

I am Not Following Anyone!

With Mikes Bikes first roll-over this week I am sure many of us will be discussing and thinking about our current SHV, position within the class, strategy over the coming weeks, and leadership within their team. And then there was the article by Robert Kelley talking about 'In Praise of Followers'. Why on earth would I want to be a follower? In my week of learning the three articles of leadership and followers I have come to realize that I am no more, or less of a follower than what I was last week. That is to say I do not agree in following.

The title of Kelley's article got me going from the start. Who is Kelley to criticise what and how people do with their lives, and who would I be to judge if someone was a follower or not. In my opinion followers are people who can't do the work properly and is a form of cheating, i.e. you are just following superiors above you. Adding to this Kelley (1988) also spoke about how followers were a subsidiary to leaders who hold the role of being glamorous and attentive. Again I disagree. I personally believe that everyone holds their own unique identity and values that reflect the person you are. You may agree or disagree with others but you need to feel strongly in what you believe in and get your point of view across to others.

Kelley's article also states some key findings about good followers. Apparently good followers see their co-workers as colleagues rather than competitors. Well this is obvious to me! Why would I treat fellow colleagues as a competitor when you have to work and socialize inside and outside of work? Yes there can be competition in work to determine bonuses and bragging rights but at the end of the day I wouldn't like to be working with competition, more my friends and colleagues. You are not following your colleagues, you are doing what is needed to be done to achieve wealth and personal satisfaction in one's life.

The above points can be explained with an example in discussing our team's strategy this week. I felt that my strategy was strong and I showed why I thought it was a good idea. While other team members agreed with my idea and wanted to follow on with that rather than starting what their strategy is and explaining why their option could be better, or how our strategies could bounce off one another's. I further explained to these team members that they need to describe their strategy to the rest of the group rather than picking only one as this is why we have teams because plenty of ideas are better than one.

To conclude I do not believe in the title "In Praise of Followers". However during my university degree it has come to my understanding that everyone holds different opinions and you should feel strong about them when reflecting to others. This learning journal completely changes my views in this week's reading where week one and two I agreed to what the authors were enhancing, and this week I feel the complete opposite.

Kelley, R. E. (1988). In praise of followers. *Harvard Business Review*, 66(6), 142 - 148