

Feedback from a recent Staff Leadership Retreat for the 35 staff of the Social Services Division of the Latin American Youth Center in Washington D.C. :

I thought the facilitation was great. Tony did an excellent job of keeping everyone on task and holding interest throughout—what could have been—a very long day. His facilitation style was relaxed and engaging. He made an effort to connect with the group by sharing pieces of himself and his own history, and by consistently soliciting feedback on activities and agenda items. I appreciated Tony's sincerity, his flexibility, and his obvious expertise in the topics discussed.

I thought that Tony's approach to leadership was straightforward, thought provoking, and accessible. The retreat was well organized, and followed a natural progression in looking at leadership from both a personal and professional perspective.

Tony discussed empathy as acknowledging the past, trust as something that is developed in the present, and passion as building a collective vision for the future. The retreat workshops closely followed that model, allowing those in attendance the opportunity to reflect on past successes and failures, to reconnect with their motivation and, through it, their commitment and to set standards for future achievement.

I feel as if I learned a great deal about several of my co-workers. I particularly enjoyed the opening "introduction" activity. While it obviously became quite emotional for many of us, the openness and honesty with which everyone approached it really set the tone for the day.

The group exercises allowed me to connect with certain staff members that I rarely have an opportunity to interact with; we were able to have fun and laugh together, but more importantly I felt as if we supported one another in reflecting on ourselves as individuals and as a part of the Social Services Division.

The retreat helped me to realize that I have been allowing my busy schedule to throw my priorities off balance, and reinforced for me just how important it is to allow yourself time for self-reflection.

On a personal note, I particularly enjoyed the discussion of time management and life-balance as keys to effective leadership. I also enjoyed the interactive nature of the workshops, and the many anecdotes that Tony used to bring the material to life. Overall the retreat more than met my expectations.

-- Michaela Kelaghan, Senior Youth Developer/Case Manager

Tony was very approachable, relaxed and attentive to hearing from as many as possible. He was able to relate to Social Service Staff experiences well... Tony's

approach to leadership is excellent. I like the empowerment model, and building in leadership within ourselves.

I learned a lot about myself from the retreat. I learned that what also de-motivates me (i.e. overwhelming amount of work at times, politics, etc.) also is a motivator and inspires me to make changes. However, I also realized a lot through the society-friends-self-family-partner model in how I fluctuate out of balance with my intrinsic values. I also learned about how to think out, verbalize and hopefully put into action better strategies for time management.

I liked the relaxed, approachable, flexible and knowledgeable nature of the facilitator. I liked the organization of slides and his preparedness. I liked that he allowed most of the solutions to come from us, and providing guidance based on research, and how he engaged us in determining the flow of the retreat.

The retreat allowed a good opportunity for us all to get together, re-group and recognize each other and the work we do. I found it to be very positive and fun.

-- Amanda Kerpsie, [Drug] Prevention Team Leader

I think that most of my co-workers have a similar motivation in relation to our work. There were many overlapping ideas about our motivations. I think our strengths parallel our motivations when related to work. Communication, desire, passion are all strengths my co-workers hold. As for challenges, I think the biggest one I learned about was separating life and work and also managing life and work. The work we do and also the youth we work with tend to take over your life.

The ideas that were given out were good and not forced upon us. They were more for us to use as we think needed or just to think about. The balancing life and work will come in handy with a lot of my co-workers because work takes over their lives. The methods taught have allowed us to have even more open lines of communication and respect others' work more.

I think Tony's approach was good because we had the chance to discuss the different characteristics of a leader....He made us realize that we all have characteristics of leaders in us.

--- Patty Santucci, Outreach Worker, Youth Developer

I liked the way Tony encouraged participation from even those who would not naturally speak up, and brought in theoretical back-up.... I liked Tony's approach - leadership doesn't always look the same - but has some consistent components."

--- Donna Geraci, Clinical Supervisor

I appreciated the facilitator's ability to be flexible and allow things to change according to the needs of the group and yet also maintain things on track...I think that the relationship orientation that the facilitator took to leadership is especially appropriate for a social services agency...Tony facilitated a great session, especially the time management stuff!!

--- Brandon Stratford, Youth and Family Counselor