Poling, Jacob D

Diversity is a key aspect of any good leader and not just in the ethical sense of the word but the true definition of it. In fact race or ethnicity should have nothing to do with it, because someone’s race or ethnic background has nothing to do with being a good leader. Over the course of my life I have been exposed to many types of diversity, whether through my six plus years in the military, the police academy, or several years of school and life in general. I have dealt with many personality types, situations, and experience all falling under different circumstances which in my opinion is what diversity is. The different situations or experiences in life that help to shape who you are as a person or in this case a leader.

The military is the ultimate proving ground to see how anyone deals with diversity. In the military you have thousands of personality types and backgrounds coming together and being forced to accomplish many different tasks. Some are incredibly simple with little to no consequences except for maybe a few pushups. However, some can be extremely challenging and people could lose their life if not done correctly or in a timely manner. This is where a good leader is needed. Something the military has defiantly taught me is that a good leader is everything and he must be able to deal with diversity. The biggest thing I will take from the military and my experiences in the military as a leader, which I was a team leader and am now a squad leader is you must be able to deal with people’s bull and still get the mission done. People always cause some problem or have some issue and in high stress situation such as combat a leader must stay calm and still get the mission accomplished. In my future continuing as a leader, I plan on constantly learning about diversity and ways to improve as a leader. I have always felt the military is the perfect place to learn anything, because not only do you learn it as well if not better than on the civilian side you also learn it with the added stress of potentially dying while doing it. My six plus years in the military has done nothing but to enforce this attitude, which helps to forge excellent leaders.

The police academy was a 6 month lesson about how to deal with diversity and be a leader in the community. Police officers have to deal with adverse situations every day and are expected to be actual and moral leaders in the community. When I was in the academy we learned about different situations we would possibly face as a police officer. They ranged from race issues, domestic violence, and something as simple as a traffic stop. Each situation we faced and learned about only involved one common factor; diversity. Each situation brought about a new problem, person, or dilemma. Being able to handle this in a mature respectful fashion is the key to making it as a cop or a leader. The police academy taught me how to deal with situations in a more calm and less aggressive fashion, which is more opposite of the military teaching of seek and destroy. The police academy taught me how to be calm, mature, and respectful which are very important factors of how a great leader deals with diversity.

College is usually the first place many young men and women get their first real taste of a diverse life. Most come from sheltered towns and cities, only few come from bigger cities with big high schools. Usually college is where most start to develop the ideas that will last their lifetime and see how they handle diverse situations. In my case the military was my first big plunge into diversity, so college was kind of a breeze compared to it. When I got to college, at least East Carolina, I already knew how I would handle most situations, because the military or the police academy had taught me. I also feel that coming from the idea of shaping a leader, college is not that helpful. College is great at teaching life lessons and teaching how to handle diversity as an individual, but not as a leader. Forgoing a diverse leader comes through real life situations and stress not partying and homework. College has helped to develop group work, dealing with immature people, and meeting deadlines, but has not really helped to forge me as a leader. The military and the police academy has done a much better job, however the lessons learned in college about dealing with people has its place in my life and will one day be useful.

Learning how to deal with, overcome, and use to your advantage is the key to dealing with diversity. Being able to do this effectively is what makes great leaders great. In an ideal world of harmony everyone would be the same, but this is not the case and this is also the reason great things happen. However, it takes a great leader who can deal with diversity to bring a team together and make great things happen. All my experiences have taught me a very plain and simple lesson, if I want to be a great leader, I need to always improve how I deal with diversity and overcome the dilemmas I face. Looking back over my years as a leader, I would defiantly recommend the military as the place to go to diversify one’s life and become a great leader, because this is what it has done for me in my life and continues to do so.