

“SOARING TO NEW HEIGHTS”

Annual Volunteer Appreciation Night
Organized by Parkland County, Alberta
Held at the Clymont Hall, on Highway 60, South of Enoch
April 5, 2014

The presentation was creatively and skillfully integrated into the evening’s theme by using a kite for an analogy.

These are the nuggets that I gleaned from Brent Collingwood’s inspiring presentation

- *as recounted by Sherrill Thompson*

THE KITE ANOLOGY

PRESENTER: BRENT COLLINGWOOD

A) THE FABRIC / MATERIAL

The fabric is the essence of a kite. It must be woven tightly in order for the kite to be able to soar. We (the people) are the fabric – the “Fabric of Society”. An individual strand represents one person. What would your organization look like?

Quote by Henry Ward Beecher: “Socially we are woven into the fabric of society, where every man is like one thread in a piece of cloth. No single thread has a right to say, "I will stay here no longer," and draw out. No man has a right to make a hole in the well-woven fabric of society.”

B) THE FRAME OF THE KITE

A kite can’t fly without a frame.

This represents the structure of the activities that you do; the governance model or structure. You can fly the kite successfully if the frame is strong.

C) THE STRING

This is the connector to the kite (which is the community) and the person holding it.

- 1) Connection to your organization
- 2) Connection to the community
- 3) Connection to society at large

D) PERSON HOLDING THE KITE

The operator represents the people that you serve (constituent).

In order to get the kite to fly, you have to fly your kite straight into the wind. This wind represents problems.

Sometimes after a group of people combat a set of major problems over a long period of time and then they gain success, they can lose their “compass”. In the past the challenge has been fixed and the organization’s identity has been wrapped up in that particular challenge. Once

the people have solved that problem and it does not exist any more there is a tendency to struggle with their identity.

We need to keep challenging the next problems. Cherish the next problem and grab onto it.

FIVE GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO HELP YOU SOAR TO NEW HEIGHTS

A) JUST SAY YES

Look for strategic opportunities that will cause you and your opportunity to grow (he mentioned how getting married could be one example – it's hard and takes work but there is good reason to say yes to the commitment of marriage)

Here are the top ten skills to emphasize in your organization:

- 10) Organizational skills
- 9) Time management
- 8) Resourcefulness
- 7) Communication skills
- 6) Negotiating for yes
- 5) Teamwork
- 4) Conflict resolution skills
- 3) Strategic planning skills
- 2) Conflict management skills
- 1) Leadership skills

Leadership must grow from within. Help others thrive and grow. Soar to new heights. Support each other. Watch for burnout and avoid it.

B) LOOK UP AND REACH OUT

Faith Popcorn for example has talked about society "cocooning", and we should guard against that becoming too extreme.

One example: Netflix – you can sit and watch a movie without going anywhere.

We have lost a lot of the interaction between people.

In many situations, nobody is talking to anyone any more.

The human community is equally as important as "friends" on Facebook.

Without interaction with each other, societies could fail and not function properly.

We need to look up (and not be so involved with other things that keep us within ourselves).

Our task / our job / our roles are to reach out to society and interact with others and find each of our places as part of the fabric of society.

C) FALL INSTEAD OF FAIL

Change the word “fail” to “fall”. When the kite didn’t work, did it fail? – NO - it fell. Sometimes we have to pick up the kite again and start or try it again. Sometimes we have to fix the kite and start over. If we change the word “fail” to “fall”, we never will fail. Get up, and try again.

D) IF NOT NOW, THEN WHEN?

Procrastination is one of our greatest things we must work against. It is not a race – there is no starting gun, no finish line. There is no time like the present to start.

Quote by Anne Frank: “How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.”

Quote by Norman Vincent Peale:
“The really happy people are those who have broken the chains of procrastination, those who find satisfaction in doing the job at hand. They're full of eagerness, zest, productivity. You can be, too.”

Reference to a quote by Martin Luther King: The best thing to do is the right thing; the worst thing is to do nothing.

E) HAVE FUN!

If you’re not having fun, it’s just work – you’re not having fun!

Reference to a quote by John Lennon: The things we remember most are not “things” at all – they are memories of being with other people.

Don’t forget your “love to do” list.
You have a choice to continue to volunteer.
You’ll never know what impact you’ll have on the lives of others.
A touch ... a smile ... a listening ear ... a compliment ... a compassionate act

Reference to a quote by Tom Strauss: It only takes a moment ...