

Leadership—A Rotary Core Value
Delivered at the Club's weekly luncheon
by Ingrid Sheldon
February 10, 2010

Thank you, Lou, for the honor of presenting “leadership” as one of the five core values of Rotary as defined in Rotary International’s most recent Strategic Plan. I, too, researched Paul Harris and leadership. But when I read the following, I just had to share it with you. From Paul Harris as follows: “Much responsibility rests upon the shoulders of the song **leader**; it is not infrequently within his power to make or break a meeting.”

Leadership has always been a topic that has intrigued me. I created the following analogy to guide me in my thinking. In honor of our speaker, I will use a sports team. It is usually a football team, but basketball works as well. Have you ever thought about the numbers of leaders involved with that team?

There is the team owner – have to give him, her or the institution credit for creating or investing in the team. It takes leadership to persuade others to invest, to have the initial idea. Leaders should have vision.

Then there is the coach – the teaching leader who can instill the passion and skills in the team to succeed,

What about the team captain who supports her team and interprets direction, facilitates the execution of the determined play?

The team members? Each needs to be responsible for her own part in the overall success of the game. Don’t we hold our leaders responsible?

Then there are the cheerleaders who coordinate our response which will hopefully energize the crowd and team into victory. We should give some credit to the band too.

Together, many participants decide on a mission and actively work to fulfill it... together...

Today we are talking about the Rotary team with “service above self” as its mission. What kinds of leaders do I see on this team as I look around the room today:

I see leaders who identified community problems – food for our hungry neighbors, dying trees in public parks changing the character of our community, students who need an extra incentive to overcome severe obstacles to finish high school.

I see leaders who have traveled to India to immunize against polio.

I see leaders in their professions and community endeavors.

I see examples of “leadership (that) is practiced not so much in words as in attitude and in actions. (Harold Geneen (1910-1997) English/American Businessman)

I see leaders who quietly work to make certain that our Rotary meeting experience is the best possible.

I see servant leaders who do their work with tremendous integrity, compassion, and understanding.

I see leaders who are revered for their insights.

I see leaders who have worked and continue to work collaboratively to solve community problems.

I see leaders who share their time, talent, and treasure to further the mission of Rotary and better their community both here and abroad.

In reality, as expressed by former RI President DK Lee, leadership ties the other core values of Service, Fellowship, Diversity, and Integrity together. We were all selected to be Rotarians and we all accepted that call because we realize that the meaning of our lives will be measured by the service we provide. Rotary provides that opportunity.

As I mentioned before, the interpretation of “leadership” is a subject that has always intrigued me. Not only is there a book about Bo and leadership, I have one called “Lincoln on Leadership.” But I will conclude with a quote from Mac Anderson’s “Essence of Leadership.”

“As a leader, it is my hope ... (that the following)... will be an inspiration to help you:

Walk the talk,

Keep it simple and keep it real,

Celebrate successes,

Know that courage matters,

Keep hope alive,

Take responsibility,

Develop a “service attitude,”

Aim for the heart, and...

Make a difference whenever and wherever you can.”