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Leadership

Leadership comes in many types, whether it’s helping others, inspiring them, or guiding them through tough times. Whitney Kropp, Dr. Shinsky, Adam Bender and Janie, in The Eyes Were Watching God, represent all the different forms of leadership. Leadership is being a model for someone; to motivate them and encourage them to do what they believe or dream of doing. Each one of these people represents a leader in many different ways.

From Ogemaw Hights, Michigan, Whitney Kropp was elected on the homecoming court as a prank. At first she was didn’t want to go to the dance but after much support from her family, she decided to stand up for herself and go. This is the first quality of leadership that she has. She got right back up and followed her heart and rolled with the punches as they came. After all of the hurtful things the students said, she shoved it right back into their faces and attended the homecoming dance with great confidence. Her story got more and more popular as the weeks went by. She made an appearance on national television like, Good Morning America and the Katie Curic show. Curic offered her a trip to Disney World and of course, just like any other sixteen year old, she jumped at the opportunity. Many people have criticized her for accepting the offer, but in my opinion, I think that she deserves the trip. After all the harassment she got from the students and criticism she got from the public, she deserves to go have fun. She’s the perfect example of a leader; she stood up for herself and others and didn’t care what other people thought. She had major confidence and much support from her family, friends and the community.

Another example of a leader is Dr. John Shinsky. Shinsky lived with his mother, until he was eight years old when his father died. When his mother couldn’t continue to raise him, she sent him off to an orphanage. Once he got adopted he continued to go to school and after he graduated he found his mother and she continued to inform him of how much she loved him and the reason why she gave him up was because she couldn’t give him the life he deserved. When Shinsky graduated, he accepted a scholarship to Michigan State University to play football. Later on he was unable to play because of medical reasons. However once Shinsky retired from the football team, he became a teacher. Just like many other people, he had a dream. He wanted to give back; he wanted to build his own orphanage in Mexico. Shinsky and three other formal football players rode their bikes across the United States to raise money to build the orphanage. Nevertheless, before the journey, Shinsky was diagnosed with cancer; he tried fighting but he decided he would remove the tumor and they were back on track and ready to start the ride to Mexico. Not only was he a leader on his football team, but he also overcame cancer. He helped people believe in themselves and taught them, “Ordinary people can do extraordinary things.” Meaning, anyone can make a difference.

Adam Bender from values.com was born with cancer. He had a large tumor on his left thigh and he had to have his leg amputated at his hip when he was a year old. His parents never thought he would be able to participate in sports, however when he was a toddler he started to show an interest in sports. He wanted to play soccer so he did. When his parents thought he couldn’t do it, he proved them wrong and quickly adapted to playing with his crutches. He also wanted to play baseball, so what did he do? He learned to adjust to playing with his crutches. By the time he turned 10 years old he played as the quarterback in his flag football team, and won the state champion for his age and weight on his wrestling team. He’s a leader because he shows others to follow their dreams and have the desire to do what they believe in. Even though he’s physically challenged he can still participate in something that he loves to do. Adam participated in what he yearned for with the help of his family and friends. He’s a leader because he sets a good example for other children with disabilities.

Janie, from Their Eyes Were Watching God, was a leader because she took control of her life and she didn’t care what others thought about her. For example when she wanted to run away with Tea Cake, many people in the town didn’t want her to go because they thought he was going to take her money and gamble it all away. Janie thought he truly loved her, therefor she followed her heart and ran away with him. Another example is small, but it makes a big difference. She lets down her hair once Jody dies, and to some people they consider it immoral. However she thought of it as regaining her voice, standing up for what she wants instead of what society thinks she should do or be like. She regains her self-confidence by appreciating her beauty and be more outgoing. Jody took that away from her when they got married and kept her all to himself. Janie never had a voice in those twenty years that they were married, she could never say what she felt or be who she wanted. When Jody passed away and when Janie met Tea Cake, is when she really became a leader. Janie followed her heart and pushed for her dreams. She did everything she could do to make herself happy, no matter what the others thought, as long as she believed in herself she went for it. Janie took her life in her hands and did what she wanted, no matter what. In the end of the book when Janies telling her best friend, Pheobie, about her and Tea Cake, she inspires and encourages her to follow her dreams and to shoot for what she has always wanted.

To me, every single person on this planet is considered a leader. Each and every one of us can inspire or encourage others to follow their heart and to have faith in themselves. Every single person sets an example to be followed; whether they’re a big celebrity, or a boy with autism or in this case, a boy with only one leg. Even an aged couple of men bike riding across the United States can make a difference for so many others. A leader can inspire, encourage, and support others to do what they’ve always dreamed. Don’t give up on anything, be leader and stand up for what is right.