

A young man's Crucible Experience

L200, Crucible Essay

Mr. Ernesto Pizarro Jr.

2/11/2010

L200 Crucible Essay

This essay is the crucible of my experience and its influence on my leadership style, philosophy, and beliefs.

As a young man growing up in the Bronx, a borough of New York City, maturity came at a fast pace. For example, I never experienced what it was like having an over protective mother that watched my every move. Also, my mornings and afternoons felt lonesome with no one to see me off or monitor my return from school. Furthermore, I missed having someone there to sit and help me with my homework when the problems were difficult to understand. None of these things were possible during my youth, as necessity over shadowed the parental bond. My adolescent years further propelled my maturity and a yearning for a better life. Although the lure of the city streets offered many an opportunity for a young entrepreneur, I wanted more. Inspired to avoid being a statistic and nearing the crest of my youth in the Bronx, I enlisted in the Army hoping for a chance at a better life. My experience during my youth set the stage for my leadership style, initial philosophy, and initial beliefs of self-reliance.

My arrival at Fort McClellan automatically activated my harden persona that only relaxed while alone behind closed doors. I felt this approach was necessary due to my height and weight limitation. In addition, I assumed a hardened approach made me less of a target from others who may view me as vulnerable due to my size. Although I was out of my element, I could not let my physical limitations obscure my over arching goal of a different life. That evening, we arrived at our barracks that consisted of open bay sleeping quarters.

While in the barracks, a well-built Samoan used a technique to clear the open bay path. He would run up and down the bay causing all in his path to clear the way. When I saw his behavior for the first time, I had to make it known that his conduct would not work with me because I

viewed his actions as a form of control and superiority. Therefore, my street experience immediately manifested itself requiring me to take action.

As the Samoan ran up the bay, I stepped out in his path to confront his charge. I held my ground and gave good resistance. From that moment on, we became friends because he was surprised that his show of strength intimidated all, but the smallest person in the bay. It also emphasized my initial philosophy that when faced with adversity I must continue to believe in myself and avoid any intimidations. The incident was also instrumental in shaping my leadership style and emphasized that to establish and maintain an acceptable climate leaders must confront adversity. In retrospect, there may have been a less painful option such as conversing with the Samoan to understand the root cause of his action and together develop an acceptable avenue of approach.

This crucible has helped me understand the correlation between my youth, Fort McClellan, and their influence on my leadership philosophy, style, and beliefs. For example, I have learned that I must lead by example to gain the trust and respect of others. Also, I cannot give up because of my limitations. In addition, I must confront adversity head on and with confidence. I must also create an environment that offers the same abilities to my subordinates. Furthermore, I believe a person can accomplish anything they set their mind to and overcome any obstacles. Moreover, I have learned that if I do not believe in myself I cannot expect others to take me seriously. These beliefs and philosophy have remained integral at all my assignments and levels of leadership.

In addition, I believe when you lead by example you gain the trust of your subordinates thereby, facilitating a cohesive team. Leading by example accentuates the fact that you will not put anyone in a situation you would not confront yourself. Furthermore, I believe to grow as a leader I could not let my limitation be a distraction or deterrent. I also knew I had to

acknowledge, confront, and overcome my limitations to succeed. I have maintained this belief throughout my leadership assignments and they are the reasons why I accentuate the positive aspects mentor my subordinates to assist in resolving the negative. Moreover, I believe that I can accomplish anything I set my mind to. I carry these beliefs wherever I go and express my views, philosophy, and beliefs to those less confident to assist them in achieving and excelling beyond their perceived limitations.

This crucible helped me realize how my experiences during my youth and in Fort McClellan affected me as an organizational leader. I believe that all members of an organization are instrumental to its success and provide value. I also believe leaders must challenge their subordinate, peers, and superiors to empower them outside of their confront zone as individuals, teams, and groups to enhance the overall organization. In addition, organizations need leaders that can create a climate that is conducive to openness and free from retaliation. Leaders must also be able to recognize the eight psychological indicators that affect the way leaders make decisions. In addition, I must be cognizant of the traps that can bias my views or actions. I then need to set conditions that will help me monitor the established indicators to ensure I am able to make sound, reliable, and unbiased decisions.

Furthermore, as a leader I must set a climate where all members of the organization receive respected without restriction or limitations. These aspects will help establish a healthy climate where individuals feel as part of the solution and that their contributions hold the same weight as a senior leader. This type of climate in turn will lead to a positive and productive environment that will ultimately change the organizational culture. It will also create ambassadors that will carry their experience onward to future assignments. Moreover, the implementation of a healthy climate can grow to a change in the organizational culture and therefore will then make for a learning organization. An organization where its members feels free to express their ideas,

receive serious consideration and credit, and are given the opportunity to implement their ideas to assist in achieving the goals of the organization as a whole.

This crucible experience also reflects on my leadership development as it outlines that my act of self-perseverance not only affected the respect I gained at Fort McClellan. It also brought us closer as a bay initially with me as the glue and eventually with us as a team. The phrase big things come in small packages is a paradigm I believe to be true as it took a small man with a big heart to overcome adversity. In addition, I also believe in the paradigm that one person can change an organization. What's more, now I understand why I champion others especially the underdog when it comes to expressing a view, idea, or comment.

This crucible not only allowed me to reflect on a significant experience that I had forgotten. It also helped me understand the reason for my actions. For this reason, I believe individuals should take the time to reflect and take self-assessments. This will help them become a better leader and help their subordinates understand the reason for their leader's actions, which will help build respect. I also believe that my crucible benefits me at the organizational level because at Fort McClellan I was a peer. My action influenced the relationship within the bay inhabitants and brought us closer as a team. Therefore, my basic training experience saddled me with the tools to succeed at the organizational level as I learned how leading by example could affect the organizational climate and help fosters commitment. For these reasons, my crucible experience enhanced my personal leadership style, philosophy, and beliefs.

In conclusion, this crucible essay on my experience and its influence on my personal leadership style, philosophy, and beliefs depict what started as a path for a better life also made me a better leader. Also, the moral courage I displayed during basic training remains in the forefront of my mind and influences all my decisions. In addition, I had an early introduction to leadership that I never consciously thought about yet remains with me to this day.

This crucible has assisted me in understanding the affects that my experience as a youth and subsequent experience at Fort McClellan had in shaping my current leadership style, philosophy, and beliefs. For example, my willingness to step out in the path of the Samoan and confront his charge was crucial to bridging the gap between the Samoan and the remainder of the bay inhabitants. By reflecting on my crucible has brought clarity to decisions I have made as a leader. For example, my rapid maturity in New York and harden resolve accelerate the development of my confidence in my ability and myself. In addition, the void I felt from the absence of a parental bond pushed me to strive for superiority in my scholastic education to gain attention. Together, my confidence, ability, and superiority helped me establish and exhibit the tough image necessary to over shadow my physical limitations in Fort McClellan. Also, my action at Fort McClellan was crucial to bridging the gap between the Samoan and the remainder of the bay inhabitant team.