

Of Genuine and Effective Leadership - 01/07/2010

Contributed by Angelo Daniel Parcon
Thursday, 07 January 2010
Last Updated Thursday, 07 January 2010

Letting the new members shine

Vol. 2, No. 2 * January 7, 2010

By JCI Mem. ANGELO DANIEL R. PARCON

2007 President

Exactly twenty-five years ago today, I lost my father to cardiac arrest. His first, and unfortunately his last. I was seven years old then and words could not describe the grief and anguish that I had to go through in the first few days realizing that I won't be seeing him anymore.

Being second to the youngest, I was quite close to my dad. There was a time when our mom would be the one who'd accompany my older brothers and sister when they'd visit our mom's hometown in Butuan City. It was just my dad, my younger brother and I who was left in Cebu. One of my fondest memories with him was when the three of us would hear mass at the Redemptorist Church, had ice cream cones at Coney Island and finally he'd take us and buy us as many comic books as we wanted on Sundays.

It was simply devastating losing him like that.

EVER THE OPTIMIST

Little did I know then that his passing would play a very important role in my formation and would act as a fuel to fire the passion and determination that would someday make me into who I am today. I have five other siblings, from then on our mother had five boys and a single rose who would look to her for guidance as we grew older. Our eldest was just fourteen then and he was abruptly thrust into the role as a father figure to us five other younger kids of whom the youngest, the one who was born after me, was just four when we lost our dad.

To put it bluntly, we were literally thrown into the fire of what is called life. To ease the pressure off of our mother, we all chose to take the bull by the horns and try to weave through the trials and tribulations we encounter when we were able to.

That is when I come to the topic on how we can aid the personal growth of a local organization's members, particularly the new members. When a person chooses to join JCI, they already took the first step in trying to become a better person on their own accord. If the local organization chooses to baby them too much, it's tantamount to stunting their growth as a person and as a leader. It's not a secret that man has this predictable characteristic to assimilate easily to something that they're comfortable with. "Spoon-feeding" a member is one such situation.

LETTING THEM RUN THE SHOW

Since 2006, when we first founded JCI Cebu-Mactan Channel, we've always preached the idea of having new members undergo three very important trainings when they joined us: A New Members Orientation (which was preceded by a Coffee Conversations session), the Vanguard Leader's Course and a Project Management Seminar. After which they would be given the chance to be a project chairperson of a project of their choice.

It was but natural that you could see fear, anxiety and a rush of mixed emotions on their faces when you would tell them "What project would you choose to chair?". Some would balk at the idea, while some, as I said, would take the bull by the horns.

Of course we do not toss them immediately into the mix without a guiding eye to watch over them. For every new member who would chair a project, as much as possible, we would pair them off with a regular "veteran" member to provide advice when needed in the project that they would be collaborating in. But we make it a point that room for growth for the new member will always be given a premium. "Veteran" members have already had their time, they make it a point to work for and allow the new ones to be the ones to shine.

In 2009, we were blessed to have members joining us who all chose to take the bull by the horns and literally threw themselves into the projects that they chose to chair. I would not deny the fact that to a certain point; I had moments of hesitation whether they could handle the immense responsibilities in the projects that they chose to involve themselves in. I was thankful that they all proved me wrong and all passed their trials, with flying colors even.

Our set up in JCI is much like corporate offices; Presidents, Vice Presidents, Board of Directors, et al. But what makes us placed on the other end of the spectrum is, in JCI we're all allowed to make mistakes. We are, of course, a process oriented organization; unlike the corporate world which is a results oriented environment.

DO
NOT BE AFRAID

That is why we should never be afraid to let our new members join the fray and allow them to be project chairpersons and let them have a feel by having them run the show but at the same time continually guide them on how to do it the JCI way. We can make mistakes, as long as we don't make the same mistake twice. We can make mistakes, because it is through these mistakes that we learn how to do it better. We all make mistakes, both the "veteran" members and the new members. And that is one other aspect which allows us to grow even further as persons and leaders. We just have to make sure that we learn from our mistakes.

I have borne witness to how our new members in 2009 spread their wings and showed their true potentials to become important assets to the JCI movement. Not only did they show the spunk and the tenacity that defined us a "young" JCI local organization, but they emanated the passion and determination that symbolizes a true young active citizen. One can read about the projects that they chose to handle in the contents of this website.

In closing, don't be afraid to let your new members shine. Do not be afraid to cut the so-called umbilical cord that could prove to be a stumbling block to their growth. Do not be afraid to make mistakes. Do not be afraid to throw them into the fire.

For the new members,

do not be afraid to take the challenges head on. Better yet, do not wait to be thrown into the fire, just jump in!

P.S. Happy New Year everyone! I trust all of you have had an incredible holiday season!

Disclaimer: I do not claim to have found the formula for GENUINE and EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP nor do I claim to be a genuine and effective leader though I sincerely seek to be one. This column is my quest towards being a genuine and effective leader and my insights from my JCI experiences that would hopefully lead me there. Let me hear your thoughts too by leaving a comment here.