

308th NYYM
Silver Bay, NY

Leadership during these times

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©July 22, 2003

Thank you for the invitation and the introduction.

Greetings from the Wilmington, NC monthly meeting and the NCYM (C).

I ask that you not trust me. Don't believe what I have to say. Test this for yourself.

Having been invited to speak on "Leadership in these times," I want to share just three things: a bit of who I am (so that you will know that if I could change you can), a framework for leadership now, and a challenge for you to partnership with the Creator. These are the only takeaways

I also need to mention that as I have met with you in the last three days, you have shared your expectations.

- One man said I came to hear you speak on racism. (See Part I).
- A woman said I came to hear you speak on servant leadership. (See Part I).
- Another woman said I came to hear you speak about violence. (See Part I & II).

Since I firmly believe in making sure that an audience leaves with their expectations addressed, I have incorporated each topic in the message given. With the Spirit's leading, I pray to stay on course. I am also willing to answer questions at the end.

People who have heard me speak know that I like giving the end from the beginning. So I'll do that first.

I know that this works because I was in Annapolis not long ago where I saw a woman who had heard me speak in NC. She said aren't you the lady who said.... Then I went to FGC Gathering in Johnstown, where I met a woman who said my husband came home and told me about your message.

People who really know me also know that I hate long drawn out messages. At times I think I'm like most of the world with ADD. If it is not short, clear, and to the point there is a fair chance that I will miss it or it will be over my head. This will be short.

I've heard it said that we have 6 degrees of separation between us and everyone else in the world. If that is true someone here has an in to the President and perhaps he'll get the takeaway, too. What I am saying is that it is important to have conversations. If you believe that the message is valuable share the takeaways.

Right now the world is in such tough shape and this includes our meetings that need Spirit-led messages that people can hear, understand, and use.

If you are in doubt about the need to use messages, take a moment and rate on a scale of 1 to 10 the following institutions: economy, environment, education, entertainment, labor, law, religion, politics, family, and war.

Economy – A faint pulse.

Environment – In need of better stewardship. Water. Forests. Air.

Education – Dropouts. Teen pregnancies. Students unable to read. Violence.

Entertainment - Increasing levels of violence.

Labor - 2.5 million people unemployed. Many underemployed and no livable wage.

Law – 1 in 4 black men imprisoned by age 18.

Religion – So exclusive that every day we hear of people killed because of their faith.

Politics/government – Policy and legislation that favors the wealthy and corporations.

Family – 50% failed marriages. Spouse and child abuse.

War – A tragedy.

Well here is the message that I have been listening to and have heard over and over for months as I have prayed to know what to share with you. We will not focus on the problems, but the options for change.

“Leadership in these times requires a 3 X 4”

Nope. Not a 2x4. Not a 4x4. Not even an 8x8.

Let me explain.

3 = Listen to the Holy Spirit, test the spirit, and do what you hear.

4 = Self, others, tasks, and resources, in that order

They are in a matrix three across and four down.

There is so much to share, but I know that like an oriental painting the less I speak the better. This is the Dr. Atkins’ no carbs, bare, skinny boned message.

I.

Background

First, let me tell you a bit about me.

- Born and grew up in Montgomery, AL during the civil rights movement.
- Saw segregation and racism up close and personal. Selma to Montgomery

march ended on the grounds of my elementary school. They planned a mass meeting for that night. I handed out leaflets encouraging people to attend. I remember the concert and mass meeting, where I stood in front of the stage.

- Lived in the next block from the MIA, SCLC, NAACP offices. Remember the marches, dogs, troopers on horses. Lunch counters. Back doors. My family was very involved in the movement. I saw Dr. King and others.
- I integrated my middle schools. Spent two years in hell. Name-calling. Poked. Pencils. Spit balls in the back. Mom used to say you get in a fight at school and you'll have another one at home.
- I was filled with anger and rage. Dared white people to speak offensively to me.
- Took this rage to college on a predominately white Virginia campus (1000 white/30 black students). I was determined to graduate and did early, but often miserable.
- After college, I worked as a news reporter and substance abuse counselor in two city jails and a state pen. Grew to love the men. After two years felt burnt out because I did not know how to take care of myself emotionally. Wanted to go to graduate school, travel in Europe, and get supervisory experience. Mommie said consider the Army. (Motto then: Join the Army and see the world.) I did expecting to stay 3 years and get out. Stayed 21.
- During many of those years, I was still angry. Alone and far from home, I was forced to look at my life. I decided that I did not want to die having not lived.
- During that time I had been praying for a friend to give his life to the Lord. When he did he became a Quaker. I'd never heard of Quakers and decided to find out about them. Having prayed for so long, I did not want him involved in a cult. So I decided to find Quakers.
- Well I attended the first meeting in Indianapolis in 1982. Have been attending every since.
- Across the years, I had other realizations and began to apply them.
 - I decided that I had deep faith that got me and many others through the Army and life.
 - It was clear that the fruit of the Spirit was not present in my life. I needed other options. I decided that I would forgive and release the rage and anger. This I did taking back my power and accepting love, joy, and peace.
 - I learned to deeply listen to the Holy Spirit, as the source of good, instruction, leading, and guidance in the way that I am to go.
 - I learned to love myself as a child of God and chose to forgive myself for the years spent hating. I embraced the belief: love God and love my neighbor. This meant getting rid of borders and arbitrary boundaries. As I traveled the world I opened myself to live with and share life experiences with all people. I sought to find similarities not differences.
 - I stopped being a victim and accepted responsibility for my life. I realized that if others never apologized for wrongs, I would be angry all of my life.

- I stopped hating and forgave the many who had verbally and physically assaulted me over the years. This helped me begin to see the process of violence as hurt, pain, a decision to forgive or not forgive, forgiveness as an opening to love, unforgiveness as a reservoir for bitterness that erupts as a verbal or physical assault when one has fear or conflict.
- I learned language from a wonderful book, Radical Honesty, to forgive and release the past and to address conflict immediately.
 - I resent you for . . .
 - I appreciate you for...
- This is the practice that I use to address encounters that feel racist or unfair. It is also what I encourage others to use when in conflict with another. Invite them to dialog and share pain, listen for an explanation or apology, forgive, and release. No cache of bitterness to carry for years or to dump on another at a later date. (i.e., Wal-Mart tire guy).
- I've come to believe that most people do not intend to hurt me with words and deeds. It is not intentional racism. They are just not mindful. If we take a moment to converse, the issue is explained, resolved, and we both move on to keep loving life. I have a colleague who says it is more complex than this. Not my experience. I don't believe that the process takes 10 steps and 6 weeks. Life is too short for unforgiveness and bitterness to fester rotting my insides for even a day. I am responsible. (i.e., Luc).
- I've learned to love, respect, and honor other people from this reservoir of love and goodness. Most days when I walk, I enlarge the reservoir, ever breathing in the goodness of the universe and releasing the goodness and mercy to the world.
- I have learned that at each stage of life when CALLED to a work, I need to say yes, do it, and do it well, as unto God, without murmuring and complaining, just balance. In doing so, the Holy Spirit pours through me and the work goes beyond skill to my art. I've helped many soldiers and others do this, too.
- I value and care for Mother Earth.
- I have learned that I am a strong, capable leader modeling leadership for my family, my community, my workspace, and the world. This I take very seriously.
- Servant-leadership - While in graduate school I desperately sought a leadership model or theory that worked without leaving people hating their jobs and not trusting their supervisors. I studied the major models: trait, group, great person, situational, integrative, transactional, transformational, servant-leadership, and others. At that time, servant-leadership seemed to offer a framework that was most likely to ensure a workplace where all could thrive. The servant-leader embodies 10 characteristics.
- I've come to believe that the characteristics are not enough. One must listen to the Holy Spirit (by this or any other name). Then and only then is there balance and wholeness in the work. This is spirit-led leadership, a

practice that all can embrace and practice. It is this framework that I am sharing with you tonight. It is what I call a "3x4."

- Recently I learned to trade the stock market and would be quite content staying home to do that. Not the Spirits plan. So I leave my home for weeks at a time and get on the road to share this message with non-profits, profits, government orgs, universities, religious groups, and individuals. I consult, mentor, lead workshops, facilitate groups, mediate, and teach.

That is the background experience that I bring to you. Hopefully, I have adequately spoken to racism and violence.

II.

Leadership framework for these times. (All persons. All ages).

Now for the 3 x 4. The 3 first.

- **Listen to the Holy Spirit.**
- **Test to see if it is the most loving thing that you can think, speak, or do. If no, do not do it.**
- **If yes, do what you have heard.**

Now the 4.

SELF

- Love and Care for yourself first – the world is so messed up because we treat people the way we treat ourselves.
 - Listen to your body and use your mind to help watch what is eaten, read, seen, touched, smelled, and heard. Get and stay healthy. The body is a place where God dances. Be mindful.
 - When engaged in something base, withdraw, and turn with the intent to not return.
 - When enjoying, check for satiation. No need for excess. Herein is balance.
 - When tired, rest so others do not hear, "I am so tired."
 - In this way, one can "Keep the pulse."
 - Being capable with sufficient discipline for a balanced, healthy, peaceful life, it is possible to stay filled with gratitude for it is clear that life does not have to be so wonderful.
 - To do otherwise is to cause pain for self and others. (i.e., the adjustment in my presentation at the Peace Conference).
- Enlarged heart – Breathe goodness in. Release goodness and mercy. Goodness and mercy will follow you all of the days of your life. Speak and wave.
- Your Call – Listen for it.

- Radical honesty – Stop lying. Tell the truth.
- Forgive – Accept responsibility for your hurt and pain. Take action.
 - "I resent you for.... I appreciate you for..."
 - Change the focus. Stop choosing pain. Address any ...ism.
 - When left unattended, pain and unforgiveness lurk inside as potential violence. Do your work or the green slime that's like germs may be invisibly passed from you to others. Or it may erupt as a verbal or physical assault.
- Reconcile – (i.e., The Alaska story).
- Live Simply – Get rid of the clutter. Choose to live with whatever you need to accomplish your call.
- Do your own work with a commitment to love and care for all.
 - Stop running around trying to save the world.
 - On sexism, classism, racism, and nationalism, chauvinism, and religious bias, simply remember the following.
 - The Creator created us all and has purpose in all of us being here.
 - We are all neighbors.
 - Love yourself. Choose to love your neighbor.

OTHERS

- Love and Care continues.
Look people in the eye when you converse and say, "I Love you. I appreciate you. I honor you." (i.e., my walking and waving).
- Have a deep respect for ALL of life
 - (i.e., At a Quaker presentation I heard the President and others called names. For me this was verbal assault like we would view racism, sexism, or any ism. It lacked respect.
 - I've heard Quakers speak with disrespect in other venues. This for me promotes violence. Let us address issues and behavior not people.
- Have conversations with all people. God news can travel fast, too.

TASKS

- Do your work. Do it well. This may be your art informed by the Holy Spirit.
- Care about the quality of the work.
- This may be the way that you leave your mark in the world.
- Stop picking up the bucket that someone else should carry. This is the reason so many are stressed.

RESOURCES

- Care for the resources for which you are a steward.
- Care for the resources that we jointly share.
- Model stewardship for our children and neighbors. (i.e., Trash at Gathering).
- Stewardship – Care for the environment.

Leadership Framework: Self. Others. Tasks. Resources.

Through consistent and persistent practice using a simple framework we become effective models for others, especially our youth who are seeking to prepare for service in the world. Many times they embrace a practice, yet will not know how they've come to the practice. They will just do it. It is my hope that they will view leadership in this way.

The other group helped through the practice is seniors, who as they near the end can live lives that are balanced and "hallowed in their diminishment," as my dear friend John Yungblut said. From day to day, doing no more and no less than what they are called to do, with Spirit, may they joyfully and peacefully use the measure of spiritual, physical, emotional, and mental capacity available.

I finally get it. This message is bigger than Protestants, Catholics, Jews, and Muslims. This message is bigger than culture. Bigger than nationality. This message of hope is broad enough to include all of creation. Let us stop messing around. God is the creator of all. We are all part of the brotherhood and sisterhood.

When we live lives with this belief, we've few if any enemies. God does her part. We do our part. We can cease being afraid. Like Allstate, we know that all of the earth and us are in "good hands."

In the end there is neither guilt nor depression with anger turned inward. Instead, there is balance and wholeness all the days of our lives. With a changed heart we will have lived each moment mindful of having breathed in goodness and released goodness and mercy.

III.

Partnership with God.

Together let us love God. Love self and each other. And let us care for the earth.

Let's use the 3x4 everywhere. (e.g., home, meeting, the job, supermarket, and school.)

Know that indubitable truth stands. We are One. There is abundance. We can stop being afraid.

"Be the Light." This is true leadership for these times.

Afterthought.

It is quite likely that the young friends will get this first. They will be like those in 1910 who urged all branches of Friends to work together. They will model the work for us grey hairs.

Questions.