

Building Bridges session – High School of Jewish Studies - 11/4/09

## Curiosity and Leadership

“People follow a true leader just out of curiosity about where they’re going...”

Lack of curiosity is a breeding ground for stereotyping and discrimination, inflated confidence, ignorance that can actually lead to poor decision-making, dogmatism and rigidity of thought.

Todd Kashdan (2009)



Answers don't change the world. Questions do. Learn to ask WHY.

## A LITANY ON THE WORK OF LEADERSHIP

Leader: Curiosity and the urge to solve problems are the hallmarks of our species (Carl Sagan).

**People: IGNORANCE IS AN ENEMY OF LEADERSHIP.**

Leader: If we take people as they are, we make them worse. If we treat them as if they were what they ought to be, we help them become what they are capable of becoming (Goethe).

**People: PREJUDICE IS AN ENEMY OF LEADERSHIP.**

Leader: We are producing the most educated, articulate, and brilliant sidewalk superintendents the world has ever seen. We have a limitless supply of people with intelligence and expertise to analyze society's problems, but very, very few with the motivation and stamina to leap in and help solve them (John Gardner).

**People: APATHY IS AN ENEMY OF LEADERSHIP.**

Leader: And in any society those who choose the most have the most reason to feel free (Harland Cleveland).

**People: INDECISION IS AN ENEMY OF LEADERSHIP.**

Leader: In measuring things that can be counted or expressed in quantifiable terms, we are led unawares to the grand illusion - that only the measurable really matters (Harold Enarson). I have this private theory that public-sector executives too often are timid philosophers, that the only performance indicator they are comfortable with is growth (Grady Bogue).

**People: MEDIOCRITY IS AN ENEMY OF LEADERSHIP.**

Leader: The exercise of leadership requires a strong sense of personal identity - knowing who one is and who one is not (Abraham Zalegnik). We cannot make meanings for others until we have first found meaning for ourselves (Bogue).

**People: IMITATION IS AN ENEMY OF LEADERSHIP.**

Leader: A man who becomes conscious of the responsibility he bears toward a human being who affectionately awaits him, or to an unfinished work, will never be able to throw away his life. He knows the "why" for his existence, and will be able to bear almost any "how" (Victor Frankl).

**People: ARROGANCE IS AN ENEMY OF LEADERSHIP.**