We Are Failing Our Leaders

with Kai Johnson, Founder of Act Normal
Terminology: Leader

- Field Staff
- Field Director
- Outdoor Educator
- Mentor
- Instructor
- Guide
- Field Educator
- International Program Leader
- International Program Leader
On-Program

Post-Program

ACT NORMAL
Terminology: The Leader Industry
Industry Snapshot: Foundations

1. Leaders are the backbone of the industry
2. Good leaders are amazing human beings
   a. (with incredible skill sets)
3. We are failing our leaders
Industry Snapshot: How We Fail Our Leaders

Drugs

Withdrawal

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Drugs: Leader Joys

Outer

Inner

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Withdrawal: Post-program

The Big 3
1. Knowledge
2. Community
3. Stability
Big 3: Knowledge

Lack of Knowledge
1. Industry
   a. What IS the industry?
   b. What companies exist?
   c. What segments exist within the industry?
2. Opportunities
   a. What jobs exist?
   b. How do I find jobs?
   c. How do I develop a career?
   d. Is this sustainable?
3. Skills
   a. What skills do I have as a leader?
   b. Are these skills valuable?
   c. How do I communicate these skills on paper and verbally?

Challenges to Obtain Knowledge
1. Knowledge is siloed
   a. Individual, Company, Industry
2. Knowledge is largely word of mouth
   a. There is no one place that houses this knowledge
3. Instability = Lack of time and energy

Outcome = Confusion, anxiety, low self worth, professional black hole
Big 3: Community

Community?
1. Constantly creating and leaving
2. Non-existent?
3. Fractured / spread over the world
4. Don’t fit into “normal”

Understanding Gap
1. It’s likely your community HAS NO IDEA:
   a. What you do for work
   b. What you just experienced
   c. What you are going through currently
2. Even with community, still lonely

Relationships
1. Long distance
2. Constantly moving
3. Exhausted
4. Timezones, Technology
5. Understanding Gap

Outcome = Isolated, Lonely, Misunderstood
Big 3: Stability

Outcome = No time, no energy, no resources

On Program

1. Physiological needs: food, water, warmth, rest
2. Safety needs: security, safety
3. Belongingness and love needs: intimate relationships, friends
4. Esteem needs: prestige and feeling of accomplishment
5. Self-actualization: achieving one's full potential, including creative activities

Post-Program

1. Basic needs
2. Psychological needs
3. Self-fulfillment needs

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**Big 3: Loop**

- **Lack of Community**
  - Isolated, Lonely, Misunderstood

- **Lack of Knowledge**
  - Confusion, anxiety, low self worth, professional black hole

- **Rampant Instability**
  - No time, no energy, no resources
**Outcome:** The Revolving Door

**Leading**

**Pull Factors**
- DRUGS!
  - Giving Soul
  - Deeply rewarding
  - Getting paid
  - Comforting (known)
  - Reconnecting w/ community
  - Program support bubble

**Push Factors**
- On-Program Challenges
  - Exhaustion
  - Burn out
  - Financial requirements
  - Health factors

**New Job**

**Pull Factors**
- Withdrawal Challenges
  - Lack of knowledge
    - Lack of resources
  - Lack of Community
    - Very little support
    - No mentorship
  - Instability
    - Lack of finances
  - Withdrawal
    - Lack of excitement and satisfaction

**Push Factors**
- Desires
  - Increased stability
    - Geographic
    - Financial
  - Community
  - Relationships
  - Career Advancement
Outcome: Who cares?

1. Leaders are the backbone of the industry
   a. Revolving door = damaged backbone, impacts program quality, hazard

2. Good leaders are amazing human beings (with incredible skill sets)
   a. Career Paralysis = We are wasting the skills and talents of incredible people

3. We are failing our leaders
   a. Withdrawal = We are not adequately supporting leaders in the post-program phase
Solutions: What can we do?

1. We need to talk about this
2. We need data
3. Start with the Big 3
   a. Stock take, brainstorm, cross-pollinate
   b. Individual, Company, Industry
4. Industry-wide problem = Industry-wide solution
   a. Union?