as possible. I say five years from today because things change in our lives. It's good to have long-term goals but I think it is easier to wrap your head around five years from now rather than your entire life. It is also easier to do something about it. Use the space below to describe your ideal life five years from today.

After you have described your ideal life five years from today with as much detail as possible break it down into one paragraph.

Describe your ideal life five years from today in one paragraph:

What is Your Why?

Why is your vision so important to you? Why do you care about it? Why are you willing to work for it? In order to turn your vision into your reality you must have a compelling enough life. Your reasons must be greater than your excuses.

Use the space below to describe why your vision is important to you:

Personal Mission Statement

Just like you did as a team you should create your own mission statement. Now that you know the future you want, it is time to figure out what you can do to make it happen. Write a mission statement that starts with...

My purpose is to:

After “My purpose is to:” write the future you want to create and what you can do to create it. You may need to refine your purpose statement even further or alter it in the future but what is important is that you know what your purpose is!

Mission Statement First Draft:

My purpose is to:

Mission Statement Second Draft:

My purpose is to:

What to do with your purpose statement?

Use your purpose statement every day. Memorize it and recite it every day. Print it out and post it on your wall. Get creative! Create a banner, flag or poster that has your statement on it that is decorated in a way that inspires you. The most important thing is that your purpose statement is not just a thing you did today and forget about tomorrow. This is something that needs to become a part of your everyday life.

Find your strengths and build on them.

As a student leader you learned the importance of defining roles on your team. As an individual it is time for you to find your strengths and build on

them. What are you good at? What do you like doing? What do you enjoy? When you enjoy something it is probably a good sign that you have some passion there. Follow your passions. Being passionate about something is a great gift. If you have something you are passionate about, pursue it. Go after it, but become the very best you can at it. Learn everything you can and build on your strengths.

I once heard someone say they wanted to be a musician because they didn't want to work. I immediately told them that if that is why you want to be a musician you are out of luck. You will need to work harder than you ever have to make something happen in the music world. Really that pertains to any world. No matter what you want to do with your life it will take a lot of work! There is no easy path to success. You might as well do something that you enjoy and are passionate about. Find something that is a combination between your passions and your strengths and become the very best you can at it.

Set goals:

One of the best skills you can learn is how to set and achieve S.M.A.R.T. goals. If you can master setting and achieving goals you can do anything! Your goals should be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time based. Remember, dreams don't come true, goals do!

A goal should be:

S - SPECIFIC

M - MEASURABLE

A - ATTAINABLE

R - RELEVANT

T - TIME BASED



Exercise: Create a S.M.A.R.T. goal that will help you reach your vision. Also write down why you want it and how you are going to achieve it.

What do you want?

Write down a goal that is specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time based:

Why do you want it?

Remember your goal is only as strong as your reasons. You become successful when you reasons are stronger than your excuses.

Take Action:

Nothing will ever happen until you take action! It does not matter how good your goals are or how strong your reasons are if you do not actually do something about your goals! It is time to take action.

Exercise:

Write down your number one goal that will help you reach your vision:

Strategies

Decide what strategies you will use to help you reach your goal. A strategy is your game plan or method to reach your goal. Your dream, vision and goals are all examples of “whats” while your

strategies are the “hows.” Basically this means, “What specific things should I do to reach my goal?”

Write down the strategies you will use to reach your goal.

Strategy #1:

Strategy #2:

Strategy #3:

Action Items

Action items are a to-do list with focused direction. These are the items that need to be accomplished to put your strategies into action. Action items

should be short-term in nature. These are the things that need to be accomplished in the coming weeks and months. Brainstorm your list of everything that needs to get done. Organize that list into things that need to be done in the next 3 months, things to do this month, and things to do this week.

What action items need to be completed in the next 3 months?

Action Item #1:

Action Item #2:

Action Item #3:

Action Item #4:

Action Item #5:

What action items need to be completed this month?

Action Item #1:

Action Item #2:

Action Item #3:

Action Item #4:

Action Item #5:

What action items need to be completed this week?

Action Item #1:

Action Item #2:

Action Item #3:

Action Item #4:

Action Item #5:

Steps

Steps are broken down even further. They are similar to action items but they are what you need to do today. This is where the rubber meets the road. They should be reviewed and updated daily.

What are the steps you need to take today?

Step #1:

Step #2:

Step #3:

Measure results and evaluate

Measuring your results is extremely important! By doing so you will know what is working and what is not. Record everything you do. Measure, evaluate, reevaluate and adjust as often as necessary.

Accountability

The last part of an effective action plan is accountability. Just like I mentioned in the S.M.A.R.T. goals section, it is extremely helpful to have a likeminded person that can help you stay accountable.

Don't give up:

Don't ever give up. Hard times are going to come. You are going to hit stumbling blocks along the way. Don't let them get you down. Keep going no matter what! You deserve a rock star level life! You

deserve to reach your goals. The only thing that will ever stop you is yourself. Keep going no matter what and eventually you will get there!

CONCLUSION

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this book. I know that if you take action on the principles outlined here, it will change your life. I am going to end this book the same way I end every speech. A few years into my speaking career a friend asked me what I would say if I had just a few minutes to speak to a youth audience. I came up with three things.

The first thing is that you matter! You are important and you are valuable exactly as you are. Whether you know it or not, you matter! There are seven billion people in the world today. And out of those seven billion people, there's only one you. There's nobody else exactly like you, absolutely no one. Because of that, you are extremely rare and you are extremely valuable. A lot of times when we talk about someone who is really cool, we say that person is one in a million. Well, the truth is, you are one in seven billion, which means you are a true original, you are absolutely a one-of-a-kind. Be happy about the things that make you different. Celebrate the things that make you different, be excited about those things.

I know that sometimes you may think the things that make you different make you weird or make you nerdy or make you awkward or whatever. I understand that. I've been there before. But the very things that make you unique are the things that make you so valuable. Those are the things that make you so important. Celebrate the things that make you different and be the original that you were born to be.

The second thing is: other people matter! The people around you matter. The people around you are important, just like you. The people in our lives are what really matter. There is nothing more important than the people in our lives. When we look back on our lives, whether it is weeks or years from now, the things you are going to remember with the most fondness are the times you spent with those that you care about. Treat the people in your life like they matter, because they truly do.

The third thing is: you can do anything! I love the quote by Henry Ford where he says “whether you believe you can or you believe you can't, you are right.” That quote is so true because if you believe you can do something you can do absolutely anything, but if you don't believe you can do it, you're right, you can't!

You can't do anything if you don't believe that you can do it. The reason most people don't reach their dreams isn't because they try and fail. It is because they never believed in themselves enough to actually try. If you have a dream, whatever that dream is – whether it's to become a great athlete, a musician, an actor, an entrepreneur, a teacher, to get into that college, to make that play, to make that team, or whatever it is – if you have a dream, you can do it! You can turn that dream into your reality if you simply believe that you can do it, and take action. Do whatever it takes to turn your dreams into your reality.

When you look back even just 12 months from now, if you were willing to take action, you are going to be amazed at what you were able to accomplish. You are so much better than you think you are, and you can do so much more than you think you can.

The first thing was: you matter! The second thing was: other people matter! And the third thing was: you can do anything! Thank you so much for reading this book and remember to go out and create the life that you want to live. Be a Rock Star Student Leader and live a Rock Star Level Life!