

Leadership in Cinema



Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program

(Partnership with Drexel University's LeBow College of Business students
<http://www.lebow.drexel.edu/index.php>)

The Lion King

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Studio: Walt Disney Pictures Released: 1994

Genre: Animation/Drama/Adventure/Family/MusicalAudience Rating: G

Runtime: 89 minutes

Materials

DVD or online movie access, appropriate projection system, participant note-taking tools, and readings for access to the following concepts and theories (and related online links; see citations):

- Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles
- Power and Influence
- Kouzes and Posner's Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership
- Mentorship and Servant Leadership

***Disclaimer: YouTube clips may not always be available. Sometimes they are removed.*

Basic Plot

In Africa, a lion cub, Simba, is born into the royal family. From his birth, Simba is destined to rule the kingdom after his father, Mufasa, the current King. Mufasa's brother, Scar, who would have been the ruler of the Pride Lands after Mufasa if Simba wasn't born, sets out to murder his brother and destroy Simba. Using hyenas, Scar manages to cause a stampede, in the middle of which he leaves Simba alone and rushes to tell about the danger to Mufasa. The King immediately decides to rescue his son, and while doing so gets himself in a dangerous situation. He climbs on a rock and escape the hooves of the scared stampeding animals. But on top of the hill stands Scar, who ensures that Mufasa falls from the cliff and dies. Simba, believing that it was he who caused the death of his father, leaves the kingdom and meets two new friends, Pumba and Timon, with whom he grows up to become an adult lion. One day the three friends encounter Nala, Simba's old friend and a lioness from the Pride Lands, who was to marry Simba. She, with the help of Rafiki, the fortune telling monkey, convinces Simba to return to his lands. They together take the kingdom back from Scar, and Simba becomes the rightful king of the Pride Lands.

Cast of Main Characters

Jonathan Taylor Thomas	Young Simba (Voice)
Matthew Broderick	Adult Simba (Voice)
James Earl Jones	Mufasa (Voice)
Jeremy Irons	Scar (Voice)
Moira Kelly	Adult Nala (Voice)
Niketa Calame	Young Nala (Voice)
Ernie Sabella	Pumbaa (Voice)
Nathan Lane	Timon (Voice)
Robert Guillaume	Rafiki (Voice)
Rowan Atkinson	Zazu (Voice)
Madge Sinclair	Sarabi (Voice)
Whoopi Goldberg	Shenzi (Voice)

Full-film Facilitation

The Lion King is an amazing example of a film and story which illustrates many different aspects of leadership throughout. Participants watching this movie can connect the concepts from the theories listed to the leadership seen in *The Lion King*. Participants should be able to recognize when leadership is being applied in the movie, who is carrying out the act of leadership, why s/he is doing it, and how effective s/he was. The film should overall aid in the learning of the basic concepts of leadership such that participants can advance as leaders and think of scenarios where they might be required to use such leadership styles in real life in the future.

When opting for the full-film method, the facilitator should determine a good breaking point near the middle of the film.

1. Give handouts which discuss the concepts of *The Wildland Fire Leadership Values, Power and Influence, Kouzes' and Posner's Behaviors and Motivation and Servant Leadership*.
2. Review the different leadership values with participants, and discuss information given out in the handouts.
3. Break students into small discussion groups.
4. Show students *The Lion King*.
5. *Break.* (Suggestion: After Simba leaves the kingdom)
6. Begin the guided discussion.
7. Briefly discuss leadership examples in the first half of the film.
8. Have students discuss their findings and how they will apply leadership lessons learned. Facilitate discussion in groups that have difficulty.

9. Assign students homework to watch the rest of the movie out of class as a group.
10. Wrap up the session and encourage students to apply leadership lessons learned in their personal and work lives.

Part One: The Wildland Fire Leadership Values

Objective

Students will identify several Wildland Fire Leadership Values in the movie, and discuss the examples within the group.

Respect Examples

- Mufasa lectures Simba after Nala and Simba run away to the Elephant Grave. (Pay attention to his words: “What’s worse, you put Nala in danger”.) This clearly demonstrates that Mufasa greatly values the safety of his subordinates.
- Simba explains to Nala, Timon and Pumbaa what dangers may await them on the way back to the kingdom. He keeps his subordinates informed.
- Scar employs his subordinates in accordance with their capabilities. He makes lionesses hunt and provide food for him, and recruits hyenas as his spies.
- Simba doesn’t go back to his home alone; he builds a team with Nala, Timon and Pumbaa.

Integrity Examples

- Simba accepts responsibility for his actions when he think that it was he who caused his father’s death. He leaves the kingdom and runs away because of this.
- Simba faces his responsibilities again when he decides to go back to the Pride Lands.
- Simba is always trying to emulate his father. In his first dialogue with Nala after he leaves the Pride Lands, Nala tries to convince him to return. Her words that have the biggest effect on Simba are: “You’re not like your father”.
- When Simba is trying to make a decision whether to go back to his home, he repeats several times: “It’s my fault, it’s my fault”. He knows himself and seeks improvement.

Duty Examples

- Simba prepares Nala, Timon and Pumbaa for the fight when they return to the kingdom. He tells them that it will be dangerous, and that they may not survive. He doesn’t hide the truth, and ensures that everybody understands the tasks and is developed for the future.

Part Two: Power and Influence

Objective

Students will be able to identify when Power and Influence (pushing and pulling tactics) are being used in the movie, find examples from the movie, and discuss with their group.

Power Examples

- Mufasa shows Simba around the Pride Lands, using his expert knowledge to show him the areas he will rule one day, and the areas he is forbidden from going. Mufasa explains the “Circle of Life” to Simba to build reverence in him for other creatures. See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9lxZyVaVUjl>
- Mufasa shows his coerciveness when he protects Simba from the hyenas. See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x49NwjnwDUw>
- Mufasa shows power to legitimize by giving Zazu the authority to look after Simba.
- Scar uses expert knowledge to kill Mufasa and make Simba run away. Using his power to reward, he gets the hyenas on his side. Closely pay attention to how power can be used to do good things (Mufasa) and to do bad things as well (Scar). See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2K6IFYU0-XM> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LGtJn-L5xEs>

Influence Examples

- Timon and Pumbaa influence Simba in order for him to forget his past and live his life. Encourage students to find elements of coalition building and personal appeal in Timon’s and Pumbaa’s approach with Simba.
- Review how the rational persuasion aspect is shown in the song “Hakuna Matata”, and what effect it had on Simba’s life. See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5UctQeU6tnU>
- Mufasa uses rational persuasion to teach Simba when he was younger, especially when he was showing him the Pride Lands and when he saved Simba from the hyenas.
- Mufasa uses pressure and inspirational appeal to motivate Simba when he gets older by appearing through the clouds. See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QhEU3EF4jvM>
- Nala uses four different pulling tactics to persuade Simba to return to the Pride Lands, namely ingratiation, consultation, rational persuasion and personal appeal.

Part Three: The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership

Objective

Students will be able to identify when the Kouzes’ and Posner’s Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership are being used in the movie, find examples from the movie, and discuss with their group.

Enabling Others to Act Examples

- Nala enables Simba to act when she helps him go back and become the king he is supposed to be. See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OScub3q2JYg>

- Rafiki enabled Simba to act, when he says that Simba is Mufasa’s boy, and he shows him his reflection in the water to point out to him that he has his father in him. He then says the past can hurt; we can run from it or learn from it. This lets Simba see that he is able to go back and become the king and change the kingdom back to the way it used to be.

Encourage the Heart Examples

- When Nala and Simba reunite, she says, “I laugh in the face of fear,” like Simba said in the beginning of the movie when they were cubs. This encourages Simba’s heart and pushes Simba to go back and become king. See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HX0kurF5Ppg>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m-xXA6jf8HQ>

Part Four: Mentorship and Servant Leadership

Objective

Student will be able to identify instances of Mentorship and Servant Leadership in the movie. Student will be able to identify mentors and servants in different situations, how they affect others, and what makes them effective leaders.

Mentorship Examples

- Mufasa is one of the best examples of a leader in the movie, and he can be used to demonstrate the qualities of a mentor. In the movie, Simba has many leaders and mentors, however his father, Mufasa, is probably the most prominent of them all. Mufasa demonstrates his role as a mentor to Simba several times throughout the movie. For example:
 - Mufasa teaches Simba about the kingdom and the circle of life at a young age, acts as role model as king and tells Simba one day he will be king. See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bW7PITaawfQ>
 - Mufasa also guides him as a mentor and reminds him that he has duties as the rightful king through a vision. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NdBV7LTd07g>
- Timon and Pumba also serve as mentors for Simba for a significant period of time. After Simba runs away from the kingdom, he is taken in by Timon and Pumba, who teach him their ways of living and help him move on from his father’s death.
 - They teach him the ways of “Hakuna Matata” and mentor him on how he can leave the past behind and move on with his life. See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xB5ceAruYrl>

- Rafiki serves as a mentor to Simba in a brief meeting between the two when Simba is grown up.
 - Rafiki tells Simba that he has his father in him and that he has what it takes to lead. He is arguably the final person that convinced Simba to return to the kingdom and take his place as king. See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_OMPrqhA_4

Servant Leadership Examples

- Servant leadership is prevalent in the movie. There are many characters who serve Simba and his family, and many of these characters are also leaders to Simba or show leadership qualities.
- Zazu serves Mufasa, and one of his jobs in the movie is to protect Simba. He serves Simba as well and puts Simba's concerns in front of his own.
 - Zazu watches over Simba and Nala when they go to the watering hole, and when they later try to go to the elephant graveyard. He tries to protect them, and keep them safe and away from danger. Although he may be considered unsuccessful in this regard, he still puts forth his efforts to protecting Simba, as a servant leader. See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NEqW_8-dFuQ
- Timon and Pumba also show this concern for Simba when they first meet him.
 - Although they do not even know Simba is the king of the Pride Lands, they see he is in need and help him. They put his needs before their own and make sure Simba gets better physically and emotionally. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQle-J8GurM>
 - Scar fakes servant leadership in this movie for his own gains.
 - He says that he will give the hyena's food and shelter, putting their needs first, but he is only getting their help so that he can become king. He tries to blame Mufasa's death on the hyenas towards the end of the movie.
 - Mufasa and Simba also show servant leadership by serving the animals in their kingdom.
 - Simba puts the needs of the kingdom before himself by coming back to take back his place as king and dethrone Scar. He could have stayed with Timon and Pumba for the rest of his life, however he puts the needs of others before his own and returns for the betterment of the Pride Lands. See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L-uJCAWI7pw>

Additional/Summarized Guided Discussion to Accompany the Outlines Above

1. Under the concepts that you have learnt from Power and Influence, discuss where you see Power come into action in the movie?

Answers will vary, but may include:

- Mufasa showing Pride Lands to Simba
- Mufasa discussing the Circle of Life with Simba
- Mufasa protecting Simba from the hyenas
- Mufasa telling Zaazu to look after Simba and Nala when they go to the Elephant grave
- Scar killing Mufasa
- Scar tempting the hyenas to come on his side

2. Discuss the instances where you see pushing tactics of influence in the movie.

Answers will vary, but may include:

- Mufasa showing the Pride Lands to Simba (rational persuasion and pressure)
- Nala persuading Simba to come back and save Pride Lands (rational persuasion)
- Hakuna Matata (rational persuasion)

3. Discuss the instances where you see pulling tactics of influence in the movie.

Answers will vary, but may include:

- Timon and Pumbaa helping Simba in his difficult times as a child (personal appeal, coalition building)
- Mufasa advising Simba from the clouds (inspirational appeal)
- Nala convincing Simba to return to Pride Lands (ingratiation, personal appeal, consultation)

4. How does Mufasa's mentorship affect Simba?

Answers will vary, but may include:

- Simba coming back and fighting Scar for the Pride Lands
- Simba trying to act brave like his father by going to the elephant graveyard

5. How does Nala show the five practices of exemplary leadership?

Answers will vary, but may include:

- Nala saying, "I laugh in the face of fear," like Simba did when they were younger, and encouraging his heart to go back and become king

Contributions to this document were made by the following students in LeBow College of Business at Drexel University enrolled in a course titled Leadership in the Movies in the spring of 2013 facilitated by Professor Dana D'Angelo:

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