Aggie Gentlemen of Integrity

Celebrity, Wealth and Privilege are the Wrong Goals

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Outline

• Celebrity, Wealth and Privilege are the wrong goals
• What are the right goals? To be or to do
• Goals and Groups: Leadership and Management
• Examples in my own life with my research group and other groups I advise
Wrong Goals

• Celebrity
• Wealth
• Privilege

• Being “well known” on campus
• Getting more goodies for yourself because you are part of a good group
What are my goals?

• Important to have personal goals and group goals. Start with personal goals

• I have those written down for each role in my life
  – Scientist, mentor, father, husband, teacher, etc.

• What should your goals be? Heck if I know… ;-)
  – Advice: start writing down your best guesses
  – Write them down for what you want in 6 months, a year, 2 years, 5 years, 10 years, 20 years
Figuring out your Goals

I believe the best way to go is to:

1. Figure out what you love DOING
2. Work your tail off to become excellent at it
3. Figure out a way to get paid to do it for the rest of your life

- Examples of people who do this well: Musicians, Athletes, Scientists, Doctors, Artists, Designers etc.
To be... or to do

• My advice: Focus on what you want to DO, and not what you want to BE

  - Lots of people would LOVE to be a rock star, but most people don’t want a life of staying in hotels

• Musicians make music. Doctors heal people. Engineers create....

• What do you want to DO?
Want to help people? Charity

It has been said that there are eight levels of charity, each greater than the next.

1. Best: Support someone by endowing them with a gift or loan, or entering into a partnership with them, or finding employment for them in order to strengthen their hand until they no longer need to be dependent upon others.

2. A lesser level of charity than this is to give to the poor without knowing to whom one gives, and without the recipient knowing from who he received.

3. A lesser level of charity than this is when one knows to whom one gives, but the recipient does not know their benefactor.

4. A lesser level of charity than this is when one does not know to whom one gives, but the poor person does know his benefactor. Good example: many years ago people would tie coins into their robes and throw them behind their backs, and the poor would come up and pick the coins out of their robes, so that they would not be ashamed.

5. A lesser level than this is when one gives to the poor person directly into his hand, but gives before being asked.

6. A lesser level than this is when one gives to the poor person after being asked.

7. A lesser level than this is when one gives inadequately, but gives gladly and with a smile.

8. A lesser level than this is when one gives unwillingly.

I make it my life’s work to be doing type 1 regularly as a teacher, mentor, father, step-parent, advisor, etc.
Switching to Goals in Groups
Goal: Leadership

- Many people have the goal of being a leader in a group, and want their group to be important.
- I understand that most people like the idea of leadership.
  - A&M seems to have an obsession with it these days.
  - Looks good on your CV.
- Being a leader indicates they are important.
  - Being a leader of an important group is a mark of STATUS (celebrity).
  - Being a leader often means you can push other people around (privilege).
  - Perhaps more importantly, it makes it so that other people can’t push you around (lack of privilege).
More on Leadership in Groups

• If I volunteer, or if I am elected to be President/Treasurer then I should get to make decisions!

• Or... at least I should have more say than other people who aren’t doing as much as I’m doing
Management and Leadership are not the same

• Think of a team working to build a road through a jungle.
  • Management
    - Keeping the knives sharp/machines well oiled
    - Keeping people well fed
    - Medical care
    - Payroll
  • Leadership
    - Are we going the right way?
    - Are we building the right road?
    - Can I “articulate the vision” of where we are going and WHY?
• Often the manager and the leader are the same PERSON, but they are different activities!
• Do you want to BE a leader? Do what Leaders DO? Do what Managers do?
Service Based Management/Leadership

- Dictators are fond of the “Good management is more of people doing what I say, when I say it, and how I say it.”

- There is no question that Dictatorships/monarchies are more “efficient”

- I happen to favor “Service Based Management and Leadership”
Service Based

- The way I see it, my job is to SERVE
- My job is to figure out where I want to go, what I want to do, or what I want to be done
- Then I work with other people who are like-minded to bring about those things
  - Often graduate students join me on my path
  - Often I teach a class so that other people who find what I find interesting get to know what I think is interesting and WHY
- My primary mission is not to LEAD, it’s to go where I want to go. But if leading others will have a better outcome, then that is a worthy reason to give service
  - If it’s a worthy cause, sometime I just go it alone
  - I don’t need a title, I want my goals met
Example in my Research with Students

- We work together to figure out where we want to go
  - If they don’t want to go where I want to go, they should find someone else to work with
- Then I leave them alone to go do their thing, but give feedback about what works, and what doesn’t work.
- Periodic check in
- Management by walking around
- My job is to help them get where THEY want to go in 6 months, 1 year, 2 years, 5 years, 10 years
Group Meetings: Knights of the Round Table

- Group meetings are a challenge, especially in groups of equals like AGI
- Many people want to be in charge
  - If that isn’t possible, it’s “fun” to give comments and fixes, or suggest things for other people to do (it’s a simulation of importance... privilege and celebrity of sorts)
- I don’t like it when officers sit up at the front of the meeting separate from the group
- I like it when groups sit in circles, write down (and vote on) their goals, and figure out how they are going to achieve their goals
- Doesn’t have to be done as a group. In my ideal, the group (or it’s delegate) “authorizes” people to take certain roles, to make recommendations for discussion and/or organize the tasks.
  - Some of those roles are management, some are leadership roles, other times just leave people alone to do their thing
Other Thoughts if we have time

• Excellence vs. perfection
• How do you know when you are done?
Conclusions

• The Aggie Gentlemen of Integrity have a clear vision:
  – Accountability
  – Integrity
  – Selfless Service

• Time to take it to the next level

• Good luck on your elections

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