

Leadership Development 2

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Question #1: Using the ADF vision statement at www.adf.org/about/vision.html as a guide, how would you (as an ADF Priest) promote the growth and vision of ADF? (minimum 100 words)

In this paper Isaac hits on a number of points: excellence in scholarship, clergy training and practice; ADF becoming a mainstream religion with paid clergy, leading thousands of people in magico-religious workings for the good of the earth and mankind, and being public in all ways (Bonewits, The Vision of ADF).

His emphasis on clergy puts the onus on us to perform, to lead ADF in pursuit of this vision.

As a priest, it is my duty to continue my work with the clergy training program to help others achieve what I have done – to help train, teach and lead them. To this end I will continue to work towards the creation of an on-line program with one and two-week intensives held here at Trout Lake Abbey.

The public aspect of ADF is the part that many struggle with. It's one thing to hold public rituals that most non-Pagan people never hear about. It's another thing to practice interfaith work with other Pagans. And it's quite another to go out into the community and speak to Abrahamic religious groups about who and what we are. All of these things are necessary, and I am beginning to do just that. As a member of the board of Cherry Hill Seminary I have begun reaching out to non-ADF Pagans there and gaining their respect. I am also starting to do workshops at non-ADF festivals and events. And this spring I do my first talk to a Christian church.

But promotion of ADF has to continue within our own groups. While most of us in leadership may have a clear vision of what our religion is, it is clear to me that many of our members don't. Internal promotion and PR is also needed here. Outreach programs to our Groves, Protogroves and solitaries led by our clergy are something I am working towards. And I think that we clergy need to do more with podcasts and vidcasts – both of which I am exploring at the moment.

Question #2: Describe five techniques you can use in your own life to improve your management of time. (minimum 300 words)

The first technique I need to bring into my life is to evaluate my time so that I may accept or decline projects effectively. I want to serve, and I want to please, and as a result I tend to over commit to things. This comes directly from a hesitancy to delegate. There are just times that I think that no one can do something as well as I can. I am getting better about this, however. There is a cute story by Don Clark on the "Time Management and Leadership" page of the *Art and Science of Leadership* web site about filling a jar completely. The trainer begins with large rocks, then on to pebbles, sand, and finally, water. The truth here being that you've got to start with the big stuff first, and then you can work on including smaller items. But if you don't start with the big things, you'll never get them in at all. The way this will work with delegation is for me to come up with large projects, plans or ideas and then let someone else take the lead and run with it. I don't have to do all the detail work. And I have to avoid micromanaging these projects and let others get on with it.

While I already make checklists and to-do lists, they are not prioritized in order of importance. As a result I tend to procrastinate on doing anything about any of them. I have a list on a post-it note on my computer monitor that has been there for some time. It's full of important and not so important projects, but nothing is prioritized, and as a result, other things get in the way. It's another case of getting those big rocks in the jar first.

And to make prioritizing work, I might choose to schedule my time throughout the day. I find that I can get nothing done if I spend too much time doing e-mail and reading news on the web without any fixed end-time for those activities. Before I know it my morning is gone. Maximum time allotments for specific activities and projects are essential to getting things done.

I've had to run a number of telephone meetings for Cherry Hill Seminary and have learned a lot about keeping meetings focused and running on time. The "Time Management and Leadership" web page says that meetings must have a purpose, a time limit and include only essential people. Time must be given for people to express their opinions, but repetitive statements need to be minimized and the meeting kept focused. ADF has IRC chat meetings for the Board of Directors, and these can get out of hand (and I have been as guilty of this as anyone), even with a protocol about how to be recognized by the chair to get a turn to state an opinion. A firm hand is needed here.

Another very important technique for me is to schedule time for reflection. This doesn't mean TV or Internet time, but rather a time when I can sit down with a cup of tea and my thoughts, quietly reflecting on the projects and problems that I am facing at that time. Sometimes a thorny issue or problem will unravel easily if given the space to do so. I tend not to take much time for myself, and this can lead to inefficiency as well as burnout.

Question #3: Describe four ways to run an effective meeting. (minimum 50 words each)

1. Be Prepared

For a meeting to be effective, everyone going into it must know what they are doing there and why. There must be a purpose to the meeting, and all data that will be needed to make a decision needs to be brought there by whomever is responsible for it, even if that is only the meeting's chairperson. Also, a note-taker or secretary needs to be appointed in order to prepare minutes of the meeting for later action.

2. Make a Carefully Focused and Structured Agenda

The agenda needs to have clear start and stop times, in addition to the list of topics to be covered at the meeting. These topics also need to be listed with any sub-topics that might need to be covered, and in which order. The more concisely an agenda is written, the cleaner the meeting will be.

3. Ground Rules

In all meetings, but especially in on-line IRC or phone meetings, efficiency will increase if ground rules are established and agreed to concerning who gets to speak (or write) when. Also, methods for objections, agreements and voting will need to be created. In IRC type meetings it is also important that it is clear when someone recognized by the chairperson is completely finished so that the meeting can move on.

4. Encouraging Input

The point of a meeting is for people to come together and make decisions. This requires input from everyone, and the best way to do this is to ask open-ended questions that can spark

creativity. Different points of view need to be entertained and the focus of the meeting needs to be kept on ideas and not personalities (Clark, Meetings).

Question #4: Describe four barriers to running an effective meeting and discuss how you would overcome each barrier. (minimum 50 words each)

1. Boring and Unfocused Meetings

Boring and unfocused meetings are rarely productive and can create hostility between the people attending. A good way to focus a meeting is to have a good agenda and then send it out to everyone concerned for review and comment with the request that everyone come prepared with any data needed to make their points. Making each meeting a learning event of some kind, through the use of colorful presentations, interesting speakers, and books and videos, can prevent boredom.

2. Overly Long Meetings

When a meeting gets out of control, it can end up running very late, antagonizing everyone. Only by sticking to agreed upon rules for participation in the meeting, and by having a strong chairperson keep the meeting moving at a reasonable pace, can a meeting keep to its agreed length. This must be handled sensitively, though, since it's important for every participant to have their say, and there will be times that some digression might be helpful for creativity.

3. Allowing Individuals or Groups to Hijack the Meeting

There are times when one or more meeting participants will hijack a meeting, whether unintentionally or not. Some people really love to hear themselves speak, and other may be trying to bully others into agreeing to a particular position on an issue. This can be very dangerous for the health of a group. Focused ground rules about who has the right to speak and when can be helpful here, and the Native American talking stick method, where only the person holding the stick is allowed to speak, can also work.

4. Discussion of Personalities Instead of Ideas

I have been in meetings where friction between various attendees has become the focus of the meeting instead of the ideas themselves. Sometimes attacks on ideas were a way of attacking an individual. This can be hard to stop. Humor can be an effective way of derailing an emotional charge between people, and is a good way to start. However, there may be occasions when differences between people are more deep-seated and antagonistic.

When it is known beforehand that such attacks may be possible, a strong chairperson has to be able to lay out ground rules concerning this in advance, and then have the gumption to stop it in its tracks when it occurs. This will undoubtedly lead to rancor and infighting outside of the meeting, but it cannot be allowed to continue within it. Should the offending party refuse to stop, he or she might be ejected from the meeting. Another way of handling this is to announce beforehand that the meeting will be recorded, and attendance at the meeting will be a *de facto* acceptance of the recording taking place. Unpleasant people often behave better when there is a chance that others may find out about bad behavior. In extreme situations, a lawyer might need to be consulted.

Question #5: Define and describe the characteristics of the term "effective communication" and discuss at least three barriers to effective communication. (minimum 200 words)

Communication theory tells us that the exchange of ideas between two or more people, where the 'sender' give information that is understood by the 'receiver' in the way that the sender intended, is the most effective form of communication. There are two elements of effective communication that need to be addressed, and they are 'content' and 'context' (Clark, Communication and Leadership).

Content is the actual words or language that the sender is trying to get across to the receiver. Context is the paralanguage, or the way in which the content is sent. This is the non-verbal parts of speech, such as tone of voice, body language, the emotional attitude of the sender, etc. We tend to trust non-verbal communication more than verbal, since it looks so real (and words can lie). And since effective communication requires that the receiver get the information the way the sender meant it to be understood, feedback is required. Feedback is two-way communication that allows the sender to be sure that he or she has been understood. So effective communication needs to be an exchange of information.

Barriers to effective communication include perception, culture or background, and stress. Perception is all about how we view the other person. If they have a strong accent, speak too fast or don't seem credible we tend to dismiss them out of frustration or wariness. We also tend to accept what we hear from people we consider to have a higher status than ourselves and dismiss the words of people below us on the social/work ladder.

The culture or background of the people involved can also make a big difference in effective communication. We bring attitudes with us everywhere we go based on our life experiences. These include prejudices of race, gender and sexual orientation, either positive or negative, as well as past betrayals of trust (or lack of them). We approach the world based on our past experiences, and this can hinder communication.

Stress can also be a big factor. When we are stressed, we don't listen well. We may be preoccupied with our own problems and have trouble concentrating on the words being spoken to us. We also tend to see things differently when stressed than we would at other times. When stressed, we are influenced more by our past beliefs, experiences and goals and have more trouble being objective.

Question #6: Describe three avenues of communication that you have utilized to raise awareness about ADF in your community and name three more avenues that you may utilize in the future. (min. 300 words)

For the purposes of this essay I will include experiences in both Tucson and Trout Lake.

Three Avenues of Communication I Have Used

1. Working with Other Pagan Groups

When it came time to promote ADF and Sonoran Sunrise Grove (SSG) back in the early Oughts, we first joined the Tucson Area Wiccan/Pagan Network (TAWN), the local Pagan networking group. By attendance at meetings, speaking up and volunteering for things, we became better known among the local Pagans, from whom we hoped to draw membership. We even volunteered to do some of their 'open' rituals for them, which garnered respect. Over time, we also began teaching workshops for them and even ran the main ritual for a few years at their annual event, Fall Fest. There is nothing like that here in Trout Lake, but Portland is only two hours away and I could easily organize things for their Pagan Pride Day activities, assuming they don't keep the date on top of the ADF clergy retreat (the date is supposed to change from year to year). This would help both the Abbey and the new Coho Cloud Protogrove in Portland.

I have also begun to become involved in pan-Pagan groups, such as Cherry Hill Seminary, and attend and present at pan-Pagan festivals, such as Pantheacon and Starwood. This is a good way of 'showing the flag', as it were, and getting attention for ADF.

2. Use of ADF/SSG Websites

We have a listing for Sonoran Sunrise Grove on the ADF website, and this combined with our own website gave us much needed visibility. In time, any Google search using the keywords 'druid' and 'Tucson' would bring up the SSG website first. We also managed to get a listing on the TAWN website as well.

Announcements on the ADF Southwest Region list were tried, but found ineffective. Here in Trout Lake, though, my announcements of the ADF Northwest list have brought folks in from Vancouver, WA and Portland to my High Day rites. Eventually I will be creating a website for my seminary/monastery here at the Abbey which I hope to attract new people.

3. Newspaper Coverage

In Tucson it wasn't easy getting coverage in the local newspaper, but when we did get it we found that it could give us a 'bump' in our attendance. For the Summer Solstice one year the local paper did a special article entitled, "Partying With the Pagans" that saw our attendance at that rite jump from a normal 50+ folks to 110. Almost none of these people came back as they were really just religious 'tourists', but we sure did gain visibility in the community.

Three Avenues of Communication I May Try in the Future

1. Witchvox

I have long ignored the use of Witchvox because of the lack of response that we got from our local Wiccan community through our various outreach activities. But reports from other groves in ADF, while mixed, do indicate that in some areas the use of Witchvox can be quite effective. We are so spread out here in southern Washington/northern Oregon that this sort of outreach might actually work. This remains to be seen.

2. The Phone Book

While SSG did have a phone number (which went to a recording only), we never advertised in the phone book. However, here in Trout Lake, Kozen Sampson has been advertising his Mt. Adams Zen Center in the phone book, and a number of people have found him as a result. There is apparently some legitimacy that goes with being in the phone book.

3. Writing Books and for Pagan Journals

One thing I have noticed about ADF is the dearth of books out there by ADF authors. Skip Ellison, Ian Corrigan, Cei Serith and Three Cranes Grove/Michael Dangler are numbered among the few writers we have. Wicca has thousands of authors. Once I am finished with the Clergy Training Program and my Masters Degree, I intend to begin writing books for ADF Publishing, aimed at both a scholarly market and for newbies.

Another writing outlet may be Pagan journals. *The Pomegranate*, *The International Journal of Pagan Studies* is one real possibility, and I am told that there may be more out there. Writing for the few Pagan magazines left in circulation is another idea, as well as finally starting a blog of my own.

Question #7: Choose three of the following questions that you might be asked by the media or public and write a response that you might give. (minimum 100 words for each response)

a. *A reporter asks, "A member of your Grove has just been reported to have molested a number of children over the last three years. Does your organization condone this behavior and what steps is it taking to protect its members from this behavior?"*

"We were horrified to learn of this reported abuse. In no way does our Grove or ADF as a whole condone the molestation of children, rape, spousal rape, or any other kind of non-consensual sexual activity. We have no knowledge of any sexual misconduct. Proof of innocence or guilt is a matter of law. It is our policy to remove any individual from access to children in this situation until legal issues have been resolved.

It is our policy to protect the children in our Grove from such possible predation. One example is that there must always be at least two adults present at all times whenever there are children around. Also, our children are taught that should they ever feel threatened in any way at one of our events to immediately come to a Grove leader and let them know what is going on.

We pray that we may all heal and learn from this tragic situation."

f. *"I've heard that ADF members practice polyamory. Isn't that against the law?"*

"Do they? I suppose some of our members might practice polyamory, along with lots of other people, and it certainly is not illegal. Do you know what polyamory is? You may be thinking of polygamy, which is illegal. Polyamory is when three or more people all decide to love each other as a group – no single couple relationship can be more important than any other. And from what I understand, this is a difficult feat to pull off for long. But it isn't illegal – the government isn't allowed to legislate against the sexual practices of consenting adults anymore. Polygamy, however, is another thing altogether. Polygamy is when a person legally marries more than one person. Here a governmentally approved contract, the marriage contract, is being violated, and the government believes it has every right to intervene."

g. *"Is ADF a cult or a religion?"*

"ADF is a religion. A cult is a very different thing. There's an excellent Cult Danger Evaluation grid at <http://www.neopagan.net/ABCDEF.html> that has been used by the FBI and even the government of South Africa that illustrates this (Bonewits, The Advanced Bonewits Cult Danger Evaluation Frame).

A religion is a group of people who share similar beliefs and practices concerning spirituality. Now, differing religions vary widely on what they believe and how they practice, but cults go to extremes. With cults, there is a high level of control of the laity by the leaders. Their word is unquestioned, and their religious dictates infallible. These groups often demand large amounts of money from their members, and may control their love and sexual lives. They require their adherents to surrender their will to the leaders, and quitting the cult is not allowed. Members can become isolated from friends and family who are not cult members and the groups tend to be marked with paranoia.

ADF, on the other hand, does none of these things. We stay together in our faith because we want to, and the most anyone has to pay is \$25 a year (and Compassionate Memberships are free). None of our leaders are considered infallible (anything but!), and we believe that people's love and sexual lives are their own business. We have quite lively debates all the time (there is a reason the collective noun for us is a "disputation" of druids) and folks come and go at will. We're a lively and happy bunch overall."

Works Cited

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