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Introduction

We produced the *Student Leadership Planner* to help you apply the leadership lessons we've learned from the thousands of student leaders we've studied. The Planner is a one-step-at-a-time guide that is designed to help you use The Five Practices of Exemplary Student Leadership® to meet your own leadership challenges.

Are You Leading at Your Personal Best?

Over the past twenty years, we've asked thousands of students this question: What do you do when you're operating at what you consider to be your personal best? We've found that there are five practices that define exemplary leadership. When operating at their best, leaders:

- Model the Way
- Inspire a Shared Vision
- Challenge the Process
- Enable Others to Act
- Encourage the Heart

You learned about The Five Practices when you took the *Student Leadership Practices Inventory* (SLPI). As you work through this Planner, keep this in mind: The more frequently you engage in these practices, the better leader you will be. Exemplary leadership is not an accident, a position, or a secret code. It is a set of behaviors that you can learn and grow in your ability to effectively engage in.

Leadership Development Is Self-Development

Humans are toolmakers. Mechanics use tools to repair an engine, artists use brushes to paint a portrait, physicists use computers to perform complex calculations. But the leader's primary instrument is the self. Mastering the art of

leadership means mastering the self. In other words, leadership development is *self*-development.

Through self-development comes the confidence needed to lead. Self-confidence is really awareness of and faith in your own powers. These powers become clear and strong only as you work to identify and develop them.

About This Planner

You have already started on a journey of self-development by taking the *Student LPI*. The Planner will help you continue that journey. It includes questions, suggestions, checklists, and worksheets that will help you organize your thoughts, make action plans, and reflect on your experiences.

In our research, we've discovered that the best leaders are also the best learners. As you work through the pages of this Planner, we'll ask you to look within and reveal what you find—if only to yourself. The payoff is great when you do. People who are the best at what they do are always eager to learn new skills, techniques, and information. They're curious about themselves and their world. We ask you to bring your own sense of curiosity and eagerness with you as you explore these pages.