

Wing Wisdom

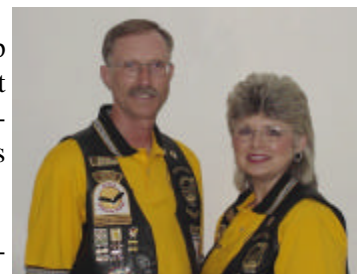
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Words from the International Directors

If I asked you to rank your top five favorite leadership responsibilities, attending meetings probably would not appear on your list. It's not that some meetings aren't enjoyable; it's just that there are plenty of other activities that leaders find more thrilling, fun or productive.



With that said, there is one kind of meeting that I absolutely love, and that is a creative meeting. For example, I once spent a few hours in a room with several people, doing nothing but talking about books (remember I am an educator and trainer). We discussed how to write better books, and we talked about which topics would add value to people's lives. In the process, we challenged each other. We built on each person's thoughts and ideas. We argued. We laughed.

Now I realize that to some of you, spending hours brainstorming about books might sound about as exhilarating as watching paint dry. But for me, it was incredibly exciting – even though I am a chemist by trade, and not an “author”. By the time I came out of that room, it was fairly late in the afternoon. After a marathon meeting like that, a guy my age ought to be getting a little tired - but I was charged up and ready to spend the evening writing (usually it is writing notes for a class or presentation)!

There's just something about meeting with a group of positive, energetic, creative people that stimulates my thoughts and spurs me to greater growth than I would be capable of on my own. We tend to thrive in a positive setting.

On the other hand, being around negative people - in a meeting, over lunch, at a football game, etc. - just takes the life right out of me. Talk about a “thought buster”. Negativity tops the chart when it comes to the forces that can stifle thought, squelch creativity and shut down idea generation.

We all know people who regularly use phrases such as "it will never work," "I'm never going to be able to get that done," "it's too hard," and "there's no way we can do it." These people don't build us up or encourage our development - they drag us down with their incessant complaining and constant negativity. If you place a high priority on creative thought, do whatever you can to limit your time with these folks, or help them to develop a new perspective on life.

Words from the International Directors *(continued)*

On a more positive note, another step you can take to increase your thinking power is to put yourself in a growth environment. If negativity is a powerful thought buster, a growth environment is an even stronger thought booster.

Here are eight characteristics of a growth environment:



1. Others are ahead of you. It's a sad day when you discover that, in every group you're in, you're at the top of your class. Such superiority might be good for your ego, but it's not healthy for your mental development. You will grow more if you are in a group of people that you can learn from.

2. You are still challenged. It doesn't matter how young or old you are—if you're bored, you won't grow. Accept new challenges and ideas.

3. Your focus is forward. There's nothing wrong with remembering the past, especially if it increases your confidence or helps you to avoid repeating costly mistakes. But growth is impossible if you think your best days are behind you - look to the future.

4. The atmosphere is affirming. Think of how you felt the last time someone affirmed you when you were struggling with a difficult assignment or situation. I'm sure you'll agree that encouragement is a powerful motivator, especially in the midst of challenging circumstances.

5. You are out of your comfort zone. It's much easier to stick with what you know, but nobody ever achieved greatness by doing that. This is one of the benefits of working with creative thinkers - they stretch you and force you to look for answers outside your normal frame of reference. A friend of mine tells me to "Think Outside the Box".

6. Failure is not feared. You may be hesitant to venture out of your comfort zone because you're afraid you'll fall flat on your face if you take a risk. But as Henry Ford once said, "Failure is only the opportunity to begin again more intelligently."

7. Others are growing. Yes, growth can be a group activity. It's often precipitated by less-than-ideal circumstances like increased competition, an economic downturn, the loss of key players, etc. But from a leadership standpoint, few things are more rewarding than watching your team become stronger through adversity.

8. There is a willingness to change. In a growth environment, you'll never hear anyone say, "But we've never done it that way before." Not everyone embraces change with the same level of enthusiasm, but people who are committed to growth don't try to run away from it.

If you are not currently participating in a growth environment, I encourage you to do what you can to make it one. Take the lead, and others will follow. When it comes to growth, there's definitely a trickle-down effect. Look at your calendar for this year – what sort of events / meetings have you planned for our GWRRA Members to help them?
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"Happiness does not depend on outward things, but on the way we see them."

- Leo Tolstoy

Words from the International Directors *(continued)*

I also want to share with you 12 pretty good rules that have been passed to me by a Navy Captain shortly after September 11, 2001. The first eleven rules were found in an FBI agent's home that died in the attack. The Captain added the 12th.

12 Pretty Good Rules:

1. Always give 100%.
2. Listen.
3. Care about each other as individuals. Be loyal.
4. Do not tolerate sloppy, lazy, or incompetent work.
5. Support your boss. Think ahead.
6. Practice the three C's: communicate, cooperate, and coordinate.
7. Always strive to be of service. Reject an "It's not my lane in the road" attitude.
8. Work hard and play hard.
9. Laugh.
10. Be quick to praise.
11. Be honest.
12. Give thanks every day for the freedom and liberty you enjoy.

Wing Ding in Fort Wayne, Indiana will be here soon – we hope to see you there! Remember to *"Promote the Experience - Share the Excitement"*.

Steve and Carolyn Cotton
International Directors – Leadership Training



Wing Ding Notes

Please review your schedules once more and contact CJ if you may have some time to volunteer a couple hours in the Leadership Training Division booth at Wing Ding. It is a great time to share your enthusiasm about LTD, help point people in the right direction, and you are guaranteed to make new friends!

Also, mark your calendars for July 7th so you can participate in the LTD meeting. Don't miss this opportunity to meet other LTD volunteers, participate in some recognition, share thoughts and ideas, and learn more about this year's curriculum changes.

"Creativity is allowing yourself to make mistakes. Art is knowing which ones to keep."

- Scott Adams

The Curriculum Corner



By the time you read this, the Training Record Cards should have arrived in your mailboxes (or maybe on your porches since we needed boxes to send them out). We were very fortunate. Nearly 11,000 cards were made up, and the only cost was the mailing from the printer and then again out to you. We sure hope you like them and that they have the desired affect – to encourage members to take more seminars. The new hanger bars and patches are being created and should be available for Wing Ding (sooner I hope).

In last month's newsletter I used a phrase that I have been using a lot lately: "row the boat." I'm not sure exactly when I started using this phrase or even why. It just came to me during an explanation of something last year and it struck a cord. I have been using it ever since, and audiences really seem to resonate with it. Simply put, it draws a parallel between oarsmen rowing a boat in unison and GWRRA officers working together to arrive at a destination. And just as oarsmen from time to time must be replaced to rest, so too should our officers get up and give their seat to fresh arms and legs. Think about the concept and then think of your own words to explain it. Pretty soon you'll be using the "Boat & Rowing" theme in some of your presentations. Try it, you might like it.

The other point that I would like to talk about this month is "freshness." No, I'm not referring to produce, nor am I inferring that anyone is less than nice. As I have been updating the curriculum, I have had to think about how I deliver some of the material. This has often made me see my presentations as stale. I have fallen into a trap. It didn't happen suddenly. No way. It just quietly crept up on me until one day I realized that I was saying the same words in the same place time after time. Of course I was (I said to myself), those are the best words to use to describe that point. Boy, could I ever justify what I was doing. But when you are changing as many documents as I am, you all of a sudden realize, there is always another way to say something.

So, my fellow Trainers, dust off some of your favorite seminars and take a really good look. You too may find some "stale" verbiage in your presentations. Shake yourselves up and you will probably find a new way to get your point across. You will even find a better way to excite your audience. The biggest pay-off will be to yourself. That's right, you will be energized and more enthusiastic that you have been for quite some time. "Freshen" up that tired presentation and see how many folks ask you about it.

CJ & Bo Karcanes
Region 'N' Trainers &
LTD Curriculum Coordinators

*"If you do not
know where
you are going,
you'll end up
some place else.*

- Yogi Berra

By The Book – The Progress Review

The “By The Book” articles are intended to help familiarize Volunteer Leaders and GWRRA Members with the guidelines, policies, procedures, and information contained in the GWRRA Officer’s Guidebook. Please feel free to reprint these articles in Region, District and Chapter newsletters.

This article is presented to familiarize all members with the processes and procedures GWRRA Volunteer Leaders utilize to better serve the membership. One process is the progress review.

One of the most difficult tasks we have as professional volunteer leaders is determining how well we are doing our “jobs.” We all gain close friendships in the process of doing these “jobs” and that’s OK but it becomes very difficult in getting objective criticisms or learning more about our weaknesses and/or strengths. GWRRA to the rescue!

If we can isolate the Learning Process from the Friend Process, we will all get more “bang-for-our-educational-buck.” GWRRA truly believes that as officers, our first responsibility is to our Membership. To serve them in the best way we know how. Our second responsibility is to ourselves. To be all we can. If we can learn to be the best, then the Membership will benefit, our spouses will benefit, our jobs will benefit, our friends will benefit. Truly a Win-Win!

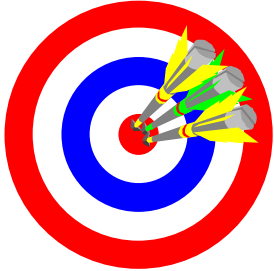
So how can we accomplish this? By the Progress Review (included in the Officer Guide Book) that lists all the different traits and job processes that we believe are necessary to be a good GWRRA officer. It is your task as a Volunteer Leader to use this format to help yourself, and your peers to become better leaders. What makes GWRRA different with this process is that this procedure will be conducted BOTH ways. You have the opportunity to review your subordinates AND your appointing officer. Properly done, we all benefit and grow! How does it work? New officers, (those with less than one year of tenure) will have the opportunity to review subordinates AND their appointing officer twice. Once, approximately five months into your tenure as an officer and secondly, approximately ten months into your term as an officer. For example, if you are a new District Director, make copies of the Review Form for each of your Chapter Directors and one for your Regional Director. Ask the CDs to honestly complete the forms and mail them to the Regional Director. He will closely scrutinize the forms, blacken out the names (and any other distinguishing ID) and return them to you, the DD. He will go over them with you, and both of you will mutually discuss objectively, how to learn to be a better officer and person. In the meantime, while this is going on, you, the DD, will write a review of your RD, and send it to the Executive Director. He will protect your ID and use your information to objectively help your RD in understanding how to better help you do your job. Do this again around October 1st. Hopefully, you will better understand how to serve your subordinates and what they need from you to do their jobs well. In addition, of course, if they are doing their jobs well, it will be easier and better for you, GWRRA and all our Members!

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“The thing always happens that you really believe in; and the belief in a thing makes it happen.”

- Frank Lloyd Wright





By The Book *(continued)*

If you are an “Old Soldier” (more than one year of tenure) you only need to do this process once, around October 1st. Follow the procedure as mentioned above. Naturally, you do not have to wait until Review time to communicate! We all hope (and expect) that you and all of us will stay in communication as often as needed, which in the beginning, is especially necessary! Enjoy the abilities of your peers! The important thing about this Review process is to learn to be all we can be. Do not fall into the trap of doing reviews as if the Reviewed is the Almighty himself. You know, perfect marks on everything! This is a tool to help you and us, eliminate our weaknesses and improve our strengths. Long live GWRRA’s strengths and good luck with your education process!

Harry Dollarhide
Region H Trainer

Information Filters

Thinking is very chaotic. The neurons in your brain fire at a speed of a hundred billion times per second and make connections randomly with past experiences and present information while trying to adapt to the current environment or the current challenge. How do you obtain the information? How do you store and use the information? How do you give that information meaning?

As you may recall, studies on listening have found that a person retains only about 25 percent of what is heard twenty-four hours after hearing it. A better system is needed to learn what is already known, as well as for retaining and storing information so that it can be recalled more efficiently. This is only one of many considerations when discussing topics such as memory skills and active listening.

One model of this process involves information filters. Think of this information filter as having four circular layers. Each ring of this filter feeds into the next one toward the center, resulting in the total of all you know.

1. The outer circle represents exposure or the things you have experienced in your life. There are always going to be limits on what you have seen and experienced no matter how active, well read, or well traveled you have been. If you want to know more, you need to increase the number of things you are exposed to - more ideas, more experiences, and more overall information.
2. Going inward, the next circle is attention or what you have paid attention to during those “exposures.” Keep in mind that many things do not enter your perception because you aren’t paying attention to them as they occurred. Try to notice more patterns in things, people and feelings. Look around for more details. Typically these details will help you to better understand and retain what you have experienced.
3. The next circle is called perspective or point of view. The way you look at things can limit how much of the details you perceive or what aspect of the experiences you perceive. Try to see things from different angles. What’s going on in your mind? Can you switch to a different point of view, or are you rigidly locked in to only one? Can you stretch your point of view to consider ideas from others? The more ways you can see something, the more elements of it you will perceive.

*“The future
belongs to those
who believe
in the beauty
of their dreams.”*

- Eleanor Roosevelt

Information Filters *(continued)*

4. The innermost circle is called retention or memory. Memory is notorious for being selective. Your memory of what you were exposed to selects how much of that experience you really know. However, you can improve your skills for storing, sorting, and categorizing information so that your brain retains more of it.

In summary, everything you know or suspect to be true is based on the limited amount of information that has come through these four filters. The more you are exposed to, the more you can potentially learn and know. The more you pay attention to, the more you can understand. The more you shift to varying points of view, the more thoroughly you can understand it. The more you can recall and retain, the more you will be able to use information when you need it.

One application of these memory skills is remembering names. Watch for next month's article where some exercises and ideas to help with memory skills will be presented.

Amy Peterson
Region E Trainer

*"Do what you can
with what you have,
where you are."*

-Theodore Roosevelt

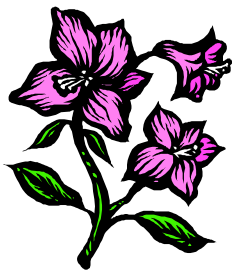
Reinvent Yourself Through Change

Matt Krumrie shared the following ideas in the 1/23/05 *Star Tribune* newspaper regarding things to keep mind when considering making changes:

- **Make a change list:**
Make a list of the things you can change and the things you can't.
- **Question assumptions:**
There is often more room for change than you might think. Look at your assumptions about what isn't possible and challenge those assumptions.
- **Take control:**
Too many people wait passively for things to get better. The only person who is going to make that happen is you. Take control by taking action. Start taking steps to make a change right away, even if they are only small ones. Action creates opportunity. Inaction only leaves you stuck in a rut.
- **Seek out change:**
Feeling in a rut often comes from experiencing the "same ol' same ol' " your brain can go into cruise control.

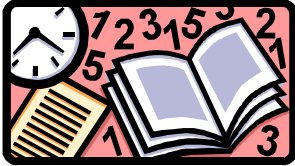
Krumrie also offered the following ideas for seeking out change:

- Once a week, find a way to step out of your comfort zone. It will wake you up.
- Take on new responsibilities.
- Change your environment. Redecorate your office/cubicle (or a space where you spend a lot of time).
- Seek out new insights and new perspectives. Find a mentor. Take someone fascinating out to lunch.
- Introduce one new thing to your routine each week.
- Seek out opportunities to meet new people. Join an organization or club that interests you.



Calendar of Training

There is training scheduled out there, but most of the details are being missed. Your training details (when sent to Amy Peterson) are being forwarded to the International Office for publishing on the www.gwrra.org website. In order to make this information sharing the most effective possible, please continue to send your newsletters and/or training event details to Amy Peterson at amysescape@aol.com (or fax to 763-755-8397) as soon as possible.



November 2005

11/05-11/06: Horizon Program in Des Moines, IA (Region E). Contact Amy Peterson 763-783-1851 or amysescape@aol.com.

International LTD Staff Listing

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*"You can't build
a reputation
on what you're
going to do."*

- Henry Ford

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