

Joyce Milling
Youth Apprenticeship Coordinator
Next-Step Leadership
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INTRO for Website Content: Joyce Milling is a Youth Apprenticeship Coordinator with ApprenticeshipNC, serving 23 counties across the southern part of NC. She has helped to develop a variety of youth apprenticeship programs, a few include, Drone Technology, Early Childhood Education, Manufacturing, IT, Pre-Nursing, and Veterinary Medicine. She previously served as the Associate Dean of Students at Warren Wilson College where she oversaw both Residence Life and Housing as well as Student Conduct. Joyce also loves hiking, scuba diving, and learning about different ways we can have a positive impact on preserving our natural world and the people in it.

Questions

Opening

A. Who IS Joyce Milling?

- I'm a mother and wife, first and foremost. I have 2 kids, 8 and 11 and get to work with my husband which is an incredible gift. Speaking of work, I've been serving as a Youth Apprenticeship Coordinator with ApprenticeshipNC most recently and have always had a passion for helping folks to find work of meaning and purpose. I've also always been a lover of the natural world. I was a biology major in college and more recently have found that I enjoy scuba diving.

B. What are your current goals?

- I have always struggled with goal setting and tend to lean into leading a value driven life which fuels my motivation for continued improvement. That being said I can still give you 3.
- 1) Read Burnout: Breaking the Stress cycle by Emily Nagoski - I have always been better about giving advice than receiving it and I gave copies of this book to some colleagues/friends when I left my last job. They quickly reflected after reading it that I could really benefit from reading it too but I've been putting it off. I think this is the year to tackle it!
- 2) Play Raquetball at least once a week and walk the dogs at least twice a week. Physical activity has always fallen to the bottom of my priority list and I'm learning now that it's fun to sweat and that the good feelings that come after a

work out can have positive ripple effects on me and my family. Putting others first doesn't mean sacrificing self care- a lesson I'm still trying to learn.

- Find a new way to mentor- I'm still working on this one. I used to supervise a team of amazing people and in my current job there isn't that same opportunity. I'm realizing now that I really miss that aspect of leadership despite really loving the work that I do with Apprenticeship. I also used to be a foster parent and that was another outlet for mentoring, I stepped back from that to focus on my kids but I do think that I need another outlet for mentoring/coaching just not sure what that is yet.

Questions From Viewers of Next-Step Leadership

1. How do you continue to grow and develop as a leader? What are your daily habits moving you forward?

-I'm constantly working on listening and trying to figure out when it's best to temper my excitement. I have a terrible habit of getting excited about something or feeling a need to contribute or help with something when really I need to slow down and listen. Daily habits moving me forward are simple- I always have to have a cup of tea- it's nostalgic, calming, and warms my belly, the light caffeine is also helpful for focus. I also am pretty tied to my calendar (s). Ever since college I have kept a color coded calendar of sorts to manage my time- again values driven- how much time am I spending on tasks, how much time am I spending on meetings, how much time am I spending on learning, am I stopping to eat/take breaks, how much of my time is my family getting, etc. You may notice that I didn't ask how much time am I exercising- that's why it's one of my goals- always forgetting about that fitness part.

2. What are the most important attributes of successful leaders today?

-I know this is not going to be too original but empathy and honesty but I also can leave out clear communication. I really value honesty and I think if we are not honest with ourselves and with others what are we doing and are we really living? The leaders I've most admired and respected and wanted to emulate have demonstrated empathy not only for those they are leading but also for anyone they encounter. Lastly, clear communication is a must for me when it comes to leading, if I can't hear you or understand what you are trying to relay in your communication, how can I follow you?

3. What qualities are lacking among today's leaders?

- Self reflection and vulnerability. I think if there was more emphasis placed on self reflection, leaders would be able to better live into the qualities and attributes I just talked about, empathy and honesty, which are critical. Once you are able to self reflect then it takes even more patience to try to hone the skill of being vulnerable without moving into

oversharing. I also think that we have grown up in a culture that values perfection and devalues making mistakes- but we can't learn without making mistakes. If our society was more open to making mistakes I think the vulnerability would come more naturally and wouldn't be as challenging for leaders today.

4. What does consistency mean to you?

-Always showing up and being ready to act- I think consistency and dependability go hand in hand.

5. 10 Years from now, when you are out leading in the world, what do you hope to hear from others when they mention you as a leader?

-That I cared, that I went above and beyond for someone or something. I try to live a life of passion... for my family, for my work, and for the earth. I hope to have an impact in one of those areas if not all 3. However, funny story- I failed the where do you see yourself in 5 years classic interview question during my first big job search. Friends kept saying I don't know why you aren't getting hired and stepped in with a mock interview intervention. They asked me the typical where do you see yourself in 5 years and I said as a mom! They laughed and said no really what's your answer and I said that's my honest answer. This was one time where honesty wasn't the best bet. They explained that I had to come up with an answer that made a company want to hire me and that my honest answer wasn't building any confidence in my employer. Lesson learned - I changed my answer to something that was still honest but maybe a little less personal and got hired first time. I think this is a great example of why it's important to practice and get others opinions even if you think you have something figured out you might find a stumbling block you never knew was there.

6. Of the 2, which do you VALUE MOST? Vision or Integrity?

-Integrity, but dang if that isn't a hard question. It is so hard to lead without vision, are you sure I can't pick both? But I will say that it's impossible to lead without integrity, at some point regardless of how strong the vision is, I believe that without integrity some part of that castle will come crumbling down.

6b. Is being a good follower important for becoming a good leader?

-If I'm following suit with my whole talk on the importance of honesty, I'm going to have to confess that I'm not a good follower... I'm stubborn and often need to get my thoughts out. So it's hard for me to say that being a good follower is important, what I will say is that being a good servant to others is important for becoming a good leader. Although I may be a difficult follower, I'm always up to serve anyone on the team and do my part to help accomplish the goals or achieve the vision.

7. What motivates you?

-Man are these good questions- I would have to say the people and places around me. I'm surrounded by wonderful, smart, hilarious people in beautiful settings. I love to see others succeed and I love to travel and explore. This is the reason for 2 of my 3 goals- I want to prioritize exercise so I can continue to explore the world without pain and I want to get back to a mentoring role so that I can continue to witness the success of others around me.

NSL Questions

8. What are you reading right now? What is on the night stand? Or on the Kindle?

-I'm currently reading your book which is great and also which my daughter keeps asking me to read to her which is super cool. I did just finish A Woman is No Man by Etaf Rum and not only was it an amazing look into a culture that I didn't have much exposure to prior to the book, I learned at the end that she's a professor at one of our community colleges here in NC. I guess I'm on a local writers kick!

9. What would you say is the BIGGEST Misconception people have about you? How do you work through it?

- I've heard that people can find me intimidating at first, because I'm loud and direct in my communication style. In my last job there was a rumor going around that I was prior military and that just couldn't be further from the truth, I really buck routine and structure in my personal life and it took me years of adulting to start picking up after myself, I'd much rather leave piles of stuff around, I absolutely hate to clean. I try to balance that with finding ways to demonstrate to people how much I care and opening up to people quickly so that they can see what's beyond the loud voice. I've also been working on listening which is a skill that I think can help people to feel more at ease.

10. What was YOUR path to leadership?

-My first official leadership role was being hired as postmaster when I was in elementary school but I don't think that is really what you are trying to learn. I am an oldest child by a lot- closest sibling is about 6 years younger than me and my youngest sibling is 16 years younger.. A lot of my leadership started within my family. For starters I was always around adults which gives you a different perspective, so I've always been comfortable around people older than myself. Then, I would say my leadership development matured and formalized in college. I was admitted into the President's Leadership Program at my undergrad and minored in leadership. I became an RA, founded and led some clubs, served as an orientation leader, and tour guide. I took those experiences and spent the

majority of my professional career until now working in Residence Life and Student life departments at colleges.

11. Tell us about a time you failed as a leader.

-You can't always be what everyone wants or needs as a leader and I think too often I try to do just that. When I'm failing as a leader, I'm usually failing to prioritize the right things and not delegating enough to others on my team. This is also why I really want to read the book Burnout as one of my goals this year. Perfect example- we had a case of bedbugs at a college I worked at and I became the main point of contact for the exterminator as well as the main point of contact for the student, the family of the student, the repair person who was supposed to fill a hole in the wall. I also became the main person responsible for changing their housing assignments, helping move items, and handling missing items disputes. Long story short- trying to be everything to everyone ended up blowing up in my face. The bedbugs persisted through multiple cleanings, exterminator visits, and move in/out by the students over the course of a few months- way to long. It only got better when I started delegating- a different person on my team became the main point of contact for the students, I leaned more on the facilities office to coordinate the exterminator and repairs and I fell more into a tracking and accountability role which allowed for all the i's to be dotted and t's crossed and finally we were rid of the bugs! Trust in your team- delegate- and only step into a role that is not yours once you have exhausted other options.

12. What efforts have you made, or been involved with, to foster diversity competence and understanding?

- I've been a part of several efforts over the years. Currently, my focus is on creating a voice and recognition for gender diversity within apprenticeship as well as ensuring that employers we work with have a clear understanding of the importance of diversifying their workforce and ways to eliminate barriers to provide access and foster inclusion. I've been working with Disability In NC to also bring awareness to the importance of hiring folks with disabilities and to think through what career pathways can we support through Apprenticeships.

13. Last Question: What thoughts or ideas do you want to leave Lessons in Leadership Leader-Cast watchers with?

- Be kind to yourself and honest with yourself. NEVER stop Learning and growing. On that note- if you are embarking on a career path or considering a change in careers seriously look into apprenticeship. I had no idea what it was until my husband started working as an apprenticeship coordinator and then I of course followed. Maybe I am a better follower than I give myself credit for :) Long story short, I saw too many students go through college only to leave not able to

articulate what work experience they had or ended up never using their degree at all. Apprenticeship is a partnership between employers and educators that allows a student to work and continue their education at the same time, both within their chosen career path and while gaining important credentials. In the state of NC if you start on an apprenticeship pathway in HS you also get your tuition costs waived at any NC community college that is part of your apprenticeship program. It's quite an opportunity that often goes unnoticed. I'm hoping to help shed some light to this option for our student listeners out there. Thanks so much Angelo for giving me this opportunity to reflect on my own leadership journey and to share some next steps for the leaders listening.