

DLI exemplifies leadership attributes of 2 dynamic influencers

Jeff Anderson | Saturday April 28, 2018

How would you explain leadership? My best explanation is that leadership is an influence process — a process we each engage in through words, actions and behaviors to influence others.

A friend recently introduced me to Joseph Grenney, a best-selling author and keynote speaker. Grenney adds the word “intentional,” saying, “What truly influential leaders understand is leadership is the capacity of an individual to intentionally influence others in sustainable change through a handful of key behaviors.”

This week the Dynamic Learning Institute completed its first semester, and we are thankful for everyone who participated as students, instructors board members and community partners.

DLI aims to provide Kerrville-area adults with learning experiences that create opportunities to explore interesting topics



and develop new interests. Championing lifelong learning is also an important DLI objective that we share with community partners — The Dietert Center’s Club Ed, Schreiner University and SERV Kerrville. Lifelong learning is the ongoing, voluntary, self-motivated pursuit of knowledge — knowledge that enhances

our social inclusion, active citizenship, personal development and self-sustainability.

When these life-enhancing attributes occur, learning becomes fun, stimulating and adds a special zest to our lives. No matter one’s age, lifelong learning creates a youthful feeling that is special to experience.

Hopefully, DLI’s 24 spring semester classes delivered stimulated learning experiences to many of the 1,153 DLI class participants. As we celebrate the progress of DLI, it’s perhaps the right time to reflect on the dynamic leadership qualities of two individuals who were instrumental in delivering this new



learning forum to our community. DLI was the brainchild of Tom Moser, who believed Kerr County would benefit from a forum where the interesting life experiences of neighbors in the Hill Country could be shared and lifelong learning could be championed. Tom had a vision for what we now can see was a timely idea. Tom’s good idea multiplied in value when community leader Tina Woods opened the collaborative doorway of The Dietert

Center's resources to assist in the development and launch of DLI.

Over the course of DLI's development, I benefitted from viewing up close the leadership qualities of several people I call treasured leaders of the The Texas Hill Country. This column will focus upon leadership attributes I witnessed while working on DLI with these treasured leaders.

My desire for this article is to communicate observations about key leadership attributes that exemplify useful learning insights to you and others about high performance influencers.

COMMUNICATING VISION

Tom and Tina are very busy leaders. Tom serves as a Kerr County commissioner and Tina served, until electing to pursue new chapters in her life, as executive director of the Dietert Center — a major multi-program community non-profit. Both enjoyed little extra discretionary time to devote to a concept like DLI.

Yet, both saw a larger vision for a new learning program that would benefit the people of our area. Tom had experienced the benefits of speaking at a forum away from Kerrville, where interesting life experiences were shared. He began to cast this vision to others, with the hope that a group would develop to bring this idea to fruition in greater Kerrville. Eventually, he enlisted a few of us to begin that process.

Tina's organization includes Club Ed, a three-decade-long lifelong learning program already offering hundreds of classes annually. She could easily have cast aside, for any number of reasons, a new idea that many considered competitive. But quickly after the first DLI vision presentation, Tina responded by

connecting the vision to the realities of implementation. She said that "Kerr County has all the resources needed to make DLI a reality, and Dietert Club Ed will help in any way we can."

Several key behaviors resonated with me from my experience with both of these leaders. No. 1: They clearly communicated the message of what they desired to influence. No. 2: They were decisive and communicated strong confidence in the aspects of the vision they articulated.

Their clear and decisive communication styles were of great influence as the DLI concept was shared with others.

'WHAT'S BEST FOR KERR COUNTY?'

Tom's insights into what would become DLI were borne from his teaching and attending classes in communities outside of Kerrville.

The DLI journey began for me in June at Cartwheels, where we gathered with representatives of a major university that Tom brought together to discuss establishing a new Lifelong Learning Program in Kerrville. These representatives made verbal commitments for funding, future manpower, technology, administration and marketing support. To many of us present, these commitments appeared to provide a strong foundation for moving forward together which we soon proceeded to do — let's fast forward.

Early November was the deadline for completing all agreements and other facets to launch DLI in January. As can happen when working through complex collaborations, the nitty gritty details delayed the finalization of our mutual working agreements. As these delays pressed into early November, I approached Tom to ask his advice in regards to what do we do if the final

agreements fall short of our local expectations. He was the key person associated with promoting the outside sponsors' entry into Kerr County.

Tom and I met outside of a meeting he was attending for veterans. He listened and responded with the question, "What's best for Kerr County?" Together we discussed his question and concluded that what was best was to ask this very question to community partners Tina and Schreiner University.

When I approached Tina, she reminded me of her original vision statement.

"Kerr County has all the resources needed to make DLI a reality, and Dietert Club Ed will help in any way we can," and added, "If that means that Dietert and Schreiner take on the responsibilities that were to be borne by the outside sponsor, then we will do so."

Schreiner's Mark Tuschak also communicated the same message in regard to Schreiner.

Tom, Tina and Schreiner were independently committed to what was best for our community. They essentially set aside their own agendas, prior relationships and plans to put the people and interests of greater Kerrville first.

HUMILITY AND SERVANT HEARTS

Looking back, Tina knew all along that the local resources existed to replace the plentiful package of benefits offered by the outside educational institution. Yet, she 100 percent supported the DLI mission anyway. Tom had good relationships that would be interrupted by a last-minute move to a totally local DLI program. Yet, he 100 percent supported the conclusions and directional change desires of our community partners.

Humility is putting the needs of others before yourself. Watching Tina's and Tom's non-public, individually

magnanimous behaviors was inspiring and influential. I will likely never forget their exemplary actions.

It's no surprise, then, to see their servant hearts at work as well. On Jan. 19, I stopped by the Dietert Center to check on last-minute details for the DLI kickoff that evening. There in the ballroom was Tina setting up the room for the 250 guests who registered for the DLI kickoff featuring the presentation "Human Spaceflight." I had assumed the setup job would be handled by others, but seeing Tina at work influenced me to join her, and soon we had a small team organizing the room.

Soon, Tom and Ginnie Moser arrived with the food and beverages for the kickoff reception. Then Tom emceed "Human Spaceflight," where we all enjoyed the opportunity to learn about America's manned spaceflight highlights from the perspectives of a NASA astronaut, flight director and chief engineer.

Vision, a focus on the greater good and humility are only a few of the many exceptional behaviors I witnessed from these two high-performance leaders. I hope their examples will prove valuable to you as you encounter opportunities to intentionally influence sustainable change within the people and projects important to you.

Well, I better stop now, as Tom and Ginnie Moser are hosting tonight's "A Diplomat Looks at the War in Iraq" class, and if I delay getting there, Tom will already have the classroom set up!

DLI Chairman Jeff Anderson is servant pastor of SERV Kerrville, a nonprofit collaborating with community partners to empower lifelong learning.