

# Youth Leadership

*In Conflict Resolution, Peace Building and Governance*



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War is a very bad proposition. Its disadvantages are endless. Individuals who were semi-prosperous and have now struck the poverty level would sum it up by blaming their fall on the war. That alibi and sense of not trying hard has seemed into a vital age group. People say a tree starts getting rotten from its roots. Our tree, our nation, has become "rotten". So what has become of the core of our society, which is no doubt, the young person?

Being a youth myself, I can say we have a particular mindset that is difficult to be altered. Therefore, if a youth thinks he can pass his time by doing pranks of people, it would take a Herculean effort to get him to desist from doing that. Consequently, the war has brought about a mindset of violence that needs to be changed. People talk about youths being future leaders and I agree with that and noting more. Our elders are doing good job by keeping themselves in power. They know that young people are incapable of leadership, only a few. But most bright prospects need thorough nurturing before being given an opportunity.

In spite of all these challenges, young people have the ability to influence positive change in our society and beyond. There is a considerable position of our youth that, given an opportunity, can do something positive. Unfortunately, a larger percentage gives youth an overall label, which adults are simply intolerant to. That is a big problem that needs to be addressed.

People, especially youths, think that that what their brawn can take them through, their brain can't. That in my opinion is a colossal factor in violence among youths. As to what this type of violence achieves, I am at a loss. It is becoming so common that it is getting frightening for our society. Peer pressure is an Omni-present setback, but a strong-willed person would hold on to his/her good attributes.

People have mixed feelings about our justice system. I think it is dysfunctional, and if someone is caught visiting someone's house and is turned over to the police and apprehended, he will not be tried and sent to jail for a particular period of time as recommended by our Constitution. He would stay there and give the justice administrator a bribe.

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So I would think that people are venting reasonable frustration on wrongdoers. That will continue until the lawmakers start abiding by the constitution with a rigid hand.

This mob justice is somewhat alarming, though; People used to mob justice might find it difficult to deter that mind set if and when proper justice is administered. They might also use violence to solve everyday conflict. A typical scene in Monrovia: Two friends playing a board game. One asks the other a conversation engaging question, "Did you watch the game last night?", and they become seasoned into conversation. Apparently, they support rival teams. But like a chemical reaction. Clam conversations converts into heated discussion, which leads to a hurling of personal abuses, usually ending in a fight. These days, youths lack reflexive conflict resolution skills.

In conflict resolution, the mishaps are always identifiable. They are also the first things that need to be identified in resolving a conflict. You cannot resolve a conflict without knowing each side's problems. Sometimes, there is no clarity as to what is being argued about, but people still go on arguing. Identifying the feelings of that conflict and the impact of these problems which are influencing the conflict and the other guidelines come easily, like whether or not the conflict should be resolved. These pointers can be easily used as anti-dotes of any conflict.

It is often said that the Kpelle ethnic group of Liberia lack common sense. This is only one of many stereotypes that Liberians live by. And more often than not, they are incorrect. Take for example, the Kpelle. All my experiences with that ethnic group have shown that people take their humility for stupidity; the banning of these infamous theories is an integral part of peace building. There is a need for multi-cultural groups and promote to promotes their inter-ethnic stability.

These standardized mental pictures can prove to be very detrimental. People need to understand themselves before creating such negative uncritical judgments. This has been the underlying problem in many countries' conflicts and abnormal peace building. South Africa's apartheid, Rwanda's genocide between their two main ethnic groups, racism in the United States of America during the mid 1900's are just a few of many situations where certain groups of people were pigeonholed.

Governments and leaders are always important to a nation. A person does not have to be a head politician to be a leader.

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Just taking responsibility when the need arises means a lot and gives one of the qualities of a positive leader. But power hungry leaders negatively influence young political aspirants. Government is very important in a nation, and a nation needs capable leaders to guide them correctly. Student Government is also fundamental to a nation. A colossal portion of student bodies are strikingly similar to national governments.

Governance is always effective when leaders follow exact theories in leadership. One of these theories is that a superior should always be accountable to the people who care about the country. This goes on to say that if a president is elected by the people to lead them, he/she should be able to regularly report to his/her people. Another vital theory is that heads of Government are susceptible to the rule of law. This means that spearheads should lead their people according to the statutes of that nation and they ought to be coerced without partiality.

Subsequently, everyone should have equal prospect of evolving. Perhaps a boy child goes to school. A girl child should be given equal opportunity to go to school. All people should also have a voice in the Government. This is where free speech comes into play. A nation with free speech will be on the road to success simply because the common people the common people would have an opportunity to participate in the leadership. A final a very imperative theory deals with getting the job done. A leader can promise all the right things for his/her people but in the end, all goes to waste if the promises are not kept.

Youth leadership prepares youth for the challenges of politics in real world. Hon. Joseph N. Boakai, Vice-President of the Republic of Liberia, Hon. Conmany B. Wesseh, Deputy Minister, ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Liberia, Sylvester Grimsby, Superintendent, Sinoe County, Republic of Liberia and many other leaders went from being student council leaders to becoming national effective leaders.

Leadership needs a mix of youths and adults. It needs experienced, seasoned spearheads and also an influx of fresh minds and innovative ideas. I consider that, if we can accomplish that, the results would be highly positive. To achieve this, we need to take class elections and student body elections very seriously. In my perspective, a young man with an ambition to being a leader might deem it necessary to take part in such necessary extra-curriculum activities, in which the aspirant might witness the ups and downs of an electoral process and politics as a whole.

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In this experience, the contestant might learn a few things that would help soften the blow of the real world of politics. I would see it as a dress rehearsal of things to come.

If all the content of this essay are systematically recognized, we will be looking at a revolutionary generation to say the least. Everyone says that the youth are the leaders of tomorrow. It is time we act upon that.

