Case Notes

# Chapter 2: Recognizing Your Traits

# Case 2.1: An Emerging Leader

## Case Summary

The life story of “Tim T.” is presented in this case study as an example of an individual who possesses innate charisma and dynamic values. Tim has confidence in his abilities, considerable sociability, and apparent integrity. Tim has a myriad of experiences thus far in his career, participating in an after-school program focused on building elementary school children’s self-esteem, working at a bank part-time while in college, and managing a private, nonprofit, inner-city agency for youth development, education, healthy living, and leadership.

Through different leadership training experiences, Tim would eventually leave his community center position for a different leadership experience, this time working as an associate vice president for a regional agency focused on economic growth and job creation. The consistent message across all of Tim’s experiences is that he is an individual that wants to empower others to better themselves and their lives.

Case Analysis

This case integrates all six of the key specific leadership traits into the life of one person. Tim displays characteristics of *intelligence,* *confidence,* *charisma,* *determination,* *sociability,* and *integrity*. **Intelligence** is demonstrated through Tim’s collegiate experience at both the graduate level and in additional trainings. **Confidence** is displayed by Tim’s desire to lead a purpose-driven life in his work. Tim displays **charismatic** traits in his interactions with others and also in his ability to use the power of persuasion to help others find ways to empower themselves. It could be argued that Tim is **determined**, as he has transitioned in multiple leadership roles, all of which allow him to continue acting on his innate and ingrained abilities. Tim has demonstrated **sociable** characteristics since his early childhood, which has continued throughout his adulthood. Finally, Tim displays high levels of **integrity** through the values that were instilled by him from his adoptive family, which he still embraces to this day.

Readers of this case should focus on any and all of the six specific leadership traits as defined by our text. Readers could also call upon some of the other traits such as achievement, persistence, insight, initiative, self-confidence, responsibility, cooperativeness, tolerance, influence, sociability, drive, motivation, integrity, confidence, cognitive ability, task knowledge, extroversion, conscientiousness, and openness (Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Stogdill, 1974) to answer their questions.

## Sample Answers to Case Questions

*1. What is your reaction to Tim’s story?*

Tim appears to display leadership traits representative of an effective leader. Tim has transitioned through many industries and assumed leadership roles in all of them. He displays confidence in his abilities and a natural desire to help others. Tim believes in the empowerment of others through motivation and dedication.

*2. Nature and nurture play a significant role in Tim’s leadership journey. From your perspective, which has the greatest impact on Tim? Discuss your answer.*

Under the trait theory of leadership, Tim’s nature would have had the strongest impact on his development. Tim displays innate abilities including extroversion, charisma, and sociability. According to Tim, he didn’t develop these abilities, he was born with them.

*3. Of the six major traits described in the chapter (i.e., intelligence, confidence, charisma, determination, sociability, and integrity), which traits are Tim’s strongest, and which traits are his weakest?*

The case narrative directly addresses Tim’s integrity, sociability, confidence, and determination. Examples are provided which students could pull from that target each of these leadership traits. It is also assumed in the context of the case that Tim exhibits strong charisma, as he could serve as a strong role model for others, and articulates strong values. Intelligence is not explicitly addressed in the case, although it is noted that Tim has earned his master’s degree. It could be argued, however, that Tim’s lack of perceptual skills at his executive director position at Douglass Community Association caused him not to understand the internal human resources aspect of his position.

*4. What characteristics of Tim’s leadership would you like to incorporate into your own style of leadership?*

This answer will vary from student-to-student. A possible response would be that a student would want to have Tim’s self-esteem and determination to accomplish everything they set their mind to. Another possible response would be that students would want to have Tim’s charismatic approach to leadership. Students may also consider Tim’s integrity and altruism as appropriate characteristics to incorporate into their leadership style.