

# The CHOICE Connection

Positive strategies. Practical solutions.



constructive  
**CHOICE**  
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## Quotable Quotes

*"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."* ~ Helen Keller

*"True leadership must be for the benefit of the people, not the enrichment of the institution."* ~ Loren Gresham

*"Leadership is action, not position."* ~ Donald H. McGannon

*"I have a different vision of Leadership. A Leadership is someone who brings people together."* ~ George W. Bush

Dear Jean,

I am amazed at how much information regarding leadership is available to us. I typically start the writing of my newsletter by finding quotes that inspire me and then begin combing through Amazon for books that entice me to learn more and have good ratings. I then move on to searching through the internet to see if there are sites related to leadership specifics. This month I thought I was going to focus on the aspect of recruiting and working with volunteers and the challenges in leading them. Although, volunteers are key resources in a community, it appears they are one small part of the whole. My greatest find in my internet search was stumbling across a site promoting a Community Leadership Summit - that is free and has been held annually for the last six years. We are all a part of communities - several in fact within our local and geographical areas. Join me in a thoughtful exploration of leadership, its impact and value to the communities we live in.

With Joy,

## Leadership, You and Your Community

For years my narrow thinking regarding leadership focused on leadership at work. I have in years past been involved in my church communities and often found myself in a leadership role within these groups. I just didn't think of this as being a leader within a community, although there are aspects within a faith based community that run parallel with your local city and civic minded communities.



Eight years ago, I was referred to a municipal department that was under the jurisdiction of a volunteer committee responsible for an oversight of accountability. I committed to two three-year terms serving in a role as a volunteer management consultant. An interesting framework to be committee volunteers and oversee the quality of work the organization produced. Even more interesting to be at the table with the department employees, the city legal staff and management working in a collaborative manner to mitigate the potential of negative impacts to the city. I learned many valuable lessons from my observations of the leaders sitting around the conference table and how their styles generated the negative and positive impacts to relationships.

My research for this month's topic of Leadership, You and Your Community uncovered a resource that has an interesting view of the competencies it takes to develop yourself as a leader in a community. The following overarching structure is attributed to James F. Krile. The resource is the *Community Leadership Handbook: Framing Ideas, Building Relationships and Mobilizing Resources*. Mr. Krile identifies three competencies. These three competencies - framing ideas, building and using social capital and mobilizing resources, when blended together, strengthen the impact of a leader within a community. The key words for me as I perused the book are his inclusion of assets and data, visioning, action, people and relationships. As most handbooks do, he also provides tools to support the different elements for each of these competencies. While I did not read the book in any great depth, I am intrigued by his framework and the practical tools he offers to his readers.

The first competency, Framing Ideas, focuses on knowing your community and gathering the data to understand where the community is today. I love the fact that Mr. Krile promotes visioning through the use of Appreciative Inquiry as a tool to determine where the community desires to grow and then build an action plan to support the community vision. I am a fan of Appreciative Inquiry used by organizations and believe this is a powerful tool as well for any community.

The second competency, Using Social Capital, focuses on effective communication, managing conflict and cultural nuances and how you map and connect these elements of your social capital. As the title of his handbook suggests this competency is directed toward building relationships. The tools offered in the handbook are focused on communication skill

building - both verbal and visual. The verbal skills are focused on working through conflict and strengthening your skills of influence and relationships. The visual art of the communication is demonstrated in his tool that supports mapping the social capital.

The third competency addressed in this framework is directed toward the recognition and engaging your resources - mobilizing them into the actions designed with the framing of ideas. There is no one group of people left out. Mr. Krile addresses the connection of your stakeholders, coalitions, teams and volunteers. Regardless of whether a community activity or effort is funded and managed within a working organization, there will be partners, teams and volunteers.

What continues to surprise me having been on and working with partners, teams and volunteers is the untapped leaders and leadership potential that is often hidden among these resources. Your gift, in addition to being a leader in your community, may actually be your discovery and development of more community leaders - those waiting to be asked to step up. The success of mobilizing your resources doesn't just come from recruiting, your community leadership success is enhanced by your willingness to engage, develop and provide feedback to all.

## **Tools and Resources FROM THE BOOKSHELF**

[Community Leadership Handbook: Framing Ideas, Building Relationships and Mobilizing Resources](#) by James F. Krile (2006). A roadmap to community leadership to give community members like yourself the tools to bring people together to make changes.

[How to Develop Leadership Skills: Become an Effective Leader at Work, Home and in the Community](#) by Joan Mullally, Helen Armitage, Carolyn Stone, Andrew P. Simon, and Annabelle Stevens (2012). Leadership over adults and leadership over youth - are you ready for the challenges and responsibilities?

[Future Focused Leadership: Preparing Schools, Students and Communities for Tomorrow's Realities](#) by Gary Marx (2006). The connected leader, a scan of the environment, creating a vision of the future, future-focused communication and moving to action.

[Uplifting Leadership: How Organizations, Teams, and Communities Raise Performance](#) by Andy Hargreaves, Alan Boyle and Alma Harris (2014). Dreaming with Determination, Creativity and Counter-Flow, Collaboration with Competition, Pushing and Pulling, Measuring with Meaning, Sustainable Success, Uplifting Action.

[Everyone Leads: Building Leadership for the Community Up](#) by Paul Schmitz (2011). Public allies and their five core values.

## **THE INTERNET CONNECTIONS**

[Community Toolbox](#), Chapter 13. Section 3. Styles of Leadership; Section 5. Developing a Leadership Corps; Chapter 14. Section 1. How to be a Community Leader

[Leadership Centre County](#). A Program for developing leaders.

[Heartland Center for Leadership Development](#). The Heartland Center for Leadership Development is an independent, nonprofit organization developing local leadership that responds to the challenges of the future of small towns and rural communities.

[Community Leadership Summit](#). An annual event, six years running and free. In 2015, it was held in Portland, OR.

## Reflection

Are you a leader within your community? Do you want to be? If you consider the three competencies mentioned above, which competency is your strength? Which competency would you want to develop? What competency might never be your strength and thus you would ensure you have a partner who brings this strength to the table?

### **Framing Ideas - my strengths are ... my development opportunities are:**

Analysis of the challenges and opportunities  
Data access and organization  
Visioning  
Designing a positive future state  
Developing and implementing the designs into action

### **Building Relationships - my strengths are ... my development opportunities are:**

Communication skills - both verbal and written  
Managing conflict  
Engaging cultural diversity  
Mapping social capital

### **Mobilizing Resources - my strengths are ... my development opportunities are:**

Identifying and connecting with stakeholders  
Creating alliances  
Developing teams  
Securing and fostering volunteer support

Which of these fall into your Community Leadership development plan to include the gifts you can share and the elements still to be learned?

## Choose To

Envision your leadership potential in your communities ... know your community ... design your community engagement ... translate your vision of leadership into action ... create your alliances ... strengthen your communication skills ... expand your cultural awareness ... connect with the community champions, the partners, the teams and your volunteers ... ask for more ... receive what is given ... say thank you.



## November Joyful Observances

Family Stories Month

[Movember \(or NoSHAVEmber\) Month](#)

National Inspirational Role Models Month

National Memoir Writing Month

[Sweet Potato Awareness Month](#)

World Communication Week (November 1-7)

Sherlock Holmes Weekend (November 6-8)

[World Kindness Week](#) (November 9-15)

National Family Week (November 22-28)

Better Conversation Week (November 23-29)

All Saints' Day (November 1)

National Men Make Dinner Day (November 5) Must cook, No BBQ allowed!

Loosen Up, Lighten Up Day (November 14)

[National Philanthropy Day](#) (November 15)

Family Volunteer Day (November 21)

Buy Nothing Day (November 27)

## **Administrivia**

My Constructive Choices Audience...

- \* Professionals wanting to be at choice in their career and daily work,
- \* New managers (and aspiring leaders) transitioning to establish a leadership role in their communities,
- \* Individuals wanting to sort through the choices, build a more fulfilling life, live their voices, and...
- \* Coaches who choose to step out, show up, and say - YES, it IS all about YOU!

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