Throughout my junior year at Minnesota State University Mankato, I was involved in a research project. The summer before my junior year, I started to help in this professor’s lab, but wasn’t assigned a project until school started in the fall. This research project involved working under a graduate student and also having another undergraduate student to work with. The other undergraduate student was a senior at MSU and had already been doing research under this professor for a year.

During my experience, I found it was so nice to have a partner to help with the project. Not only was it nice to collaborate with someone else, but it was also helpful to have someone who already had some experience in the lab. Throughout the project, we had different smaller projects and tasks to work on together. In order to do this efficiently, it was important to recognize my leadership strengths and also my partners. It was clear that my partner was going to lead by physically showing me the ropes of the lab since she had experience. She was a great teacher and she recognized I learn best by example, so that’s how she taught me.

At first, I didn’t feel like much of a leader at all in this setting because I was new to it all. However, I realized quickly that while I wasn’t able to teach, I was leading in different ways. I led by showing up every day with a positive attitude and a readiness to learn. This helped lead by example and helped keep my partner and I motivated.

Once I got the hang of the lab procedures, I was starting to become an authentic leader. I genuinely enjoyed what I was doing so it was easy to lead with the passion I had for the project. I used the fact that I wanted to have a final project I was proud of, to lead my partner and I to do the best work we could for all of the smaller projects.

I have previously figured out that I am not only an authentic leader but also an extroverted leader. This means that I am not afraid to have my ideas heard in group settings. Although I don’t think this showed for a while, as I started to get more comfortable in the lab, I started to express my ideas with my partner and with our lab professor. One thing I believe is extremely important for myself, is to make my ideas known to others. It is my belief that if I don’t share my ideas, I will never know my full potential. Even if my ideas don’t always work out, I can feel confident in the fact that I had the leadership ability to make my idea known and show that I am capable of contributing to groups.