

Recently, I worked on my “personal statement” as part of a job application process. Although the job didn’t materialize, it stretched me to have to articulate the kind of leader I am and hope to be:

I am a passionate and sincere leader who thinks deeply, and enjoys connecting people and ideas as part of a learning community. My heart is postured toward service in the ways that I listen to colleagues, parents, and students, always eager to understand and support. Great school leaders can identify, cultivate, and celebrate strengths in those they lead, building relationships through which to offer trusted feedback; additionally, great school leaders have a vision for their schools at macro and micro levels, and communicate it through their school’s core values and mission.

My entire career has been centered in middle school, and I am capable of synthesizing varied perspectives as part of my decision-making process. I have excelled as a thought leader within my middle school administrative team, and contributed suggestions that have been implemented. I curate content for my sixth grade team of teachers and my sixth grade students to foster inclusivity, build capacity, and promote awareness. I lead by example, grounding myself in inclusive, well-defined, articulated, and pervasive values that shape my day-to-day conversations and interactions in every sector of school life. I am humble enough to apologize and courageous enough to invite a hard conversation. I am trustworthy and transparent, holding myself to a high standard of personal and professional excellence and growth.

As the sixth grade dean for the last five years, I have modeled that leadership is about influence and is best accomplished through relationships of high integrity and trust. I am grateful for the standard I have set with my sixth-grade team: cultivating community through open dialogue; normalizing vulnerability through honest conversation; celebrating special occasions through card and cake acknowledgments in team meetings; capitalizing on the unique strengths and perspectives of individuals; and discovering the untold stories of students and families that inform the school-home partnership. I am aware of how important it is to support my team of teachers as professionals and people, so that they can best show up for their middle school students who are experiencing life changing physical, cognitive, and emotional growth through puberty, prefrontal cortex development, and individuation.

I love being a middle school leader because I get to be a part of the character formation and cognitive development of adolescents through collaborations with teachers and partnerships with parents. I excel at: resolving conflicts with parents through child-focused discussion, humor, and insight; creating team-based action plans for students with behavior issues, disabilities, and/or academic struggles; mentoring teachers through my understanding of curricular scope and sequence, differentiated instruction, and pedagogical rigor within and outside of the middle school mathematics classroom; and connecting with middle schoolers through conversation, pedagogy, play, conflict management, character education, social-emotional learning, and teachable moments within and outside of the classroom.

The Temple Takeaway:

Write at least a paragraph of your personal statement within the context of your job and/or the work that you do, and [share it with me here](#). This applies to everyone regardless of employment status—there is work (activities, pursuits, etc.) that we are all doing and/or are called to do. Need some inspiration? [Jordan Raynor](#) offers some of the most thought-provoking writing on faith and work that I have come across. He recently published a book, “The Sacredness of Secular Work: 4 Ways Your Job Matters for Eternity (Even When You’re Not Sharing The Gospel).”