
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

Vol. 1, No. 44. July 24, 2009

Hello, Everyone:

When we think about people who lead, we usually categorize them according to the position they hold. We often think that the higher the position, the greater the leader. But that's not the meaning of leadership. Have you ever come across someone who has a high position but when you really look, no one is following them?

You don't need a position or a fancy title to be a leader. Leadership is the ability to influence others to better themselves and to pick themselves up when they feel down and out. We've talked about a book the leadership team has studied at our retreats, *The Leadership Challenge* by Kouzes and Posner, and the five principals of leadership. These are things that real leaders do, and that have nothing to do with one's position. Another is *Our Iceberg is Melting*, by Kotter and Rathgeber. Your regional managers and facility directors have copies of these books, if you would like to read them.

One great leader I came across while I was in Oklahoma was a guy named Jack Rector. Jack was a true leader who lived each one of the five principles. He was an executive with the Oklahoma Gas and Electric Co. and held office in a number of business and civic organizations in Oklahoma. But Jack was also the heart and soul of the Oklahoma City Running Club, and it was through its training program that Jack's leadership abilities really stood out. Jack inspired people to achieve things they never imagined for themselves. He coached ordinary people into becoming marathon runners. Jack probably went to his grave last December at age 83, never knowing how much he influenced people. Jack was a competitive runner for 48 years, and he ran in races worldwide. He always wanted to qualify for the Boston Marathon. He did not succeed in qualifying until he was 78 years old. Of course, he finished the marathon for his age group. Jack was the leader of a running group in Oklahoma City that began training for the Inaugural Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon in 2001. He was 76. Jack went out before 7 a.m. every Saturday morning when the runners trained, to set up water stations every three miles (and took them down when practice was ended). He also ran every mile of every training session, in any kind of weather condition, and encouraged all the trainee runners to keep going. When Jack fell and skinned his arms and knees, he got back up and kept on going. Jack inspired everyone around him to do their best.

Jack was a truly great leader – supportive, inspirational, never discouraged, and always got up when he was down. Jack thought anybody could do anything, and taught that sometimes our minds set limits for us. He and his wife encouraged runners and taught them that success was all in the mind. Notably, Jack encouraged and inspired a blind runner to train and be successful. He devised a way for the blind runner to work with a partner or mentor to keep him moving in the right direction. That's what great leaders do. They find a way help others succeed. And that does not take a title or high position. That comes from the heart. He **Modeled the Way, Inspired a Shared Vision, Challenged the Process, Enabled Others to Act and Encouraged the Heart.**

I want each one of you to succeed. I want each of our kids to succeed. I want to do everything possible to support your success. I know you can do it. I know, because I see ordinary employees doing extraordinary things every day to meet the mission.

Thanks for all you do, every day in every office and facility. Have a great weekend.

Sincerely,

“Doc” *Dr. Mary Livers*

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