

## Leadership

Marny Morin



# The Tenets of True Leadership

Leadership is an issue that affects all of us. We exercise it every day; we lead in our businesses; we guide our children; we organize dinners, carpools, sports teams, and conveyance transactions.

We are thrust into many different leadership roles throughout our lives. We are called upon to be custodians of what is right and good, lasting, and of value for those in our care.

Alexander the Great conquered and ruled the world, but not because he was born a prince. He achieved greatness because Aristotle—also a great man—taught him how to grasp success and run with it. It is no coincidence that Aristotle learned how to be successful from another great man, Plato. And Plato learned from Socrates . . .

Leadership is not just for people at the top. It's a competency; you can learn to expand your perspective, set the context of a goal, understand the dynamics of human behaviour, and take initiative to get where you want to be. To acquire whatever quality or skill you want to develop, you should hang out with the people who have it. You achieve success and happiness by starting with the right teacher.

The Society of Notaries Public has evolved over 75 years to what it is today, a small organization with a magnitude of responsibility, the trust of public and government, and a diverse membership. Without strong leadership, this evolution would not have been possible.

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The legend of Dr. Bernard Hoeter is well known to our members and supporters. At every seminar and social function I have attended as a Notary, anecdotes about the leadership role of Dr. Hoeter abound. In his era, his role was king—Aristotle, if you will; the functioning of The Society and acceptance into its membership was largely up to him.

Stan Nicol followed Dr. Hoeter as Secretary, and encouraged a more hands-on approach by the Board of The Society. He and the Board saw his role

more as facilitator than outright leader. Stan and the Board worked hard to develop strong committees, including the Membership and Credentials Committee, and to set policy.

Today, Wayne Braid mans the title of Secretary/Executive Director. He is working as facilitator with the Board to make The Society global and take it into the 21st Century.

Team leadership is an art. A facilitator is a catalyst who stimulates a group to work together effectively as a team. The facilitator acts as trainer, assistant, mentor, and partner. Each role draws the required response from the team to achieve the desired result.

The Directors on our Board are a diverse group; each brings a definitive skill or talent to the team. The worker-bees, the visionaries, the thinkers, and the movers-and-shakers are all represented on the Board. Effective leaders listen, respond, and lead by listening to others and by sharing their own ideas in an ever-changing internal and external environment. It is their function to help us create a more accurate and constructive view of reality by painting the larger picture—which

some of us often don't like or don't accurately visualize.

True leadership is and has always been a selfless action. It involves taking yourself out of the situation and considering the needs of others. It asks what is right or best in the wider interest. True leadership does not take away an individual's freedom, choice, accountability, or responsibility. Just as the leader is to be serving and taking into account the ideas and needs of those they lead, the followers must do the same. In doing so, leader and follower practise self-restraint, develop character, integrate discipline, and show respect for other people. This promotes a self-leadership environment where all are empowered and working toward the good of the whole because it is in the best interest of all.

True leadership means taking others' ideas and feelings into account while holding in trust—keeping as boundaries or guardrails—the group's ideals, beliefs, and hopes.

This is the tightrope our Board members and Secretary/Executive Director walk. The small size of our organization gives us an advantage in that our leaders are closer to the membership. At the same time, our size can create or foster tension if the membership perceives the Directors (colleagues and peers) are imposing their will in ways that may or may not be perceived to be in the individual members' best interests.

It is my view that our Board and Wayne walk this walk admirably as did those who served before them. They are committed to the integrity and longevity of The Society and its members. They deserve our thanks and our respect. ▲

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