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An Inspiring Mentorship Pair: Meet Future Leader Sasha Kirk and Mentor Michael Goff



Sasha Kirk



Michael Goff

As the fourth cohort of think2perform Research Institute's Future Leaders Academy begins its leadership training phase, we checked in on Sasha Kirk who completed her FLA training last year. Sasha is now taking part in the program's 12-month mentorship phase which supports Future Leaders in applying new leadership skills in everyday life.

A graduate of DeLaSalle High School in Minneapolis, Sasha relocated to New Orleans to attend Xavier University of Louisiana and proudly states, "I'm a freshman, class of 2028." She plans to be a teacher, and her academic focus is middle school math education. Sasha's values are respect, empathy, loyalty, honesty and equity.

Sasha's mentor is Michael Goff, a coach and motivational speaker with think2perform who helps people make values-based decisions and change their habits. Michael's values are autonomy, health, relationships, integrity and excellence. Undeniably gregarious, Michael admits autonomy is a less obvious

choice and explains: "I like being able to work from anywhere and everywhere and see the world while still getting stuff done, so autonomy is number one."

Sasha's goals of being healthier physically and mentally align nicely with Michael's previous experience as a health and fitness entrepreneur. "I'm being more mindful of what I consume," says Sasha. "I've been away from sweets and eating more vegetables." To support her mental health and achieve more balance, Sasha is adopting a similar approach. "I'm more mindful of how I spread out my schedule, so I don't reach my max stress level," she says. Sasha's third goal became much clearer with Michael's encouragement.

"At the very beginning, I told Michael, 'I'm someone who procrastinates, that's something I'm going to need to work on,' and instead of saying, 'OK, let's work on procrastination,' he said, 'OK, exactly what do you want to change?'" recalls Sasha. With Michael's prompting, Sasha transformed avoiding procrastination into the specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound goal of turning in two assignments per week one day before they were due.

As a coach and in his own life, Michael knows the momentum an achievable goal can spark. "It's all about narrowing it down into bite-sized chunks that we can do today or this week," says Michael. "This excites us and gives us a little dopamine hit. It gets us thinking, 'Oh cool, I can do that, what else can I do?'"

A natural harmony exists between Sasha and Michael, fueled by mutual appreciation and an achievement mindset. "Michael has made it very easy," says Sasha. "Having someone to keep me accountable to sticking to my goals and seeing my own growth has been amazing. It's just really nice to have someone who can walk with me through this."

"It's always about the individual you're helping because we're all different and we all need different levels of coaching," says Michael. "I want to give Sasha a pat on the back for going to a completely different state, which is culturally completely different, and she's still adhering to what she set out to do, because

part of the goal setting process is the discipline to follow through. It's been awesome to watch Sasha accomplish what she set out for."

Growing up Sasha was told she was someone who could take charge and be a great leader, something she discounted then, but is realizing through this process. "Now that I'm actually seeing myself go and do these things, I know I'm someone who can really take charge and achieve the goals that I'm setting for myself," Sasha says.

Michael saw it, too: "Early on my first thought was, this girl is about to come out of her shell. I had this feeling she had that energy and power, and my hope was when she went to college in a new state she would expand and watching her expand has been the coolest thing."

Sasha's thoughts on completing assignments ahead of schedule? "It's very relieving, especially having the free time afterwards. I didn't know I didn't have to always rush or cram things," she says.

What bite-sized goal can you accomplish today or this week? We hope Sasha and Michael's mentoring partnership inspires you to set a new SMART goal for yourself.

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