



Leadership "Intimidation" posted 9/22/09

Leadership intimidation has nothing to do with threats or aggressive behavior. It has nothing to do with coercion or bullying. It has everything to do with myths that a leader is so involved and effective that no one could possibly replace him or her. It has everything to do with fearing failure when measuring oneself, unfairly, against the myth. When standing in the shadow of such a leader, how can you convince a promising leader to make the move to the next level?

When a member being tapped for a leadership position says s/he could never do what "fill in the blanks" does, the blunt answer is "you don't have to". Emphasize that each individual brings his/her own strengths, talents and interests to a position. Help the incoming leader to understand how to draw upon those strengths within the context of realizing the association's goals and achieving its strategic objectives. Different does not imply better or worse.

For an association, changing leadership is a part of its evolution, and new leaders should welcome the opportunity to guide that evolution in unique ways. Leaders are entrusted with focusing priorities in consideration of current and future realities rather than merely replicating work done by prior leaders. It is important to utilize the talents of the former leaders so that their contributions continue, but be pragmatic and take into account available and potential talent ... and nurture that talent.

An association is an ongoing entity that requires continuity of commitment to the association's mission no matter who is in office. True, leadership styles are as varied as the individuals chosen to serve, and some are more effective than others. But, as long as leaders are dedicated to the association's purpose, an association is more likely to thrive with change. Do not be afraid. Change can be very good.