



studentlinc

Core Leadership Training

30 Student Leadership Lessons Designed To Navigate
The Six Seasons Of The Student Leader Year

Tim Milburn

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Introduction

Congratulations! You've been elected or selected to serve in a student leadership position. You've now got one year. Are you ready to make the most of your time?

Let's fast forward to the end of your student leadership year. Imagine you are standing on a stage in front of your fellow students. You've come to the end of your time as a student leader. You are about to share with them all that has taken place throughout the year. As you step to the microphone, what do you want to be saying? What do you want people to be thinking and saying about you and your leadership? What will you be remembered for?

At the beginning of most years, my student leaders energetically tell me they want to make it the BEST year ever. They will even thump themselves on the chest a little and state, "This is OUR year!"

I love that goal. I want them to accomplish it. So I break it down for them a little bit. I tell them the best YEAR ever is the accumulation of the best MONTHS ever. The best months ever are the accumulation of the best WEEKS ever. The best weeks ever are the accumulation of the best DAYS ever (do you see where this is going?). And finally, the best days ever are the accumulation of the best MOMENTS.

These moments you are in student leadership will be filled with choices that YOU get to make. Choices that count toward what kind of year you will have. You'll have moments where you can decide to serve others or serve yourself. You'll make decisions that affect things positively and negatively. There are always lots of ideas to consider, but you will have to choose which ones get implemented and which ones get shelved. Within each moment you will have the capacity to make things a little better or a little worse. The best year ever is only possible as you successfully navigate through the moments each season brings. The time will go by so fast.

Growing up I was heavily involved as a student leader. Since my college years I've worked with and advised thousands of student leaders. Some are more memorable than others. The most effective ones are able to make the most of each moment. They knew what they're capable of. They work hard to develop their own leadership skills and do what they can to be part of something meaningful for others.

For some a year is not enough time. For others, it seems like an eternity. Think about what you were like a year ago. Are there any changes in how you look and how you think? The changes didn't happen suddenly, but over a period of time. Most people tend to overestimate what can be accomplished in a day, but underestimate what can be done in a year.

A lot can happen in a year. As a student leader, you have a certain and set period of time allotted to you. You will hold your position for one year. At the end of that time you will move on to something else. It may be another student leadership position or something all together different. But you've got this year. When you look back at this one year, what kind of difference do you want to make?

Many students enter into student leadership unclear on what to expect. Perhaps you feel like many of my student leaders do:

- You saw someone else serve in a student leadership position and thought, "I could do that." Now it's your turn.
- You have a pretty good idea on what you need to do, you're just not sure how to lead anyone.
- You have some idea of what to expect from the position, but you're not sure what the position expects from you.
- You want this to be the best year ever but you have no idea what that really means or how to accomplish it.

That's why it is so important for you as a student leader to understand the six different seasons that make up a student leader year. They serve as a roadmap to guide you through the ups and downs you'll encounter.

Imagine you step to the starting line of a 100 meter dash in a race against your school's fastest runner. As you stand there, you realize that you possess no chance of winning this race. But what if we changed the parameters a little bit? What if we left the fastest runner at the starting line and moved you fifty meters closer to the finish. What are your chances now?

I've created these lessons to give you that kind of head start. Since most student leaders won't know what their student leadership year will look like until they reach the end of it, I want to let you in on a secret: The most successful student leaders aren't always the most talented, the most charismatic, and (believe it or not) the most popular. They are the ones who can lead others in the moment while anticipating what lies ahead. These lessons will show you what you can look forward to and what you should look out for.

I like to think of the student leadership year as a laboratory. You are a *student* leader. This means that you are learning about leadership. You get to try some things, accomplish some things, and lead others throughout the process.

Not everything you do will be successful, yet you'll learn the most from your mistakes. Not everything you attempt will be liked by others, but you don't know until you try. Not everything you set out to accomplish will get done, but you will discover that excellence in a few things is better than mediocrity in many things. Not everyone you strive to lead will follow your leadership, but that will help you understand how to best lead others in the future. The laboratory is open the day you step foot into leadership.

The worse thing that can happen to a student leader is not failure. It's not making a mistake (I wholeheartedly encourage those). It's walking away from your experience with regret. Hyrum Smith, Co-Founder and Chairman of the Board of Franklin-Covey said, "Life's too short to choose any path that ends in regret."

I watch student leaders come to the end of their year frustrated by the unaccomplished hopes, ideas and goals they leave behind. Their desire to be part of the best year ever faded and they're just making it through another year. They say things like,

- * "I wish I had stuck with it through the tough times."
- * "I wish I had done things differently."
- * "I don't feel like I was much of a leader."
- * "I didn't create the kind of team I needed to be successful."
- * "I didn't have any fun."

Let's go back to the scene where you're standing in front of your fellow students. The way I picture it, you begin to share about the lessons you learned together. You talk about some of the new things you tried, laughing at the stories of failed attempts and glorious successes. You share the credit with others for the accomplishments of the year, both big and small. I can see you telling them about a bright future because there are new student leaders ready to step up and step in.

Finally, you move closer to the microphone. With confidence and a sparkle in your eye you boldly proclaim, "My friends, this has truly been the best year ever!"

That's my hope for you. Are you ready to make that happen?

Let's get started.



Overview

There are seasons in a student leadership year. They flow from one into the other. Sometimes they are more intense and dramatic, other times they seem to come and go without much notice. There may be some overlapping and even some signs of moving back into a previous season. They express the flow of each year. I've noticed that each student leader experiences these seasons at different levels and intensities. Some feel them more than others because of their own temperament, personality, and leadership situation.

For the most part, these seasons happen in the order I list them here. There is movement in a student leader year with high points and low points. That's why it's important for you to get a sense of the "big picture." If you understand ahead of time when and where the seasons (both good and bad) might be, you'll be better prepared to handle them when they come.

The Six Seasons

THE SEASON OF ANTICIPATION

This is the season of looking ahead. Deciding to apply, planning a campaign, looking ahead to what you will attempt to change, maintain, and accomplish throughout the upcoming year.

THE SEASON OF IMPLEMENTATION

This is the season of moving into action. All of your plans and dreams are put into motion. It's go time. You quickly find that you're knee-deep in your position, putting your strengths to work, building relationships, and having fun.

THE SEASON OF FLUCTUATION

This is the season of overcoming obstacles. You discover things don't always go as planned, conflicts arise, certain realities begin to push aside any idealism you had about the position. You find your early momentum is starting to fade.

THE SEASON OF EVALUATION

This is the season of the gut check. You realize many of the ideas and plans you had for this year might not happen. You have to take a realistic look at where you and your team are at. You take some time to reflect and figure out what's most important. The first half of the year is over and you make some decisions about how you will finish during the time you have left.

THE SEASON OF DETERMINATION

This is the season of staying the course. You'll come to a cross-roads - to persevere or to walkaway (before you're done - before the year is over). It is during this season you recognize there is still work left to be done, that you will keep your commitment to see things through. If you stick with it, you'll discover a whole new level of leadership.

THE SEASON OF SEPARATION

This is the season of letting go. Every student leader leaves, the question is: when will you leave? You see your student leadership year through to the end and leave a lasting legacy that other student leaders can build on. You take the time to prepare the next generation of student leaders to be successful in the next chapter of your organization's story.

The Student Leader Backpack

The Student Leadership Backpack (SLB) contains the core skills that you'll need to be successful throughout your student leadership year. Each of these five core leadership characteristics can be learned and developed.

Lead yourself first: the student leader's hardest task

Leaders start with themselves. Character, self-discipline, and personal organization skills determine what kind of leader a person will be. Leaders must serve as an example to those who put their trust and loyalty in them. Leadership starts off as an inside job.

Develop influence with others: the student leader's biggest asset

Influence allows a leader to lead. A leader knows how to move people in a certain direction through mission, vision, and values.

Make a difference mindset: the student leader's noblest cause

The leader understands there is a space between a person's need in the present moment and their ideal future. Stepping into this space gives a leader an opportunity to make the difference by meeting needs, solving problems, and creating a better future.

Clear communication: the student leader's strongest skill

The ability to communicate is often overlooked in leadership. But clear communication is what motivates and moves people. A leader must be able to keep people informed and focused on what's most important for the organization. A successful leader will provide clarity and not confusion.

Get others involved: the student leader's highest investment

A student who does everything alone is not a student leader but a student worker. While we need workers, a leader finds opportunities to get other people moving in a common direction. A leader works closely with people, equipping and guiding them in accomplishing a task, project together.

T H E S I X S E A S O N S O F T H E
ANTICIPATION IMPLEMENTATION FLUCTUATION

C O R E L E A D E R S H I P S K I L L S	LEAD YOURSELF FIRST	<p>CHARACTER Develop tools to remain authentic</p>	<p>PERSONAL MANAGEMENT Organize your time/develop systems</p>	<p>BALANCE Keep emotions in check / focus on big picture</p>
	INFLUENCING OTHERS	<p>VISION Looking into the future / begin with end in mind</p>	<p>EQUIPPING Giving tools and training to be successful</p>	<p>VALUES Align the vision with what's most important</p>
	MAKE A DIFFERENCE MINDSET	<p>PAY ATTENTION Invite feedback, suggestions about needs</p>	<p>PREPARATION Identify needs to address and assess resources</p>	<p>PROBLEM SOLVING Overcome obstacles and crisis</p>
	COMMUNICATE CLEARLY	<p>EXPECTATIONS Establish communication channels /guidelines</p>	<p>EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION Communicate well</p>	<p>RELATIONAL COMMUNICATION Learn to connect with people</p>
	GETTING OTHERS INVOLVED	<p>RECRUITMENT Use excitement to sign people up / build your team</p>	<p>DELEGATION Assign tasks to others</p>	<p>ACCOUNTABILITY Follow up on delegated tasks and assignments</p>

When the Six Seasons of the Student Leader Year are combined with The Student Leader's Backpack they form the Six Seasons Training Model matrix. Within the matrix are 30 leadership modules that teach a specific core leadership skill as it relates to a specific season of the year.

S T U D E N T L E A D E R S H I P Y E A R

EVALUATION

DETERMINATION

SEPARATION

PRIORITIES

Revisit your purpose and establish what's important

SELF-DISCIPLINE

Do the right things and persevere

FINISH STRONG

End well/ No regrets

MOMENTUM

Finding out what works and building upon it

EXCELLENCE

Do your best and then some

LEGACY

What you leave behind when you leave

LEADING CHANGE

Decide what needs to change to make things better

PAYING THE PRICE

Persevering / sacrificing to achieve success

CELEBRATION

Recognize and congratulate success

LISTENING

The better half of communication

MOTIVATION

Tying organizational goals to personal aspirations

EXPERIENCE

Pass on key info to next generation

FOCUS ON STRENGTHS

Review your performance and talents/abilities

TEAMWORK

Teamwork makes the dream work

POTENTIAL LEADERS

Raise up the next generation of leaders

There are a variety of ways to work through this training.

A. Individual leadership modules. - Focus on the one leadership skill you need to work on the most.

B. Six Seasons Track - Follow the student leadership year and work through each season as they occur. RECOMMENDED!

C. Core Leadership Skills Track - Work across through each of the five core student leadership skills.

“The journey is better than the inn.”

- Cervantes

The Season of *Anticipation*



The season of looking ahead.

Deciding to apply,
planning a campaign,
looking ahead to what you will attempt to change,
maintain, and accomplish
throughout the upcoming year.

1

A student leader
feels...

- » Excitement
- » Highly Motivated
- » Hopeful
- » Idealistic
- » Confident

Characteristics of the Anticipation Season

- » A high level of energy and optimism for the student leader position.
- » A vision for the possibilities the student leader position holds.
- » An excitement to work with the other student leaders during the upcoming year.
- » A realigning of priorities to include time and resource for the student leader position.
- » A varying level of wariness over your ability to fulfill the duties of the student leadership position.
- » You begin to learn, train, and get better equipped to succeed in the position.
- » New friendships are formed as student leadership teams are assigned and begin working together.
- » Greater confidence in team's abilities and outlook toward the future.

An effective student leader focuses on...

- » Developing relationships.
- » Becoming familiar with current systems, structures, and chain of command.
- » Training and gathering resources
- » Planning
- » Forming a vision



Character

If everything rises and falls on leadership, then let's take it a step deeper: everything in leadership rises and falls on the leader's character. Character is the foundation of successful leadership.

Every issue you encounter, every difficulty you must overcome, every relationship you build will be impacted by your character and the character of others. **You cannot ignore your character.** There will be moments when you are tempted to sweep the issue of character under the rug. You'll feel the pressure and argue what matters most is actions and results. But even actions and results are influenced and effected by your character.

As a student leader, what you accomplish is important. How you go about accomplishing it is equally - if not more - important. The term, *student leader*, hints that you have youth on your side. Thus, you're probably in the early stages of character development. The question is, how are you doing at developing your character?

Your character is formed and shaped through the accumulation of choices you make. These choices create the moral and ethical measurement people use to determine if you are a person of good or bad character.

"Character is what you are in the dark."

Author Unknown

*“What lies behind us
and what lies before
us are small matters
compared to what
lies within us.”*

**Ralph Waldo
Emerson**

American Essayist,
Philosopher
and Poet
(1803-1882)

You get to make choices everyday. The choices you make today will have an influence on your character (and people's perceptions of your character) for years to come. Your character will define the type of student leader that you are becoming.

Each of the following points offers a way for you to build a strong, personal foundation of good character as a student leader.

Live by the same standards that you hold others to.

Many aspire to leadership positions because they believe it gives them the right to live "above the law." That's a myth. As your involvement in leadership increases, you are typically held to a higher standard. Don't think for a moment you can get away with certain indiscretions because you are in a position of authority and responsibility. If anything, you need to live and lead in such a way that you don't even have the appearance of wrongdoing.

Be the same person in public that you are in private.

Leaders are often tempted to put on a public "face" - to appear a certain way to their followers that's different than who they really are. This is called being "two-faced." The best way to overcome this temptation is by being authentic. **People want a leader who is REAL** - one who is consistent in both public and private settings. Be willing to admit when you're wrong or made a mistake. Let your people see and share in some of the struggles that you face as a leader. They will be able to relate to you as a person and you can model what it looks like to work through difficulties with integrity.

Your words and actions need to agree.

People in leadership will often joke, "Do as I say, not as I do." If you instruct your followers to do their work with excellence, to be honest, to live in loyalty to the vision and cause of the organization, you must be willing to model that for them in your own life.

A sermon is most effective when it's displayed in the life of the one giving it.

Don't shy away from hard work.

Leaders must be willing to get their hands dirty. Hard work, especially the sweat-blisters-manual-labor kind, shows that you are not "above" the most menial tasks. Hard work is an opportunity to get in and get it done with those whom you lead and work with. It will inspire others to work hard. It lets people know that you will do what everyone else needs to do to accomplish the group's goals.

Keep your promise.

Being trustworthy is a key component of good character. If you make a promise to someone - keep it, fulfill it, and follow through on it. **Don't make a promise in the moment that can't be fulfilled in the future.** It would be better to not have promised anything in the first place. Trust can be broken in an instant. When trust is damaged, it can take a long time to build it back up.

Associate with others of high character.

If you stick a poker into a blazing fire the poker will become red hot. The same is true when it comes to those a student leader associates with. If you spend time with people of high character, you'll be more apt to develop your own character in positive directions. Plus, the character of those you associate with will reflect on your own character. In your leadership, you will only be as strong as those who are closest to you - who form your inner circle. If they are people of questionable character, it will bring your own character into question. People really do believe that "birds of a feather flock together."

Follow through on responsibilities.

Whether you were elected or selected for a student leader position, people gave you their trust, believing you would do the job well. Make sure you always gives your best. It is not your job to do everything by yourself (otherwise you wouldn't be a student leader), but the responsibility of getting things done lies with you. You must inspire and expect follow-through in those you lead. **Each day is an opportunity to be excellent.**

Journal Question

Imagine that someone is observing your life - following you around. What would that person say about your character? What advice might they give you?

Don't participate in behavior that puts the rest of your team in jeopardy.

Your actions have an effect on everyone around you. Nothing happens in complete isolation. Members of a team understand that "my" actions effect "us." When you act in a way that undermines your character, it negatively impacts the credibility of the team. This is not only important for you to remember, but it's equally vital that every person on the team understands this.

Maintain your integrity and maturity in difficult situations.

Difficult situations are character building moments. Your character will be tested when things get rough. If you can handle small situations with integrity and maturity, you will be much more prepared during larger periods of crisis. It's easy to make the right decisions and act appropriately when everything is going well. But things will not always go as planned. **The kind of character you possess will show itself by the way you respond to and handle difficulties.** That's when people will see what you're really made of.

Choose to put the needs of others before your own needs.

Good, strong character allows you to be secure enough to put your own needs aside and help others in need. You don't have to always be first. In fact, find ways to let others go ahead, get the praise, or reap the reward. **Your reward is found in helping other people be successful.** If you try to make your opportunity to lead others all about yourself, then you'll quickly find you're the only one who wants to be around you.

"Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired, and success achieved."

Helen Keller
American Social
Activist, Public
Speaker and Author
(1880-1968)

Case Study

John is a student leader who is working at the table selling passes for the upcoming year's activities. At the end of the day, the receipts are counted and something doesn't add up. It appears there is exactly \$200 missing. When the other student leaders question John, he claims he has no idea where the missing money is. The leadership team huddles up to discuss the situation. At this point they want to take John at his word. Unfortunately, John had promised to lead the clean up crew at the end of their last event two days ago. But everything was left out and the place was a mess. John had also failed to follow through on a couple of other responsibilities that were his.

Questions:

- + How can John get his team to believe he didn't take the money?

- + How do the events from John's past effect the group's feelings in this situation?

- + What would you do to prove your innocence if you were John?

- + What can the team do if they have serious doubts about John's involvement in the lost money?

- + How does John's character effect the rest of the leadership team?

“Character is simply habit long continued.”

Plutarch

Greek Biographer
(47-120 A.D.)

Seven Steps

Practical Ways To Take Action Immediately

1. List out the type of character attributes you think people would use to describe you. Ask the members of your team what they think and compare the lists.
2. Write down the promises you are working to keep. It's often easy to make a promise. What's difficult is learning to manage and keep a promise.
3. Character is made in the small moments of our lives. Think of some strategies to maintain good character in those small moments.
4. Analyze the shortcuts you are trying to take in your life and leadership. Determine their effect on your character.
5. Take time to reflect on each decision by asking yourself, "Is this decision or action building or tearing down my character?"
6. Identify one person whom you believe exhibits good character and interview that person about their own thinking and strategies.
7. Write a description of what you believe a person of good character looks like.

"Watch your thoughts, for they become words. Watch your words, for they become actions. Watch your actions, for they become habits. Watch your habits, for they become character. Watch your character, for it becomes your destiny."

Author Unknown

My first action step will be: *(include a date or deadline)*



About Tim Milburn

Tim Milburn is the founder, author, and designer of studentlinc. He discovered his love for student leadership in the second grade when he was selected to be the “eraser” monitor (this was the person that got to go outside and bang the erasers together to get the chalk out...the person always came back in a little pale). From that moment, he always got excited about leaders and leading.

After spending over thirteen years developing student leaders as a youth pastor, he now serves as the Director of Campus Life on a University campus. Each new year is an opportunity to share many of the lessons he’s learned and taught thousands of student leaders.

Besides writing and developing resources that benefit student leaders, Tim speaks to hundreds of students on an annual basis. He offers a variety of training presentations to both High School and College leadership groups. More information about how to partner with Tim in equipping your student leaders can be found at www.studentlinc.net.

Tim currently lives in Eagle, Idaho with his wife and four children. To connect with Tim on Facebook or Twitter, visit www.timmilburn.com.



LEADERS ARE LEARNERS.

That's why there are so many resources that address leadership issues for the budding entrepreneur, the business leader, even the person who desires to simply lead him or herself. **studentlinc** was created to specifically address the issues and the circumstances faced by student leaders - those young people who are engaged in the leadership laboratory within their school, youth group, civic organization, etc. **studentlinc** is dedicated to equipping a generation of student leaders who are poised to change the face of their culture and campus.

The best leaders are students - always learning...always growing. In fact, **studentlinc** recognizes that there isn't much difference between leaders who strive to be the best students and students who are striving to be the best leaders. There's a lot to learn when one is leading others.

For more information about studentlinc, please visit the website at

www.studentlinc.net

There you'll find

- organized links to specific articles
- downloadable tools that are reproducible for immediate use
- practical Ebooks that will help student leaders make the most of their experience
- opportunities to bring real, hands-on training to your group of student leaders

You can contact studentlinc by email: studentlinc@gmail.com.