



Petrik Lajos Bilingual Vocational School of Chemistry, Environmental Protection and Information Technology, Budapest, Hungary

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Training for LIFE: Leadership Initiative for Europe



Newsletter

Efficient Communication



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Since the beginning of the *Training for LIFE: Leadership Initiative for Europe* project in September 2013, we have learnt a lot about the different qualities a good leader has to possess. These include vision, strategy, positive change, priority, influence, self-discipline, perseverance, integrity, delegation or excellence.

These all add up and characterize a good leader. So, we know by now that

being a leader is very often a difficult task. Many of the characteristics mentioned above can be learned and mastered while others have to be innate such as integrity.

Although being a great leader is a very demanding task, through the course of the history of mankind, we have had countless distinguished leaders who changed the lives of their people or the way we think and their legacy has been influencing us ever since.

A great leader has to be a visionary, an organizer, a mentor, an ample communicator, a decision-maker, a team worker and a motivator at the same time. But these characteristics seem very vague or abstract for an ordinary person.

So, we thought, we should meet leaders in person and bring these subjects closer to our students. Leaders usually seem very distant and unapproachable for us although they are very often cool and funny people if you get to know them.

Take for example Mr. Pál Mácsai, one of the most



prominent actors and theatrical directors of Hungary. He has been acting for 30 years; recently, he has been playing the main character of the Hungarian version of the series titled *In Treatment*. He has won numerous awards during his career. He is also the manager of the Örkény István Theatre in Budapest.

On our annual “Settlement Night” in October, when the students can stay inside the school for the whole night and attend various programmes, we had the honour to have Mr. Pál Mácsai as a guest of the Training for LIFE project.



We asked him to talk about his experiences as a theatre manager, what the beauties and hardships are when somebody is in a leading position. And we were also interested in his opinion about good leadership.

We learned from him that in his opinion, a good leader has to have a vision. His vision was to start a theatre in Budapest, the repertoire of which includes serious plays in an accessible manner. During the 10 years of the history of the Örkény István Theatre, plays by Schiller, Mrozek, Dürrenmatt, Shakespeare or Ibsen have been staged. Time has proved him right, because his theatre is the second most popular art theatre in Budapest and their shows have won multiple awards at different theatrical festivals.

During everyday work, a theatre manager or a leader has to be strict and be able to punish those, who do not obey the rules. But at the same time, he or she has to be able to create a very informal atmosphere, in which his or her colleagues feel great and can be productive.

Of course, a leader has to know the organization he or she leads. There are more than 40 different kinds of professionals (actors, actresses, directors, set designers, costume designers, tailors, accountants and so on) working at the theatre. Mr. Mácsai has to be familiar with all the work stages. In his opinion, the ideal leader of an organization should know the lower levels of the organization he or she manages, as well.

A leader has to believe in the goals of the organization and also has to keep the faith in the others when things do not go smoothly.



Also, he or she has to listen to the criticisms. One of the traps of being a leader is that after a while one might think that he or she is omnipotent, knows everything right and can do anything. A leader has to have an ear to the critics.

Finally, a good leader has to be able to admit his or her mistakes. A great leader is never all-knowing and infallible. He or she has to have the strength to apologize.

If you have these qualities, you will have the respect of others and they will follow you. All great leaders have the qualities mentioned above, the question is whether you have them or not?

Ádám Szolnok, the Hungarian co-ordinator

So, we know that communication is essential for conducting our everyday lives and also a good leader has to be a good communicator. In the following, you can read articles and an interview about the importance of communication and how we communicate.

How do teenagers really communicate?



Communication is very hard for most teenagers. We do not know which words to use, how to address the adults or our peers or what can be said in a certain situation. In the following, I am going to write about how we, teenagers communicate with each other.

First of all, we often do not engage in face-to-face communication. We mostly use social network sites, such as Facebook or Twitter. Even if we are in the same room we are more likely to use our phones to text to the other person rather than speaking with him or her.

Secondly, when we are texting to each other, we usually shorten many words, for example: IRL means *in real life*; OFC means *of course*; y/w means





you're welcome and so on. Moreover, when we are talking to each other we sometimes use shortened words, too.

But still, it is more possible that we just take our phones out of our pocket and text to the other person. Is it better just to text than talk to the person standing next to you? Well, sometimes yes, it is. At times it is hard to tell the other person what is on your mind or you might be really shy in

real life and you feel safer communicating in text.

To sum up, most of us, teenagers use our phones to communicate with each other no matter how far we are from each other physically.

by Ádám Kovács (Class 10.D)

The Importance of Body Language

Communication is not limited to speaking. We can communicate without words. In fact, our body language and our gestures are just as important as the words we say. Even the clothes we wear tell a lot about us.

Actually, in everyday life your look is very important. There are many tiny things which are telling secrets about your personality. People make up their minds about others in the first few seconds. It means if your clothes are not appropriate you may fail in a special situation, such as a job interview or a business meeting. The people will think wrong things about you which may not be true. Also do not wear colours which indicate power and aggression.

In fact, there are more ways of self-expression. The right handshake is very important. If you are holding your partner's hand too strongly, it means you want to dominate him or her, but if your grip is too weak you may seem a bit shy. Your tone also has a vital part in communication. If you are trying to convince someone of something pay attention to your tonality. It suggests self-discipline.

Moreover, in the world you can come across a lot of hand gestures but many of them have different meanings in different places. As a member of the Hungarian delegation in Turkey in early November 2014, I had to be aware of the hand



gestures that might have different meanings in Turkey. For example, in many countries “*the thumb in a fist*” is a playful gesture used by adults towards children, pretending to have stolen a child’s nose. However, in Turkey it has an aggressive and rude connotation. Or if you put your fingers all together, in Turkey it means that something is beautiful or well. So be careful not to offend anybody.



To sum up you cannot hide who you really are because your gestures tell a lot about you. They also help you to get yourself understood without words, but you have to be careful because your gestures can be easily misunderstood, as well.

Source: <http://larryferlazzo.edublogs.org/2014/03/19/infographic-the-global-guide-to-hand-gestures/>

by Gábor Takács (Class 12.C)

Communication between young people and adults.

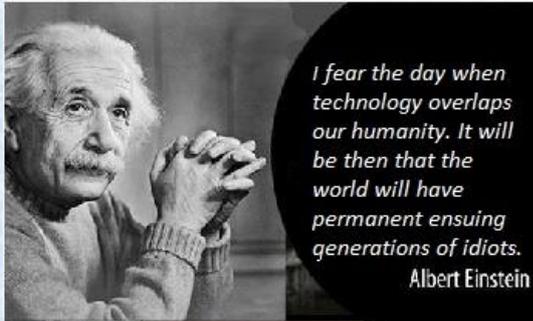
An interview with Bottyán Pál, the school’s psychologist

Olivér Payer: *What difficulties are there in the communication between adults and young people?*

Bottyán Pál: It is a very difficult question; it depends on age, whether the child is an adolescent or a young adult. In the case of little children the situation is unique. They look at the world with childish innocence. They are not aware of good or bad. Therefore, this may lead to misunderstanding between adults and children. The communication with teenagers is a different story since they rebel against their parents, their teachers and the whole world.

O. P.: *It seems that young people do not respect adults as much as they used to. What is your opinion?*

B. P.: Each country has different traditions. For example in Germany and Hungary people show their respect by using formal language if they are not on friendly terms with each other. We use this formal language when we talk to an elderly person. Unfortunately, very often, when I go to a department store the shop assistants, who do not know me, say “Hi!” to me. It is not so polite.



I fear the day when technology overlaps our humanity. It will be then that the world will have permanent ensuing generations of idiots.
Albert Einstein



O. P.: Now let's talk about communication problems. Here is a quote: „I fear the day when technology overlaps our humanity. It will be then that the world will have permanent ensuing generations of idiots.” (Albert Einstein) Do you think it is true?

B. P.: This is an interesting question. No, I don't think that we will become idiots because of the technological revolution which has taken place in the past decades. So many previously unthinkable things have become available for the people. We know what is happening on the other side of the world within a few minutes. The question is how we use this enormous amount of information.

I think, we have more freedom than before, our thoughts can be communicated more independently and we can gain more knowledge in less time than ever before. In my opinion, the technological advancement has more advantages than disadvantages.

O. P.: *How can we improve our communication skills?*

B. P.: First of all, communication skills are determined by genetics but they can also be improved with the help of communication courses. Women are generally more communicative than men. You can learn a lot from the conflicts in your friendships and relationships and improve your communication skills. The problem is that we all live in our “own little world” and we do not see ourselves objectively thus we think we communicate our thoughts well. Of course, this is not always true and until you see yourself on video, you do not face your communicational problems. Feedback is really important.

O.P.: *Thank you very much for the interview!*

by Olivér Payer (Class 10.A)

Ádám, Gábor and Olivér were the student members of the Hungarian delegation in Turkey in November 2014.



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