00:00:03

[Arturo Hernández]

Great. Okay, so if you're a little confused and you don't know where I am, that is me in the crowd. And I'm happy to be here this on this session. So it's my first time participating here at the Global Teachers Festival this year, the 2026. And I'm very happy to share a few ideas and thoughts based on my experience.

So what does being a humanist leader mean?

I think it's important to understand that in these artificial intelligence and generative artificial intelligence times, we need to remember that we are still human and that we are working with humans. And we need to also remember that people should come first. So let's not forget about that and join me in my journey today. So I've prepared my presentation as a journey. So come along and follow me.

00:01:08

So the first stop for our journey, our trip, is how did I get here as a leader? You know, what happened then we'll move on to our next stop, which is the concepts and the tools that I learned and that I also had the opportunity to use. And then our next stop would be our personal experience content. So after 30 years of teaching and dealing with people, I've come to understand a few things that I would like to share with you and why I consider my leadership style as a humanist. So the last stop in our destination would be non stop improvement.

Because leaders are never perfect. Okay, there's always room for improvement. So let's begin then. And I would like to first try to understand how is it that I became a leader. I think I kind of know the answer.

So it might have been first by accident and then obviously life, destiny did their their own thing. So what is it then that that made me be here? So life put me in a different context whenever I change jobs, both personal and professional context, where I either consciously or unconsciously decided to take on some responsibilities. I showed some type of leadership skills, which in a way let my previous leaders know that I looked like a potential leader. So I ended up taking the lead in projects or tasks that some people didn't want and because there were no other volunteers.

00:03:13

So that's how sometimes you end up being a leader. You know, when nobody else wants to volunteer or raise their hands, sometimes you say, okay, I'll do it. And that's how the story begins. And then in a more conscious way, I was officially named or assigned the role of a coordinator at a school. I took on some responsibilities with certain teachers.

Then I became a director. And then I became the person in charge of a significant group of people. Because I showed positive results. Because my way of convincing people to do things

and to accompany them also help me become a better leader. And as you may imagine, when you have taken on some responsibilities, you have done coordination and you have also become responsible for other people, then you realize that you've become all of a sudden a leader.

00:04:29

And I have a question for you, and I would like, if possible, for you to try to answer very quickly in the chat room. How did you end up being a leader if you were one? I'll just give a few moments for people to type in some answers. Think about your experience. How did you end up being a leader?

In my case, I became a leader accidentally. I didn't plan it. Thank you. Same as you. Same as me.

Thank you. Yes. Some people just take over and say, you know, I'll do it. That's right. Interesting.

You know, we, a lot of people that are typing became accidental leaders. I think it's very strange to run into people who definitely plan to become leaders or want to be leaders. Now. How often do you hear people say, no, I would like to be a leader, or, you know, leadership is my thing. So interesting answers here.

00:05:31

Over 20 years of experience. Yeah, accidentally, it's interesting, you know, how we share this background. Taking on challenges. Yes, interesting. And gaining trust.

That's definitely really what gives other. The confidence that you will perform well. Performance, definitely. Thank you. Thank you for sharing your.

Your answers. And then I would like us to move on to our next stop. If you remember concepts. So when I was going through this process, I needed to understand some concepts first, the concept of leadership. So leadership for me is basically the ability to motivate, to invite and convince people, but more importantly, to accompany people to accomplish common goals in a very human or humanist way.

What do I mean by that? That leadership for me is not a title. It doesn't give me the right to do what I want, but instead it gives me a lot of responsibility.

00:06:49

I had to understand what leadership was first, and then I also became interested in understanding what kind of leadership style I had. I did some research, I attended some workshops as well. And I'll be using for today's session Goldman's classification or concepts. So the first type of leadership of leadership that I would like to address is commanding. So if you have a chance to remember those times when your leaders asked you to do things that were not negotiable, you basically had to meet deadlines, you had to basically give results.

So that's the type of leadership that sometimes we have to apply Where? In other situations, I had a more visionary leadership. In what context? When I was doing the onboarding process, when I was meeting new people, when new staff members joined the team and I had to let them know exactly where we were going to and why we were doing things and what for we were doing things. In other situations, however, I try to establish or build emotional bonds because it was necessary to build trust.

00:08:16

If people agree and commit, then things happen. One of my favorite ones is the democratic leadership. Whenever possible, I like to discuss certain issues or give some proposals to my team members because I believe in consensus. Whenever it's possible, I go for consensus because people feel committed when they participate and when they are heard and taken into account. Other times I remember that I tell my team members, my colleagues remember that we are reaching for excellence.

I believe in the best version of yourselves. So I believe that we can always do things better. There's always room for improvement. And finally, I don't know if it's happened to you, but leadership also takes you to coaching. Sometimes you end up being a psychologist, sometimes you become a therapist or counselor.

00:09:22

And that's part of our job. But I think what's important here is to remember that a leader's main responsibility is to prepare the talent of the future. Why? Because we think that we are indispensable and we should not be indispensable. We need to prepare others to come after us and really to be in our place.

So I remember this very good leader of mine who said once that a successful leader is the one that prepares the next person to be in his or her place. So don't be afraid. If you are preparing people for other departments for other areas, feel proud and take credit of that. Because people need also greater opportunities and they have the right to grow. It is our job as leaders to help them grow and to be offered better opportunities.

00:10:29

We understand leadership, the types of leadership, and do not forget that we are looking for a humanist approach. Why humanist? Because we need to remember that we're dealing with people and we need to put people in the center. Everything needs to go around them. We need to take care of people.

If people feel that they're taken care of, you don't know the kind of results that you can get. Because if you remember, humans are emotional and people need to feel that they have made significant contributions and they have shown their best version. So I have a question for you before we move on. Do you happen to know what type of leader you are? Based on the classification and the concepts that I just Presented.

00:11:21

Could you think of a combination of any of these six types of leadership? Okay. Thank you. Coach. Counselor.

Excellent. Thank you. Democratic. Okay. Yeah.

Sometimes you have to be non democratic, but not to the point where you're authoritarian coaching. I like that combination. Yeah. Commanding coach. Great.

I like the fact that you are mixing flexibility but at the same time making sure that things get done democratic. Thank you. That's a lot. Affiliative. Excellent.

A mixture of all. Great. I think that the type of leadership that you need depends a lot on the type of situation you're facing at the moment. So there's nothing wrong with having a combination of all. A mix of all.

Affiliative coaching. Excellent. So if you don't know exactly what type of leadership you tend to demonstrate or show, I would definitely suggest you take a good leadership styled test or quiz so that you can find out. Thank you. Yeah, thanks for your answers.

I'm very happy to read that most people go for coaching. I think that's very, very important. Thank you. Thank you for your answers. So let's, let's move on.

00:12:41

Here's the reference from Goldman, who's very well known for his emotional intelligence concepts and books around the world. So the kinds of tools that I've used for all these 30 years basically are the following. Self awareness. I needed to understand that I was a leader whether I liked it or not. I became a leader accidentally first, but then consciously so.

I, as I said earlier, I needed to understand the type of style that I had or styles I had. So I decided to go for a good leadership test and then I complemented my training with emotional intelligence. It helps a lot to understand how people behave and sometimes people come to work with certain emotions. We usually ask people to complete tasks, to do things, but sometimes we forget the kind of emotional load that they bring with them every morning. It's important to understand that we need to understand how humans work.

00:13:49

How we humans work. I decided to go for workshops on emotional intelligence leadership styles and attend conferences. I've also watched a couple of tech talks from interesting leaders, leaders that I consider very successful. I also like to do this exercise every six months or every year when it comes to evaluating performance or assessing performance. So I like to go for a 360 degree evaluation.

What does that mean? That I ask my leaders, I ask my colleagues, and I ask the people that report to me what I can improve as a leader. So I need to be open and ready to hear lots of things and to be very critical about it. So my golden rule is I will only listen and thank for everything that they have to say. I won't reply.

00:14:51

I won't say the thing. And it's a very healthy exercise because it keeps me up to date. It gives me an idea of people's perception and if I'm doing a good job or not. Maybe I need to change my direction. So this is a risky thing.

Not many people are willing to do it, but I definitely love doing this. And I also do a lot of feedback sessions. Feedback is important. If you don't talk to your people, if you don't tell them how you feel, if things are going well, if you feel okay with the amount of work you're doing, we need to establish this important communication channel. And this happens at feedback sessions.

So I love to have feedback sessions because they tell me whether I'm going in the right direction or not. Yeah. And informal observations. This happens every day. I've become a better observer of myself.

00:15:54

First to observe how I am as a leader, how my leaders are when they interact with me and how I interact with my leaders. And also I ask my colleagues, I observe my colleagues, what is it that they do that I can learn from? Because some people may say, yeah, but your colleagues are not necessarily leaders. Yes, everyone can be a leader. Not necessarily the best leaders, but to a certain extent we have all the potential to be leaders.

And I also look at my supervisees and I observe if what I'm doing is okay. Not that I asked for their validation, but I try to understand if they are feeling comfortable with what I asked them to do. So question time. What other tools have you used? Could you share those with me, please?

00:16:50

I'll be happy to read your comments here in the chat room. So help me understand the types of tools that you use or that you have used to become better leaders. Questionnaires. Okay. Yes.

I would suggest anonymous questionnaires. Or if you have established a very good communication channel, you should not really go for anonymous questionnaires. 360 valuation. Excellent feedback. Definitely.

Informal observations. Great listen. Active listening is great. Self awareness. Yes.

Teams meetings here and attending workshops, conferences. Excellent. Active listening retreats, excellent as well. Sometimes people believe that leaders are made because of the

work they do with others, but they don't remember that being a leader starts with yourself. So meeting sweet sessions.

00:17:48

Active listening and real and genuine listening, you know, it's just not hearing. Communication. Thank you. Observations. Creative.

Excellent. Thank you. Thank you for sharing. Personal interviews. Yeah.

We need to be very open and very critical about ourselves if we want to to Improve. So I would like to share my personal experience with you. What is it that I. That I've done and how I would describe my. My leadership?

Well, first I would say that my leadership style is a combination of the following elements. First, I put people in the center. People come first. And I have gotten this from my leaders, and they have put me in the center. So if they do that with me, why, why shouldn't I do the same?

00:18:38

You know, then a mix of Goldman styles, you know, depending on the situations that I faced. Because, you know, you are always involved in different situations with different people, and people have different emotions at different times. So I enjoy working with people to give positive results. So people sometimes are very critical about themselves. They say that we are even the worst judges because we criticize ourselves in a very, I would say, rough way.

So we need to be a little bit flexible as well. We're human, remember that. I enjoy working also with people to align goals. And when nothing happens or when I see that things are not going in the same direction, I make a pause and then I have a conversation. Quick chat.

00:19:35

What, what's going on? Is everything okay? I would like you to focus and channel your energy, your time into things that really, really matter. Okay. I like to create and reinforce emotional bonds.

I'm dealing with people, with humans. And I believe that as long as we understand each other, I need to remember that humans are very productive as long as they feel safe and that they feel taken care of. I like to take some decisions democratically, asking people what they think. I run by them some ideas. So what do you think?

You know, is it a good move? Is this a good idea? In the end, I'll probably be the one making the decision, but at least I can see that people were involved and generally involved and that they sometimes have a vote, not just a voice. Okay. I like to accompany because I feel that leaders, jobs is accompany people to obtain better results.

00:20:43

What is it that you really need? How can I help you? My job is to help you do a better job for you. So the results are our results. A leader always speaks in plural.

It's us, not I. So I think it's important to change the way we express ourselves. And we say our team, my team, you know, we get there together. It's just not my. My job.

I do my job, but my job is to make sure that you do your job the best way you can. So I strongly believe that developing, developing talent for the future is extremely important. Some people may feel a little threatened because we are preparing our substitute. But you won't believe how grateful people are when they understand that you are helping them to become leaders. And don't be afraid if they ask you, you know, would you be interested in my position?

00:21:47

Why not? You know, so the incorporation of the best practices and the not so good practices of my previous leaders have made me the leader I am today. So I've learned from the best ones and. But I've learned also from the not so good ones and every opportunity that I've had has given me the chance to say the type of leader I want to be or that I don't want to be. Yeah.

So yeah, I would say that sometimes we misinterpret the term we as a team, but you really need to prove it with actions. Okay. It's just not in speech. It's really to do things together. At least I can speak for myself in this case, that I always speak for my, for my team results.

00:22:43

Okay, so our next quick question is how do you define your own leadership style? So if you could help me a little bit with this in the chat room.

Leadership skills make others work faithfully. Definitely. Yeah. Supportive. Thank you.

That's really important. It's not just to say I'll give you a hand, but to actually do it. If you give people the opportunity to see that you are interested, that you do things, that you set deadlines and you say, how I can help you to do this? If I can tell you how much I care about you, you know, thank you for, for the support. People really, really care about you as well as, as a human being.

Being, inspiring, caring. Thank you. Thank you. Open dialogue. Definitely.

And open to listen. You know, attentive, listening. Supporting. Being care, caring.Excellent.

Creating emotional bonds. Adaptive and flexible. Definitely open minded. Yes. Encouraging a mix of them.

00:23:51

Thank you. Thank you for sharing them. Investing in others. Yes, definitely. That's the best investment.

Investing in people, in human beings. So I'm moving to our last stop, our destination. So the nonstop improvement. My pieces of advice for today is lead concretely.

Actions speak better than words. And if you lead by the example, then there no one's going to come and question you.

I would say that assertive and effective leaders always keep trying. They never get discouraged. Some people may not be on the same boat. You sometimes feel that they are rowing the boat into the opposite direction. Don't be discouraged.

You know, not everyone thinks the same way we think. Become a great observer. Observe others to become a better leader.

Adapt your leadership. Be flexible. You know, you don't have to be one particular style. You can be a combination of all styles. But make sure that you understand the type of leadership that you are using as a specific moment.

00:25:16

Respect. Yeah. So leadership begins first within ourselves. How am I as a leader? How do I interact with my leaders?

How do leaders interact with me? How do I interact with others? And, and how do I interact with the people under my supervision? So leadership goes into different directions. Okay.

From the inside out, looking up, looking sideways and looking down.

Express gratitude. Be grateful. Always. Always think of a learning opportunity when you fail. Failure means growth.

It's difficult to deal with failure, but definitely it gives you an opportunity for growth. Yeah. And a humanist leader earns authority and respect when they lead by example. There's no other better way to teach others or tell them what to do when you're actually doing it and when you accompany them when doing it. So lead by example and make sure that you remember that you are human.

00:26:35

Yeah. Don't be threatened or overwhelmed by artificial intelligence and generative artificial intelligence. Humans are really people who make a difference in organizations. You know, artificial intelligence is great, but humans created artificial intelligence. Don't forget about that.

I don't have anything against artificial intelligence, but I believe that if we put people in the center, we could always make a great difference. So thank you for having me today. This is the experience I wanted to share with you. And if you would like to contact me or maybe just have any further comments, please feel free to contact me. My address is right on the screen.

00:27:20

And I want to thank you for being so grateful and so particip here in our session today with great ideas. So I'm ready for any more comments or questions that you may have here in the chat room. So thank you very much. Thank you. Nathan.

[Nathan Waller]

Arturo, thanks so much. What an interesting talk and it definitely resonates with the, with the audience just by watching the kind of chat and the interaction with the chat and seeing this kind of flurry of emojis coming on the screen. I think.

[Arturo Hernández]

Yes. Yeah, that's great.

[Nathan Waller]

Definitely. These ideas are definitely resonating a lot with the attendees that we've had today. And an interesting look and it's really nice for you to share that kind of personal experience. You know, your journey and the things that you've learned and you know, really reflecting on that has been really lovely to see. There are a couple of questions.

00:28:23

So I think we, you know, we've got a few minutes. We, we can, we can definitely, I think, have a, a follow up discussion.

So I mean, I Agree with, with a lot of what you say, you know, leaders are the ones that set the culture. I love this stuff around kind of, you know, the fact that leaders should model what they want their teams to do within an educational space, within the classroom for us as teachers. And I think, I know, I mean, I've been in education for a long time, you know, I've seen lots of, you know, teacher training sessions, you know, that would, you know, which, which preach one thing on the slide. But it's not presented to us as teachers in the, in the same way that they're like, you know, we, we need to, you know, not lecture our students. And then, you know, the teacher training session is done in a lecture format.

This kind of thing, you know, there's, there can sometimes be a bit of an imbalance there, I think. So leaders can definitely help, I think in terms of making it more, I think inclusive, I guess is the word I'm looking for. Yeah. If you're thinking about that context of modeling, I mean, inclusion is about breaking down barriers. Right.

00:29:35

So we want to break down students barriers and help them overcome them. But actually the leader's job is to find out what teachers barriers are. Not, not just barriers to delivering the content, but all of those other barriers as well. What, what teachers go through, the difficulties they're facing, the anxieties that they have. Because it's different depending on where you are in the world.

Right.

[Arturo Hernández]

And it's interesting, Nathan, how sometimes teachers, we as teachers don't perceive that. We don't perceive ourselves as leaders because once we are in the classroom, we are leaders leading the session. We are leaders. We also should set by example.

And we're not just leaders when we're teaching. We are also leaders at home, you know, with their families and on our household. So leadership doesn't really mean leadership at work. It's, I would say leadership in life, you know, for personal and professional contexts. So being a leader doesn't necessarily mean being in charge of people, but it also means, you know, being inspiration for others and also making sure that others see what you do.

00:30:48

And regardless of what you say, you know, as many people say, you know, do as I. As I do and not as I say. So I think example really is the key.

[Nathan Waller]

Yeah, so there is one question around because I think, I mean, context is definitely important here. I mean, there are definitely different approaches to workplace cultures in different parts of the world.

I mean, I've worked in Europe, I'm here, based in Dubai, so I'm in the, in the gcc. I've worked in Asia, I've definitely seen different types of management approaches, different ways that culture influences hierarchies within a workplace. So I mean, in your experience, I mean, the question that somebody's asked is around, is around feedback. I guess I'm trying to pad that out a little bit because they're saying that sometimes people feel, don't feel that comfortable giving feedback to a leader because they fear of repercussions, this type of thing. But in certain, in certain cultures, hierarchy is, is really important.

00:31:52

Have you had that? Have you? I mean, in the Mexican context. I've not worked in the Mexican context.

[Arturo Hernández]

Yes, some people are very sensitive about receiving feedback.

And when my leaders have asked me honestly for when they're really looking for an honest answer, I always tell them. So I'll tell you what I think, what I feel, and it may not necessarily be what you want to hear. So I hope this is not shocking. I'm going to be very respectful, as objective and neutral as possible. But if you have opened the door and if you have given me the chance to be honest, then I would be willing to tell you what I think.

So I think it depends a lot on the genuine interest of your leader to hear what you have to say to them. In my case, I've had leaders who say I have an open door policy, but the problem is that no one is willing to actually know, walk into the room and really say something. So even the door is open. Many people are, they feel threatened or scared. It happened to me.

00:33:01

So I don't really go for that open door policy. I say, you know, I'm a click away if you really need to have a conversation to, you know, have a video conference and let's talk about what you are going through at the moment. So in a way I would say that if you built an honest and transparent communication channel, then people would feel honest and, and willing to tell you what they really think. And, and, and that's the base of, of the basis of growth because sometimes we ask people to tell us what they think, but we're not ready, you know, to receive that kind of feedback. So we need to, to train, to be trained to, to do that, you know, and we also need to take training to provide neutral, constructive and positive feedback because we're dealing with people's lives and obviously we all want to feel positive about what we do.

[Nathan Waller]

But it depends a lot on how we say it. So I think that's where we can still learn a lot from others on learning how to give productive, constructive but honest feedback.

[Arturo Hernández]

Yeah, I think you answered it very well. This idea that an open door policy is not necessarily open. There are other, I guess barriers, invisible barriers that can be perceptive to the team that we're working with.

00:34:45

But I mean you've touched on I think really a key point and it was, it's actually echoing what Nora was saying in the first. She was saying about it from the perspective of students and parents. But actually this key word is trust. Right. Over time you build trust with the team that you're working with.

They then that breaks down those barriers continuously and consistency I guess is a key part of that. Right. Okay, we've still got time so I'm going to ask one more question. Yes.

[Nathan Waller]

There's someone here that if, if I could be contacted for a top leadership related topic for a PhD.

Excellent. Yes, feel free. I'd be happy to contribute. You know my experience is significant when it becomes valuable, valuable to others. So definitely yes, I'll be happy to, to help others.

People have helped me so why shouldn't I help others?

00:35:39

Yeah. This is what I like about education. We're a team. Right.

It doesn't matter where you are. This is why these global teachers festivals are amazing. All these people from all over the world come together and you will feel like this kind of community. You feel like this, this one team that, that you know and, and little bits resonate with different people. People will take ideas, some people will reflect on their own experiences.

Some people will find a resource or they'll get some advice which I think is great. Okay. The last, there's a little bit of a challenging question that I'm going to ask here. There has just mentioned bureaucracy. I met, saw somebody quite far up of the chat also was kind of mentioning the difficulties of the decision making process.

00:36:26

When you're in a leadership position. There are, there are instances when you, you need to balance, you know, the, the team, their needs, the trust that you're building with them with difficult decisions that they need to be made quickly. Any, I mean I'll just leave it open to you because it's a difficult question but how do you balance that? Sometimes you have to do things that people don't like.

[Arturo Hernández]

Yes.

Yeah. What, what I've done to, to answer the question is I've always be believed in being transparent. So as long as you tell people really the reasons why the decision needs to be made, they may not be happy with it but they may understand, you know, where the decision comes from. And once they understand the Whys, then they understand that the decision has to be made whether you like it or not. But once you understand the reason, I would say that you become a little bit more flexible.

00:37:33

I'm not talking about being happy or that is the, the best solution or the best decision, but at least you understand why people are doing things. I think very often I've, I've heard people saying somebody, you know, up in the, you know, the company decided to do that and we don't take responsibility for certain things. I think that when we present a difficult decision to a group, especially if there's someone there who's going to be directly or sometimes indirectly affected, I think it's important to tell them exactly where the decision comes from. And there might be negative implications, but people need to know. So once, you know, you feel that people are being honest and when you hide things from people, people believe that it becomes something personal or that there's always kind of a hidden agenda and, and people really don't trust you.

So I, I strongly believe that once you build trust and once you are transparent to your team members, your team members will support you, you know, even if it's a difficult decision.

00:38:50

[Nathan Waller]

Yeah. Again, well answered question and arrogance. Thoughts, True progress. And it goes back to what you said earlier in your actual talk about democratic processes.

Right. So, yeah, a lot of the negativity from difficult decisions quite often comes from either hiding them or making those decisions too late. People weren't involved in them. So yeah, I totally agree. The more people are involved, the more agency they have and the more agency they develop or they're empowered, the more they're involved, the more they feed back to you.

And hopefully the more that those things are planned against, I guess within strategy, they don't have to become a last minute negative.

[Arturo Hernández]

Yes.

00:39:36

[Nathan Waller]

Break those things down.

[Arturo Hernández]

Somebody was just asking, what do we do with difficult people? When I deal with difficult people, I sit down and I am very straightforward and I say, you know, these are the things that need to be done and these are the reasons why and let me know how I can help you get them done, you know, and I, I go along with the process.

So it's not just a matter of saying you have to do this, but as I said earlier, if I get involved, if I set a deadline and if I tell you, you know, I'll be checking with you how you feel about this and, and what your progress is. I'm sure things will get done. Attitude is one thing. We won't be able to change people's personalities but we can change attitude. So.

00:40:25

[Nathan Waller]

Yeah.

[Arturo Hernández]

Sometimes you have to have, you know, the necessary elements to tell someone, you know what, maybe you're not the right person that we need for this project, you know, and it's a difficult decision, but they need to understand why. So as long as you understand the whys, then people have always a choice, you know, to decide whether I want to do it or I don't want to do it. But you had the information before for.

[Nathan Waller]

You as the leader.

Yeah. You're coming at it from the perspective of, I want you to thrive. This is where you're.

[Arturo Hernández]

Yes.

[Nathan Waller]

Right.

[Arturo Hernández]

That's right.

[Nathan Waller]

It was fantastic. Thank you so much. And thanks.

[Arturo Hernández]

Thank you.