

Expectations

Presentation by DONA Gladys Weems at 2011 GWR Leadership Training Retreat

To be eligible to be a Soroptimist we must either be or have been actively engaged in a business or profession. Therefore, as professionals, we often find ourselves in positions of taking the lead. We do this in our families, our churches, other organizations we belong to, in our social groups and neighborhoods. With all this experience, it should be an easy step to a leadership role in your club.

As a leader, it is important to share with your members what you expect of them. This also applies to your relationship with the board of directors of your club. It is also necessary to listen to them to know what they expect of you. The better understanding we have of each other's expectations of ourselves and others, the smoother things will be. I suspect when you ask the question, "What are your expectations of me?" you'll probably hear some of the following comments:

1. Respect for each other. It is paramount to your success. Avoid being confrontational. By being sensitive to the words you speak and the tone of your voice, you give respect and dignity, which we all deserve.
2. Always tell the truth and act with integrity. Don't patronize your members. Be sincere. They'll respect you for your honesty.
3. Be passionate about the organization's mission to help women and girls. Lead others with enthusiasm and excitement. Let your members know what you believe by sharing your ideas and thoughts. Instill in them your excitement and passion.
4. Be adaptable. Stay creative and have the courage to do things differently. Be willing to think a new thought and share it with others. We must be able to change some things or be left behind. Let go of the past in order to grab hold of a different future. Growing stagnant is not an option.

Someone had the idea of moving bathroom facilities from the outhouse into a special room in the house. Many thought this was deplorable. I, for one, am glad there were those that were adaptable to this "new" idea.

5. You will have a crisis or two, so learn how to manage them. Don't panic. Take a deep breath and relax. I always like to remind others that we are not engaged in brain surgery. Know what is negotiable and what is not. Pick your battles wisely. Timing is everything and don't allow a problem to fester. Deal with it right away. By delaying, you may do more harm. Problems seldom just go away when we ignore them.
6. Keep communications open. Don't create an atmosphere that allows for barriers that inhibit the ability to learn, grow and move forward. Encourage others to share thoughts and ideas. Learn to listen and handle adversity while adhering to your beliefs. Take the heat and move on. It's not the end of the world.
7. Know that we succeed or fail together. Your success as a leader is linked to the success of your members.

8. Always be open to ways to improve something. Don't get stuck in "that's the way we've always done it." If that's true, it's probably time to change.
9. Find ways to not only create a vision for the future, but also become that "vision" now.
You must first envision it before you can be it.
You must be it before you can do it.
You must do it before you can have it and only
When you have it, can you then claim it.
It's called Success!
10. Work with a sense of urgency. We don't have unlimited time and nothing lasts forever. Each accomplishment is only a stepping-stone to the next opportunity that lies ahead.
11. Build a team ego. Put the group first and help others around you feel better. Make them proud to be a Soroptimist and a member of your club. Let them know they are making history every day. Build a team culture with shared values.
12. Look for ways to create opportunities for the members to develop and grow. The more they become, the more they can offer to not only the club's success, but their own personal success as well.
13. Meetings: get in and get out! That's all I gotta say.
14. Promote and support a balanced club life. Embrace the fact that we all have a life outside of our club activities and respect that.
15. Show appreciation with personal recognition. Our members are the most valuable resource we have. Recognize that there are unique talents, experiences and various levels of expertise that reside within your membership, which will make all the difference between success and failure.

Remember to praise in public and when it is necessary to offer suggestions for doing better; it is always best to criticize in private.
16. Communicate what you want. Don't assume others will figure it out. None of us are mind readers. Keep members informed and one-on-one as necessary. We cannot hold others responsible for what they do not know. Make sure the message is understood.
17. Be your own messenger. Talk frequently with the members to reaffirm the club's mission and focus. Constantly keep it out there. Let others see you lead.
18. Be an "intentional" leader. Do what it takes to make it happen. There is no such thing as "trying." You either get the results you want or you don't. Find what works best for you.
19. Take personal ownership and pride in all you are responsible for. Don't be afraid to fail. It is part of the leadership package. Comes with the territory. But remember, when you fail, fail fast, learn from it and keep moving forward. If you feel you must apologize, do so – but only once. Every time you offer another apology for the same mistake, it only serves to remind others of your failure. Blows it all out of proportion.

20. Always “be of service.” Stay true to others and those that are depending on you for your leadership.

Leadership is not something you do to people; it’s something you do with people. It is working together toward a common goal.

Ask yourself, “What are your expectations for yourself.”