

CONCEPTS IN CONTRAST: DEMONSTRATING DISPARATE LEADERSHIP STYLES THROUGH THE LAST CASTLE

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ABSTRACT

The Last Castle provides a unique opportunity to contrast two opposing leadership styles and examine a wide range of organizational behavior concepts through examples exhibited by both the antagonist and protagonist. In the movie, famed and highly decorated army general Eugene Irwin is sent to a maximum security military prison for disobeying an order that yielded a negative outcome. Colonel Winter, the prison warden admires Irwin prior to meeting him, but their leadership values clash because Winter uses suspect methods in order to maintain discipline in the prison. Although General Irwin tries to avoid a leadership role, the unjust treatment of the inmates cannot be ignored. As any capable leader would, Irwin takes command of the situation. In general, various scenes in the movie show traits, motives, behaviors, and style. In particular, students can examine specific personality traits, leadership motives, charisma and transformational characteristics, consideration and structure, leadership grid styles, contingency and situational leadership, crisis leadership, and leadership ethics. This presentation includes a six-page handout designed to systematically guide students through an analysis of the movie as it aligns with organizational behavior and leadership concepts. Although the handout corresponds to a particular textbook, the concepts and vocabulary can be readily adjusted to many organizational behavior and leadership textbooks.