



## 2020 PFA Future Leaders Conference

### *Essays Researching a Leader*

#### **Aleksandra Starzynski** ***Mahatma Gandhi***

Gandhi was an Indian lawyer, politician, social activist, and writer who became the leader of the nationalist movement against the British rule of India.

He was born on October 2, 1869, Porbandar, India. Gandhi was the youngest child of his father's fourth wife. Mahatma Gandhi was an ordinary man who believed in non-violent protests to solve problems. He was and is known all around the world for achieving independence for India through his non-violent methods.

Mahatma Gandhi inspired Martin Luther King Jr. during the 1960s civil rights movement and Tibet's Dalai Lama peaceful and non-violent methods which have affected the whole world.

Through his learnings, he taught others that violence isn't the only way to gain rule or power, patience is the key element to success. He taught 5 great lessons that led to India gaining peace. First, the force of power never wins against the power of love. Second, war always inflicts pain on everyone. Third, we live for our values and passion but our existence lies in the desire to live a peaceful life. Fourth, "An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind." Last but not least, "We must be the change we want to see in the world."

Mahatma Gandhi is known as the father of India. Not only did he gain independence for India through non-violent methods, but he also brought peace and human rights to his country. Mahatma Gandhi fought against the Britishers to get back basic human rights for all Indians.

He ran nationwide campaigns for basic human rights and to ease poverty, expand women's rights, build religious and ethnic harmony and eliminate the injustices of the caste system. Gandhi was an empowering leader not only because he empowered all Indians on a salt march to corrupt the British economic system. Since he was a pioneer of Satyagraha, he also inspired all Indians to understand and learn resistance through non-violent civil disobedience.

He was a visionary leader. He gave Indians a new spirit, a sense of self-respect and a feeling of pride in their civilization, he is something more than a mere politician. He is a great statesman and a man of vision.

Eve Szoszorek  
*Victoria Garrick*

## **I chose Victoria Garrick**

I chose Victoria because she has been an inspiration to me for a while. She is not a well known leader but she has always been a leader to me. She was a athlete in high school and was always working out trying to be what others wanted her to be. In high school she saw a lot of girls doing what she did so in college Victoria realized she needed to make awareness for the girls who have insecurity's and help them realize they are beautiful the way they are and comparing yourself to others is not the way to go. She is a 22 year old Ted Talker and role model. She always has something positive to say and never lets you down. In high school she knew girls tried and tried to change themselves. She knew what she had to do and took the stands to be a leader. She went farther than she thought in life and now she is out and making a difference for everyone. I hope one day to make a difference like Victoria and help others.

**Kasia Wlazlo**  
***Angelina Jolie***

A leader is someone that is responsible, genuine, influential, and ambiguous. Someone that fits all these characteristics is Angelina Jolie. Angelina Jolie is a 45-year-old American actress, filmmaker, and humanitarian, which is someone who helps people who are suffering. She is a good leader because she helps those in need and those who are not heard. For example, the LGBTQ+ community. She encourages people around the world to do what they believe in and do what they think is right. Angelina also helps raise awareness for different movements: one being the black lives matter movement. She has donated at least \$200,000 to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (also known as the NAACP) to help fund for the movement. She has also raised over 21 million dollars for a lot of organizations and causes. Angelina provides a lot of opportunities at meetups or at parties and auctions for people to get a chance at changing the world for the better. She has traveled to more than 20 countries while pursuing her acting career to advocate for people's protection. Another thing that makes Angelina a great leader is that she does not expect rewards, publicity, or fame from her kind and generous actions. She is not afraid to go out and share her opinions and views with people around the world. This attribute causes people to want to follow in her footsteps and make a difference in the world. Angelina's mindset is that everyone should live their lives to the fullest and not let anyone stop you from doing what you think is best for you and the people around you. She also believes that you should give back to your community to make the world a better place. Angelina has a lot of good qualities and characteristics including generosity, kindness, and ambition. Generosity is a good quality to have as a leader because it shows that you can take a stand for a certain cause and encourage others. Kindness is also a good quality to have as a leader because being kind can influence the way other people treat you. It is always good to be an ambitious leader because it makes you motivated and determined to accomplish a certain goal you have set for yourself. Angelina Jolie inspires me to create change in the world and inspire others to make the world a better place.

**Emilia Wypasek**  
***Greta Thunberg***

If you were told to open a dictionary and define a leader, you'd all get a definition roughly saying a person who leads a group, country, or organization; however, I disagree with that definition. I believe as we grow, we slowly create our own definition and imagine what a good leader should be. I define a leader as patient, effective, empathetic, inspirational, faithful, respectful, and kind.

Greta Thunberg is a 16-year-old girl from Switzerland. She is famous for being an activist leader for climate change. She began her journey of climate change by convincing her parents to reduce their own carbon footprint. Carbon footprint is the total emission of carbon dioxide by a person. After that she began striking in front of the Swedish parliament for climate change, and soon she was invited to speak at many political events.

Why do I believe that Greta Thunberg makes a good leader is because she fits my definition of a good leader? To be able to speak on a very big world issue you have to be patient and respectful of other opinions. Greta has never lashed back out on those who hate her, she has simply been the bigger person and ignored them. She remained faithful and empathic towards her cause never steering away from her main goal to stop climate change. Power has never influenced her opinion or otherwise. Her speeches have inspired others to increase activism in climate change. She also inspires all young boys and girls to take roles in activism, and her role as a 16-year-old impacts younger audiences to listen. Younger audiences look up to her because they know she understands the kind of world we live in, and what needs to change. Her goals have been effective because she is now known all over the world for her activism in climate change, and positive feedback and actions have come from her speeches. Lastly the most important asset is being kind. Those who are kind to others lead them even if they do not know they are leading. Being kind has an attraction that makes people have respect for you and what you have to say.

In 2019, Greta Thunberg was on the list of one of the world's most powerful women, and 25 most influential women in 2018. She was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize twice and on the cover of many magazines.

All leaders define themselves in their own way. As we look up to different people, we see what fits best in having a good leader. Like Greta Thunberg many other leaders share the same assets to one another; however, Greta reflects her ideas in a way that inspires me to follow those who lead like her.

**Isabella Yeske**  
***Gretchen Whitmer***

The leader I chose is Gretchen Whitmer, the current governor of Michigan. I selected this leader because she is the leader of my state and I have been very interested in her recently because of the pandemic. Her leadership shows me that women can be powerful leaders in our government where very few women stand out. Before becoming a governor, Gretchen Whitmer was a lawyer and educator that grew up in Michigan. She then became involved in politics, joining the House of Representatives in 2000 and then following that with the Senate in 2006. She is now the governor of Michigan elected in 2018, and most importantly a mom. As a leader, I think Gretchen Whitmer is confident, strong, responsible, and hardworking. She does well at making tough decisions and listening to all ideas. There are 2 events that have impacted my leader's life. In the early 2000s, she was tasked with the responsibility of taking care of her dying. Also, while in college she was sexually assaulted. These 2 events have influenced my leader's values and the passion and hard work that backs them. The people who have influenced my leader are her parents and her family. From a young age, Gretchen Whitmer's parents instilled a work ethic and the determination to give back to others, as they worked within the government as powerful leaders. While her 2 daughters continue to inspire and influence her leadership every day. I would describe Gretchen Whitmer's leadership style as efficient and hardworking. She works to solve problems and will always listen to others in order to find the best ideas. People would consider her a leader because she is the governor of our state and was elected by the people into that position. She has also proven her leadership abilities to this state in various ways, including a pandemic. The things that I will try and use from this leader is her strength when facing conflict and in unexpected situations. Additionally, I can use her decision-making skills and her confidence in herself. Lastly, her teamwork and calm attitude under pressure can help me. Gretchen Whitmer has been able to accomplish many great things as the leader of our state, including successfully guiding the state through a pandemic and reopening. Even as she was being criticized by many residents. She has also marched with Black Lives Movement protestors and is working to reform the police system in our state. Overall, I think that Gretchen Whitmer is a good example of a leader for our state.

**Nicole Pekarovic**  
***Alice Paul***

I did my research on Alice Paul, and the women she worked alongside. Alice Paul was a well-known American Suffragist and Women's Rights Activist. She and many other women where she lived were tired of being pushed aside and left out of conversations. They decided to take a stand. Alice Paul, along with others, stood up for their rights. She was a role model and helped set the path for other women to speak up. They protested and attended strikes and were arrested as political prisoners. Alice Paul still fought this injustice and refused to eat the food given to her. They force fed her, and when word got out to the people about it, they were all eventually released. Even when things got tough and their efforts seemed pointless, they fought for their freedom and rights. She, along with the other women, were brave, determined, and strong. They did not give up when things got hard, they jumped over hurdles and found different ways around the obstacles in their path. I hope to be as strong and brave as Alice Paul and the other women, and will fight harder for what I believe in. Alice Paul set the path for women, and I hope to help other women, and all people, to reach their goals and continue on the path to greatness and equality!

**Molly Yeske**  
***Michelle Obama***

My leader is Michelle Obama, the 44<sup>th</sup> First Lady of the United States. I selected her because she has used her platform to accomplish many great things for the US. Her leadership means a lot to me because she worked hard to encourage healthier lifestyles for kids. She launched “Let’s Move!” in 2010 bringing together communities across the nation, “Joining Forces” in 2011 alongside Jill Biden to support veterans across America, “Reach Higher” in 2014 an effort to support young people across the country to take charge of their future, and “Let Girls Learn” in 2015 to encourage girls around the world to stay in school. Michelle grew up in a small home in the southside of Chicago, IL with her stay-at-home mom, working father and older brother. She graduated from Princeton University and Harvard Law School. She worked at a law firm where she met her future husband, Barack Obama, who became president in 2009. I think Michelle Obama was a good leader because she helped many children and adults across the country live better and safer lives. One thing that influenced her to be a leader was becoming the First Lady and realizing how much of an impact she could have on the world around her using her large platform. Michelle’s leadership style is motivating others to lead good lives and set a good example. Michelle’s father was a big influence in her life because he went to work every day despite being diagnosed with multiple sclerosis at a young age. People consider Michelle a leader because she always used her platform to discuss issues and do what’s right. The things I will try to learn from Michelle Obama as a leader are to always use your voice to promote the right thing and to help others in need. Michelle Obama was a powerful leader that we can all learn from and be inspired by in our everyday lives.

**Brooke McPherson**  
***Malala Yousafzai***

The leader I chose is Malala Yousafzai. I chose to talk about her today because she overcame challenges at such a young age, but always stood up for what she believed in. Malala's leadership is really meaningful to me because she fought for the right to go school and for many girls like her to have a proper education. This is something many young people, myself included, take for granted every day. Malala was born in a small village in Pakistan where there was a lot of prejudice against women. She lived with her mother, who never had any formal education; her father, who was a school owner and teacher; and her two brothers. Despite the negative attention she received, Malala attended her father's school and became a leader and activist for many girls who were not allowed an education. Malala shared her love of school with many girls in her village. Malala was very outspoken about her cause and never let the negative comments deter her from her goal of encouraging every girl in Pakistan to attend school. The first thing that motivated Malala to become a leader was that ever since she was born, the citizens of Malala's village told her and many other girls that she could never be as talented and smart as her brothers because she was a girl. Malala was determined to prove them all wrong. When she was just fifteen, Malala was shot in the head by a Taliban officer on her way to school. The Taliban is a terrorist group that had taken over Malala's village and many others throughout Pakistan. Their beliefs were extremely sexist and began to become popular. Malala's chance of survival was low but, she never gave up and made a miraculous recovery in the hospital. This incident was broadcasted all over the world and gave Malala a very strong platform. She used it to lead by example. By continuing to go to school, Malala encouraged many others, especially in Pakistan, to do the same. Malala was a strong leader because she didn't shy away from issues that most people chose to ignore. Because of her peaceful and brave leadership, Malala received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014 and is the youngest person to ever be given this award. She published her first book in 2013 that discussed the challenges she faced as a young girl. One thing I will learn from Malala as a leader is to be persistent in order to accomplish your goals.