

Leadership Skills Essay

Sled dogs. Isolation. Harsh winters. That is what I expected when I moved to Valdez, Alaska ten years ago. Valdez forever changed my life, but not in the way I anticipated. We owned an ocean boat that was put to fantastic and consistent use. The long days on our boat far from the safety of the coast brought worries to my mother. Quickly, my siblings and I were taught how to swim to ensure our safety out on the waters. They taught me how to swim, but I taught myself to love it. Each day since, I have yearned for my favorite part of the day-- practice. Swimming is a tough sport to love, especially in giant Alaska. The time consumption from traveling, practice, meets, fundraisers, and the many other hours can be overwhelming. Although it is a time consuming sport, I wouldn't have wanted to spend it doing anything else. With the many hours of experience in the sport, I have developed leadership skills that have benefited me with my family, in friendships, in church, and in schoolwork.

The largest area of learned leadership is found in the basics of competitive swimming--leading the lane. Swimmers are often packed into a lane with many other teammates, and the first person is deemed the "leader". The entireties of the set and the intervals are laid upon the individual. Throughout the years, I have been the leader many times. From this experience, I have learned communication, quick math skills, and confidence in myself and in others. Being the leader in practice has developed my leadership skills dramatically feeding into other areas of swimming and in my life.

For my senior year at Palmer High School, my coach selected me to be the swim team captain. This responsibility required me being a leader at all times, since the captain is the example for the team. I was delegated responsibilities on long bus rides, in meet warm ups, team "secret buddies", stretches during warm ups, and many other tasks. Having this

opportunity to serve my fellow teammates really strengthened my leadership skills. I had a happy attitude every day; I executed kindness towards each member. With confidence, I lead them in the right direction, and I earned their respect. I learned how to speak up for the right even when I stood alone. I learned how to connect with others that I did not immediately get along with, and I learned to listen to each of them. I supported each of my teammates and built them up to the best of my ability. I had to be trustworthy for my coach because of my responsibility. Being the captain on my team allowed me to strengthen my leadership skills. I further developed them on my club team, NLSC, where I am a coach.

Coaches are lifelong examples to the swim teams where they invest many hours, all for the swimmer's benefit. I am extremely grateful for the fantastic coaches I have been blessed with. Last March, I was given an opportunity to be a coach for the entry-level swimmers on NLSC Matsu. Since then, I have developed my leadership skills in swimming far greater than any other experience. Coaching requires confidence, motivational skills, a loud voice, performance skills, and being mobile. I learn each and every day as I coach. The swimmers look to me for sets, for learning, and for a fun day at practice. Without this experience, my ability to solve quick problems required in leadership positions would be extremely lacking. Coaching strengthened all of my talents. I have been able to support other swimmers through personal let downs, and in triumphant swims. I have loved coaching, and it indeed strengthened me.

From all of these experiences in swimming, I have been able to transfer my skills into other parts of my life. The first part would be in church. I am the "young woman leader" where I mentored girls to be their best self and fight temptation in this world. Without my swimming background, my confidence, my ability to support, and nearly everything else would not be as efficient in helping these girls in church. I was asked to be the organist for church services, and I was immediately terrified. Hundreds of heads relying on me for music

frightened me every minute I played. **Because** of swimming, I learned how to quickly recover from mistakes and put many hours of practice working for improvement. I applied this to my organ playing, and also many other areas of life. Without swimming, being successful would have been much more difficult.

Keeping family bonds in good standing position can be at times stressing. From my experience as a coach and a captain, I learned how to be tolerating of nearly all behaviors. Because of this skill, I have been able to appreciate and care more about my family members even when there is stress.

Lastly, school has benefited from my leadership skills because of the personal motivation I possess. I have been able to maintain a high GPA in all of my high school years while helping others progress on the path of success. I have learned from swimming that it takes time to have good results. I have learned to put in schoolwork a constant push even when mistakes are made, when I have a rough day, or when I am extremely exhausted. I learned these skills from practice. I have exceeded tremendously because of my leadership skills and am thriving from my experience in swimming.

I have had many opportunities in swimming that have strengthened me, including being captain, a coach, leading the lane, and simple daily practice. I have learned to transfer my leadership skills in swimming into other areas of life to create a thriving atmosphere of success for my benefit and for those I am around. I am extremely grateful for my swimming background and the impact it has had on my life.

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