

Evaluation of S.F. Bay Area Executive Director Retreat

75% of the ED's who completed the 6-month follow-up survey said they would attend a second ED Retreat.

Qualitative feedback from the Executive Directors:

I believe that many of us learned a lot more than we anticipated we would. Tony's workshops fueled conversations that continued through dinners, evening walks on the beach, and late night groups who gathered around wine and intense conversation. We learned new information to take back home, information that will strengthen our organizations and ourselves as the leaders of those organizations. I believe that there was tremendous energy produced by so many intense and passionate people coming together in such a beautiful location... Tony helped us regain our focus and renew our passion and vision!

-- Janna Genovese, Executive Director, Womenspace Unlimited

Tony was the perfect facilitator as he had walked the path I am on...I need more time for myself, I need to find balance and hone skills for my staff. I can learn a lot from Tony's calmness and integrity.

-- Suzanne McKechnie Klahr, Executive Director, YouthBuild

I want to attend annually – Tony is great!

-- James Reber, Executive Director, Young Audiences of San Jose & Silicon Valley

The ED Retreat certainly hit the spot. Tony did a great job of facilitating the event and bringing people together.

-- Robin Holcomb, Executive Director, Family Connections

More feedback from participating Executive Directors:

The ED Retreat reinforced some sense of my ability to be a leader and gave me opportunities and tools to look at areas where I am lacking.

I feel like more of a 'team player' as opposed to a 'one person show. It can be hard in small organizations with isolation.

The ED Retreat reinforced the importance of delegating and letting staff work to meet the goals.

I came with one main issue I wanted to work on – balance/time management. I realize that many other ED's struggle with this same issue. I got validation and

permission (underline theirs) from my peers to make changes, ask for help and set boundaries.

The ED Retreat has reinforced some things, especially the importance of delegation, focusing on the big picture and long-range planning.

I will now try having a different program staff-person run the staff meetings, not just me all the time.

I was sure I would quit by June 30. I can see myself staying longer. I trust my instincts and self more now.

The ED Retreat has made me more interested in staying involved with human services work.

The ED Retreat addressed my current issue of time management.

The ED Retreat offered good reminders about patience and understanding with staff.

I most enjoyed the leadership and balance workshops – they were wonderful!

I loved the breakout sessions because it was so wonderful to have the full attention and focus of 3-4 others to offer help in working on my issues...I really enjoyed the interaction with others and honesty and trust to speak about real issues.

I liked the approach of engaging participants on panels—learning from one another.

Six months after the retreat, participants were sent a follow-up questionnaire to assess how they were applying the skills they learned at the ED Retreat in practice. Feedback from the follow-up questionnaire:

The ‘Management by Walking Around’ concept at the retreat was important for me. I spend a lot more time now walking around our offices talking with staff and clients. At first, staff were a little “intimidated” and would stop talking to each other when I approached, but fortunately that was short-lived. I’ve learned so much from them in the last six months!

I learned the importance of setting aside thinking/planning time and that it’s OK to do this.

I feel less isolated and lonely, and I valued the exchange from peers, particularly from the skill workshops and panel discussions.

I learned that it is normal to feel lonely as a young ED.

I believe that the ED Retreat allowed me to get back in touch with some important concepts that I had long forgotten. I made new friends and expanded my own horizons. Through that I have been able to view my work differently and inspire others to keep moving when they feel overwhelmed. I have a vision for the future of our organization and with the Board and Staff I believe that we will get there. I feel a renewed sense of pride in where we have been and where we are going.

I still sometimes struggle with being able to actually 'listen' and remain in the present but at least when I'm not listening, I'm usually aware of it.

I now see the Board, Organization and Me as parts of an organizational wheel...I am definitely more comfortable asking for help than I was.

We (leaders included) all need to have balance in our lives. I'm slowly beginning to realize the magnitude of this simple, yet very important statement.

Since this conference I have been working to be a more peaceful person (damn, it's hard).

I would have to say that Tony's "Success vs. Happiness" concept was an important one for me. Last year we provided services to over 3,000 women and children. I consider our organization very successful! However, the emotional price for me was that I had become too busy to stop, breathe, and enjoy the success of our vision. Although my workload has not lessened since the retreat, I have consciously relaxed and smiled a whole lot more! I have in turn asked my staff and Board to do the same. Our passion is the same, we just express it differently.

I am now more accepting of admitting when I am wrong.

75% of ED's surveyed reported that they have met since the ED Retreat with other retreat participants for peer support. From Janna Genovese, ED of Womenspace Unlimited:

My contact with other ED's has been invaluable to me. It has made a professional and personal difference in my work. When I went to the ED Retreat I was feeling mild burnout after sixteen years as the ED of our organization. I was feeling quite isolated and unsure if I wanted to continue on or move in a new direction. I was totally rejuvenated by my 'Asilomar Experience' and have not only been able to regain my passion and vision but have been able to reach out to some of the new ED's in my area and have been mentoring them.