

Throughout the semester we've learned about what it takes to be a creative leader. We learned that an important part of leadership is collaboration. It's important to reflect on oneself and to realize what strengths we possess as well as what qualities or skills we need to work on.

In doing each week's readings and watching talks by creative leaders, I came to notice how I need to be more active in my pursuit of collaboration. I tend to isolate myself, especially when I'm busy balancing work and school. Being an only child, I've always been content to spend time alone and sometimes have to force myself to socialize. A few months ago I moved to a new city where I already had friends and have worked at two different jobs where I became friends with many of my coworkers. However, lately I haven't been reaching out to them or making the effort to connect with anyone. My time is taken up by work and school and I haven't been making time to keep up with friends.

After some self-reflection, I decided to focus my passion project on connecting with others. I know so many creative, talented people, and I haven't been taking the steps to collaborate with any of them. Whether it's to reach career goals or have a more fulfilling personal life, interacting with a diverse group of people is key. This is the only way I'll be able to make connections, find potential partners for collaboration, and build a team to work toward a shared goal of helping the environment and the people who live in it.

One week isn't quite enough time to coordinate schedules with people and find time to work on a project, so this week was more about laying the groundwork and doing little things that are outside my comfort zone. I called an old friend who I haven't spoken to in months. She just got back from Israel and is starting med school in the fall, and it was great to catch up and reconnect. Her life is so different from mine, but we've always understood each other better than most people and she's the only one I really go to for advice, so I need to make more of an effort to continue keeping in touch.

A few coworkers from my last job were recently hired at The Shed, where I work now. Usually, I would just be excited to see them and wait to talk to them until they start working at The Shed. But this week, I texted each one to congratulate them and say how happy I am that we get to work together again.

The Shed is an arts center with galleries and theaters, and last week they released comp tickets to one of the live productions for staff to share with friends and family. This was a great excuse for me to reach out to friends. First I offered a ticket to my friend who is a big theater fan. Then I decided to get a ticket for my boyfriend, Alex, to go with her. Normally, that would be as much effort as I'd put out. But I decided to stretch

myself and offer tickets to another friend who I haven't seen in a long time, Laura, and her boyfriend, Matthew. This is where I'm excited to use a tip from Tribal Leadership about triads. Matthew is very successful in the world of advertising, and Alex is an illustrator. Laura has told me that Matthew has expressed interest in buying Alex's work or commissioning him for advertising work. So I got them all to go to the theater on the same night and made plans for all of us to get a drink beforehand. This way, I've connected two people who can benefit from one another, given all of them an opportunity to see a unique and experimental play, and I've gotten a chance to catch up with a friend I don't get to see very often.

Another triad is included in this same meeting. Laura is trying to go to graduate school for writing. A while back, Alex, Laura, and I came up with a plan to make up fake punk bands with elaborate backstories and create posters and t-shirts for them. This gives Alex a chance to work on a project that's in line with his goal of doing illustration for the music industry. It can enhance his portfolio and if we print the fliers and try to sell the fake band merchandise, more people will be exposed to his work. Meanwhile, Laura has an opportunity to do some creative writing as we create a history for all of these bands, the ups and downs of their careers and the drama and gossip surrounding them. It's been a really fun project and I've enjoyed the chance to work on something so different from what I usually do. We haven't done anything with it in a while because we've all been so busy, but this week is a chance to revive our efforts.

Throughout this week I've also reached out to friends I've worked on creative endeavors with in the past. I want to take advantage of these connections over the summer so we can work together on new art projects. When reflecting on my goals and desires throughout this class, I realized that I want to continue making fine art, even if my career is more design-oriented. I would be sad to miss out on the chance to use the fine art skills I learned in college and on my own. While I tend to work alone, I've always been more committed to projects when other people are involved. I've learned that I'm more likely to follow through with something if someone else is depending on me. Therefore, in order to ensure a future filled with art, I need to make the effort to set up collaborations with others. My friends have expertise in areas that I don't, so we could create some great interdisciplinary work.

While my career goals in sustainable design don't involve fine art, they do require the need to think creatively and to actively make connections with others. By starting with people I already know, I can gain confidence in asking for help and sharing my ideas and plans with potential collaborators. Part of why I moved to New York was because of the potential to make connections that would enhance my career and personal art, and

to be around creative people. I haven't been taking advantage of all the city has to offer, and I need to step up and follow through with what I've learned about leadership and what I've learned about myself. You never know who could lead to a great opportunity, or who you can help reach their goals, so it's important to stay open to new connections and take advantage of every chance you get. This week's exercise has given me the push I need to start addressing areas I've learned I need to work on. Forcing myself to make the extra effort and be more outgoing isn't as hard as it once seemed, and I plan to follow through with the connections I've made this week and continue reaching out to people. It's been exciting to think of all the things I can do and how building my social skills will help build my career and help me reach my artistic goals. This project has set me up to have a fulfilling summer filled with growth and learning.