
You will write a Response Assignment discussing the ideas in “Cultivate Positive Identities,” a chapter written by Laura M. Roberts in Jane E. Dutton and Gretchan M. Spreitzer’s book *How to Be a Positive Leader: Small Actions, Big Impact*. The paper must accurately paraphrase and present the ideas you’ll select to write about, but it must **discuss** your personal responses to those ideas.

This personal, reflective paper will help you to learn about your leadership strengths, generate ideas/points for writing about your abilities in cover letters for job applications as well as for engaging in conversations in the job interviews, and discover your career paths or roles in the organizations suited to your abilities. In addition to writing about your self-discovery in this paper, you must evaluate yourself and others in professional organizations and discuss the application, relevance, and value of author’s ideas.

Discussion:

Please note the date indicated in the course outline for discussion of this chapter and come to class on that day having read the chapter thoroughly and prepared to engage in a discussion on the content and your reactions to it. You will be able to compare your experiences about and reactions to the ideas with other students’ reflections. This discussion will help you to discover different perspectives as well as generate good insights for writing this paper. Make sure you attend this class and contribute to this ideas-generating activity.

Organization of Your Review:

I’ll encourage you to decide what to include and how to organize your discussion in the Assignment. What follows is a general pattern to help you with its organization.

Begin with the bibliographic entry (see below and also page 4 for more explaining

- To let the reader know about the source (the writer, chapter/article, and book), begin the Response with a bibliographic entry. The common format for this information is as follows:

“Title of the Chapter/Article.” Author’s name. *Book Title*. Author(s). Place of Publication: Publisher, date of publication. Number of pages.
- Write an introduction or an opening paragraph that is a restatement of the central idea and

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the author’s purpose in the chapter/article or the authors’ purpose in the book, followed by your evaluation. As well, the opening should be interesting and engaging to the reader. If the chapter raises some questions that you will explore later, you may very briefly outline them here but avoid listing. That is, this brief opening paragraph lets the reader know what direction your discussion will take, so state your evaluation. **(one paragraph)**

- In the remaining section of the Response, you are free to select **four ideas** for your discussion. **(See more guidelines on pages 6-7 of this handout for selecting the ideas from “Cultivate Positive Identities” for your discussion and writing in this paper. Also review the Response-to-Reading Guidelines for developing and supporting your claims using Personal Tie-in and SEC strategy which I’ve discussed earlier in class.)**

Review the ideas selected from the chapter on pages 6-7. Decide which ones you want to discuss in your response paper. Think about your experiences and observations regarding your strengths and what they illustrate about the writers’ ideas and their relevance for workplace. I suggest you use **three** Personal Tie-in responses or discussions and **two** SEC responses. Each paragraph should discuss only one idea from the chapter. **(Four paragraphs)**

- In particular, write a closing paragraph discussing the relevance of **one of the ideas for effective communication in the workplace (This is the fifth idea from the chapter)**. See more specific guidelines at the end of page six for ideas to discuss in this last para. **(one paragraph)**

Please note that no additional concluding paragraph or conclusion is required.

Provide in-text citations for the ideas paraphrased for discussion and the evidence used for discussion. Also, at the end of the paper, provide references for the sources used.

Specific Instructions:

- **Avoid summarizing or regurgitating the ideas of the book. Also make sure you discuss the writer’s ideas and not attack the writer even if you disagree strongly. Maintain an appropriate tone.**
- Use present tense in referring to the author and the reading—for example, “the author states” instead of “the author stated;” “the chapter contains” instead of “the chapter contained.”
- It is important to distinguish between the ideas of the author and those of the reviewer (yourself). Be careful to label (*Aldous Huxley continues...; this reviewer believes...; I believe*) your sentences wherever appropriate so that your ideas are separate from the author’s ideas. Confusion between the two considerably weakens your Response for the reader.

DUE DATE: See the Course Outline

LENGTH: Maximum 4 typed pages, double-spaced (or maximum 1000 words)

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Questions for Chapter “Cultivate Positive Identities.”

After reading the chapter, use the following questions to explore your thinking about the ideas in the chapter.

Questions on Identity in general:

Who am I (What are my strengths and deficiencies today)?

Who do I want to be (What would I like to change about my character to achieve greater satisfaction and impact on others)?

What am I becoming? What is my character today, and what is it likely to be tomorrow if I continue the way I’m doing things now? **AND/OR** What am I going to do to become who I want to be? What actions will I take, by when, to develop my character? How will I assess my progress?

How can I define or construct a positive identity for leadership in organizations? How will my positive identity impact my ability to work with people and organizations? How do I want to be viewed positively by others such as superiors, co-workers, and team members and to what end?

What stories (personal experiences), role models, behaviours, images, or expressions illustrate my key strengths and values? Use these strengths to define my identity.

Questions on GIVE model in the chapter (Ask: How can I apply the authors’ GIVE model to create my positive identity for leadership?)

G. (Growing Identity) How am I growing to be my desired self by becoming more capable in my job and by becoming a better person at work?

How can I experience positive emotions and develop resilience at work?

How can I replace negative emotions (pessimistic cognitions) or negative stories into positive self-views?

I. (Integrated Identity) How can different parts of my identity –roles in family, relationships, teams, etc.—be integrated?

How do different parts of my identity reflect the same person?

What do I value most in my personal, familial, social lives and how are these values connected or expressed in work roles?

How can these identities be of value at work, such as helping solve problems, generating creative ideas, building relationships of trust, and expanding psychological, social, or organizational resources?

V. (Virtuous Identity) How can I practice and enact virtuous qualities, such **wisdom, courage,**

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integrity, compassion, and humility at work? What might be the positive effects of these virtuous qualities?

How do these virtuous qualities influence us to be caring and supportive?

How do these qualities (compassion e.g.) create a safe culture in the organizations?

E. (Esteemed Identity) How can my positive feelings about my personal qualities contribute to a more authentic self at work? How can this positive self-esteem help me cope with threats to my identity?

How do positive self-images lead to my engagement at work?

Overall, how do you display or demonstrate these values or virtuous qualities at work or to people? Begin your reflection with the situations you have observed and experienced in workplace(s) and the benefits of these positive identity constructions?

Leaders' positive identities are based on self-views but are validated by perceptions of others or their followers.

Use three positive identity infusions tools (These are reflective exercises for self-assessment to become self-aware and discover your best self):

1. Create positive identity labels to develop desirable behavior. To learn about your character strengths, look up **Values in Actions** (VIA) Changingminds.org for an inventory of strengths and virtues.
2. Use leadership **Lifeline exercise** to discover milestones in your development, create developmental agenda, and monitor your growth. See catalystleadershipcoaching.com or see Synergy.org.
3. Discover your **reflected best selves** or strengths and their impact upon others. Get feedback on your strengths from professional contacts. Develop your portrait and imagine and explore what and how you will contribute significantly to people and organizations. For Reflected Best Self Exercise (RBSE), read *Harvard Business Review* article "How to Play to Your Strengths" by Laura M. Roberts et al.

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Specific Writing Guidelines for Response-to-Reading Assignment (also see the Response-to Reading Assignment, pp. 1-2)

Bibliographic entry:

Type the Bibliographic Entry as written below on page one of your paper (It comes before the opening para, and it should **not** be indented).

“Cultivate Positive Identities.” Laura M. Roberts. *How to Be a Positive Leader: Small Actions, Big Impact*. Jane E. Dutton and Gretchen M. Spreitzer. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2014. 55-63.

Paragraph One OR the Opening Para should:

- Start with the book writers’ contribution to scholarship on positive leadership (google it and select a good brief blurb about their contribution. That is, introduce the book authors’ purpose—their vision about the change they believe positive leadership will bring to a workplace—and the central idea of *How to Be a Positive Leader*. Since you do not have the book with you, here is the central idea of *How to Be a Positive Leader* from which this chapter was excerpted for your Response-to Reading Assignment (**make sure you paraphrase** the book writers’ central idea: The authors state that “your behavior matters and the more positively you lead, the more successful and happy your organization, family, and community will become.” (*How to Be a Positive Leader*, 2014, p. XI)
- Then state Laura Roberts’s central idea in the chapter “Cultivate Positive Identities” by **paraphrasing** it. See page 55 (last sentence of first para), page 57 (first sentence of the first new para), and page 63 (last two sentences) for the central idea statements of the author.
- End the first para with your assessment of the value of the article’s ideas on positive leadership.

After completing the opening para, write five paragraphs in your paper. Discuss one idea in each paragraph and make sure you paraphrase the idea at the beginning of each paragraph and refer to the writer and the page number. The concluding para is the fifth para. **No more conclusion para is required.**

Select five of the following ideas from the chapter (write **three Personal Tie-in** paragraphs, and **two SEC paragraphs (statement of Claim, Evidence, Comment)** for your discussion. Read guidelines about Personal Tie-in and SEC paragraphs in Response to Reading Guidelines I’ve discussed earlier in the classes.

Here’re the ideas you could select from. Make sure to paraphrase the idea and cite the page number at the end:

“Leaders are able to unleash resources through the way in which they construct who they are as leaders and also how they help others construct positive identities.” (p.55). This sentence is the

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central idea of the chapter.

Any ideas from the GIVE model on pages 56-57: Growing Identity, Integrated Identity, Virtuous Identity (includes any of the **five** virtues—wisdom, compassion, humility, courage, and integrity), and Esteemed Identity. These ideas in GIVE model are also discussed and extended in the rest of the article. However, I have selected some of these as quoted below.

“Positive identity construction unlocks valuable psychological and social resources in work organizations.” This quote is another statement of the central idea. (p. 57)

“When people see themselves growing at work by becoming more capable in their jobs or by becoming better people as a consequence of their work, they are more likely to experience positive emotions and to persist through adversity.” (p. 57)

“People who construct more positive identities are also better able to cope with threats to their identities, such as being criticized harshly or demeaned at work.” (p. 57)

“Positive identity construction also generates more diverse, high-quality relationships at work which are important resources for individuals and organizations.” (p. 57)

“Leaders’ identities are more powerful and sustainable when they are validated by followers’ perceptions.” (p. 58)

“Positive self-views should be reinforced by behaviors that are consistent with the leader’s positive identity claims.” (p.58)

“They [leaders] acknowledge their own imperfections, creating a safer culture in which people can express their feelings of uncertainty and commit to shared learning and improvement.” (p. 59)

“When leaders cultivate positive identities for themselves and others, they unlock critical psychological and social resources that strengthen individuals and organizations.” (p.63) This quote is another statement of the central idea.

OR Discuss any of the three identity infusions: 1. Positive Identity Labels, 2. Developmental Agenda and Monitoring Your Growth, and 3. Reflected Best-Self Engagement.

In the concluding para—

- **Discuss the relevance of one of the ideas for communication in workplace. Here’re some of the ideas which have relevance:** Integrity; empathy or compassion; creating a safe culture; using wisdom, courage, humility to build trust, positive identity labels, and any other ideas you think has implications for communication

A reminder again: review the Response-to-Reading Guidelines handout for explanation of Personal Tie-in and SEC strategy for developing and supporting your discussion of ideas. Provide in-text citations for the ideas paraphrased for discussion and the evidence used for discussion. Also, at the end of the paper, provide references for the sources used.

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A student's paragraph for discussion in class (Uses Personal Tie-in strategy for development and support, but has strengths and weaknesses)

A main point the author makes in this chapter is about the GIVE model. The part about integration particularly resonated with me and caused me to think about how the different facets of my life fit together. Integration, as the author describes it, is about different parts of one's identity being connected in ways which contribute value as a whole. These parts includes work, personal characteristics, education, interests, and any other communities or groups which one is a part of. In reflecting on my experience as a leader, I began to think about how my abilities in one domain translate to success in other, unrelated fields. For example, I have coached high school level water polo for the past five years. Coaching has helped me develop many valuable skills: explaining complex strategic concepts to inexperienced players, resolving conflicts among team members, and fostering an environment which encourages growth and development. These have all translated to success in my role as a student group leader at the university. My job in this area necessitates hosting study sessions for second year classes. Though it may seem unrelated, I am able to draw upon my experience explaining complicated concepts and encouraging a learning-oriented environment. This enables me to perform more effectively as this job than I would otherwise, thanks to the concept of integration.

Another student's paragraph for discussion in class (Uses Personal Tie-in strategy for development and support, but has strengths and weaknesses)

The author makes it clear that when people construct more positive identities and show that they are virtuous, they are able to better cope with the threats to their character, such as criticism or demeaning. I believe this to be true, because when you have a positive identity, it is far easier to see the good in anything you do; whether it be in the workplace, or just life in general. As stated earlier, it is important to realize the value that your job has for the company, no matter how high or low on the hierarchy. Having this mindset causes you to care more about the job, and doing the job properly, instead of focusing only on yourself. It helps to handle criticism because you realize that most of the time it is constructive, rather than an attack on your personality. In my experience working at the Nissan dealership as a lot attendant, we are at the lowest ranked position, doing low level work such as cleaning, shifting the cars on the lot and doing anything the managers ask. At first, I did not take my job very seriously, because I thought it was just insignificant. However, after constructing a positive identity, I have realized that my job is important and impactful because much of the day's work depends on my ability to keep a steady flow of cars coming in and out of the service shop. As a result of looking at my job in a positive light, I have taken a more focused approach and in turn, I am seen positively from my coworkers.