TAPPING INTO YOUR PASSION: BECOMING THE LEADER YOU WANT TO BE

JIM DALBEC, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
ELA 55+ IN ELA TOWNSHIP
WHY AM I SPEAKING TODAY?

I’m not an expert on leadership.
I am not a motivational speaker.
I don’t have a PhD in Pandemic Programming.

But, perhaps like many of you, I have experienced many highs and lows this past year and want to share some of what I have learned.

My biggest takeaways:

1. Take wins when/where you can get them
2. Accept help and support from others
   (take care of yourself!)
MISSING CONNECTIONS

Many of us have the jobs we do because we are passionate about working with older adults, enjoy interacting with people, or maybe we want to make a difference in the lives of others.
COVID has really been a punch to the gut on a lot of fronts, and I personally struggled with my role on numerous occasions. How can I help people I can’t interact with? How can I be an asset for those that are too scared to even leave their homes? How do I find a sense of purpose during a time that doesn’t seem to have a finish line in sight?
The Infinite Game is a book that describes two different types of games: finite and infinite. In finite games (i.e. football or chess) the players are known, the rules are fixed and there's an agreed-upon objective that ends the game with a winner often being declared. Infinite games can be played by known and unknown players, there are no exact rules and the length of play is infinite. That is the game we find ourselves in currently with COVID.
INFINITE GAMES

- There’s no winning infinite games
- The objective is to continue playing the game
- Examples: business, politics and life itself

People who embrace an infinite mindset, will be more innovative with the resilience to thrive in an ever-changing world.

Adopting this mentality was a huge mental boost for me and helped me to stay more positive. Doing everything I was doing before was impossible; I just had to keep moving forward.
Instead of thinking of everything that I wasn’t able to do, I had to switch gears and somehow find the silver lining. What opportunities did this create? What could I do?
FOCUS ON YOU!

It often seems like the more responsibilities we have, the further removed we get from our members, programming, and our passions within our role. Now more than ever, staff are looking to their supervisors for leadership and direction. If you aren’t in a good place yourself, you can’t help them. There is no better time to focus on YOU for once, and to think about what kind of leader you want to be.
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ACCOMPLISH?

We’re all in unique situations and looking for different things both in our personal and professional endeavors.

My goal today:

• Show you free online avenues to learn about yourself
• Give you an opportunity to think about what type of person/leader you are, and what type of person/leader you want to be
  • Help you focus on your own happiness
• Give you a chance to **SLOW DOWN** and really think about yourself, and what you’re passionate about.
Personality is just one of many factors that guide our behavior. The Meyers-Briggs Test (MBTI) breaks down everyone’s personality into 16 different personality types, along with the tendencies that those individuals typically exhibit.
EXTRAVERTS (E) VS. INTROVERTS (I)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extroversion</th>
<th>Introversion</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Energized by the outer world</td>
<td>Energized by the inner world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outgoing</td>
<td>Inward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talkative</td>
<td>Quiet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts first. Thinks later .</td>
<td>Thinks and may act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values breadth of experience</td>
<td>Values depth of experience</td>
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- Extraverts are “action” oriented, while introverts are “thought” oriented
- Extraverts get their energy from being with other people, while introverts get it from spending time alone
SENSORS (S) VS. INTUITIVES (N)

• This is how new information is gathered, understood and interpreted (or perceived)

• Sensors tend to trust information that is present and concrete while Intuitives are more focused on underlying theory and principles
THINKERS (T) VS. FEELERS (F)

- This component focuses on decision making
- Feelers tend to make decisions looking at it “from the inside” while thinkers have a more detached standpoint decided based on what seems logical
The final component indicates a person’s preferred extraverted function (dominant for extraverted types, but not for introverted types) of how they relate to the external world.
Significant differences can exist even among people who share a personality type, but knowing your “type” is meant to inspire personal growth and an improved understanding of yourself and your relationships 
(this may help you understand staff members or vice versa)
At 16personalities.com, you can take a free test to：“get a ‘freakishly accurate’ description of who you are and why you do things the way you do.”
You can have your results e-mailed to you, or not. You may not even agree with your results and may choose to take the test again.
No matter your results (or how accurate you feel they might be) instead try to self-reflect. You might discover a fairly obvious reason for why you feel or act the way you do.
There are several free websites that will give you results. **Truity.com** shows the 3 personalities that describe you based on 130 questions. **Humanmetrics.com** will show your personality after 64 questions. *(Think of it like a horoscope)*
REFLECT ABOUT YOURSELF

Remember, the point of this exercise isn’t to describe you as accurately as possible. You probably can’t be perfectly described by 1 of 16 different personality types. Maybe you can use it as an opportunity to reflect on how you approach different situations or realize your strengths and preferences. Maybe you can acknowledge there are things you want to work on moving forward.
Another aspect of reflecting upon yourself, is considering how happy you are currently. Do you consider yourself a happy person? Do you feel like you could be happier? How often do you take the time to dedicate to your personal well-being? If you’re like most, the answer is... probably not often.
If you go to coursera.org and search for “The Science of Well-Being,” there is a FREE online class designed to increase your own happiness and build more productive habits.
This course is a shortened version of the most popular class ever taught at Yale University, “Psychology and the Good Life.” Dr. Laurie Santos was concerned about the levels of student depression and anxiety and debuted the class in the 2018 spring semester. About 1200 students enrolled becoming the most popular course in the university’s 317-year history.
Part of the class asks you to take an online survey to determine your Signature Strengths. There are 24 different Character Strengths and Virtues every person has in different degrees. Some of these we’re already REALLY good at, and others we could work on.
MY TOP 10 STRENGTHS

The first 2 times I took the survey, my Top 2 were the exact same. Everything in the green boxes appeared in my Top Ten for all five times I took the survey.
My Bottom 5 Strengths

The boxed strengths appeared in my Bottom 5 for all 5 surveys. This doesn’t mean that I have no self-control, gratitude, or spirituality. It could just mean that it’s either not a priority of mine, or I’m just simply better at other things.

(According to this survey)
Take the survey anytime

You can take the survey as many times as you like, so you can periodically check back to see if anything has changed.

(Just because IT has, doesn’t mean YOU have)
Studies have shown that the more Signature Strengths you use in your job on a regular basis, the more positive experience you have in that particular job (4 seems to be the sweet spot).
When you combine those positive experiences with the number of applied signature strengths and use some fancy scientific calculations, that equates to you thinking your job is your “calling”.

**HARZER & RUCH (2012)**

*Using Signature Strengths Can Turn a Job into a Calling*
After seeing this class, it seemed like an amazing opportunity.

**My first thought:** I’d love to take this class.

**My second thought:** I will never have enough time to devote 10 weeks to an online class dedicated to my happiness.

**My third thought:** What if I could somehow lead this class for our seniors...?

**My fourth thought:** There’s NO way they can handle online classes for 10 weeks with surveys and links.

Every positive thought was followed by a negative one.
Science of Well-Being Course

Jim Dalbec <jimdalbec@gmail.com>
to laurie.santos

Dr. Santos,

My name is Jim Dalbec, and I am a Program Coordinator for a Senior Center in Lake Zurich, IL. Our population consists of adults ages 55 and up, and I saw that your "Psychology and the Good Life" class has been modified for a free online course, "Science of Well-Being". I know for a fact that if we gave some of our members the information for the course that they would sign up immediately. Because our participants are seniors, we have some members that are really tech savvy, and some that definitely are not.

With your permission, would you be alright with me offering the materials of our course for our Seniors here at our center allowing them to take your online course in person here at our center? I would like to take the course first myself to become familiar with everything so maybe I will find that what I envision isn't possible, but I would LOVE to figure out a way to get this course to our senior population.

I appreciate you taking the time to consider this request and hope something can be worked out to help make participants as happy as possible.

--
Jim Dalbec
18 MINUTES LATER...

Santos, Laurie <laurie.santos@yale.edu>  Apr 23, 2018, 9:30 AM

to Belinda, me

Hi Jim,

Thanks for your kind note. I’m cc:ing Belinda who works with me on the Coursera course and may have some ideas about how to share this content with your less tech-savvy seniors.

Belinda, could you take it from here? Thanks!
Laurie
4 HOURS LATER...

Platt, Belinda <belinda.platt@yale.edu>  
to me, Laurie  

Good Afternoon Jim,

Thank you for interest in the course and for reaching out about this exciting opportunity! I am happy to help recommend solutions to suit those that are tech savvy and those that aren't.

Would you be open to chatting with me at some point this week? Please let me know your availability so I can better understand your needs and advise accordingly.

Kindly,
Belinda
--

Belinda Platt
Assistant Director, Digital Education

Yale University Center for Teaching and Learning
The next day we spoke on the phone and worked out all of the details. They e-mailed me all of the handouts, materials, links, videos, and any other coursework that they thought might be helpful. Their only stipulation was to make the class free.

3 months later, we had our class!
I requested to rename the class for marketing purposes, and made it an 8-Week course instead of 10. I took screenshots of the lecture slides while taking the online class 1 week before my “students”. The first time teaching it, we had 31 participants sign up.
Since then, I have taught the class 4 more times (including once completely on Zoom) and have modified a few things every time:

1. **Capping the class at 12.** 31 was too large of a group. One student said he came into the class knowing 4 people, and after 8 weeks, he basically only knew the same 4 people.

2. **Allow more time for sharing.** The support and information shared between participants was incredible. Now at least the first 10 minutes of each lecture is for the group to discuss their struggles and successes of the past week.

3. **Focus on the studies that apply.** Since this class was designed for college students, a LOT of the content involves college students’ issues. I omitted some of those studies that I didn’t feel would resonate as much with older adults.
The question I get from almost every senior looking to sign up is, “That sounds great, but does it work??” The short answer is yes. The long answer is it depends on you.

When are you ever going to devote 8 weeks to your own personal happiness? If you were to poll 100 people on how happy they were on a scale from 1-10, how many of them do you think you would be happier than? 30? 20? 10? If there is potential for improvement, then what have you got to lose?
WHAT DO YOU LEARN?

THE SCIENCE OF WELL-BEING
WHAT PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE SAYS ABOUT THE GOOD LIFE

#1: MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT HAPPINESS
#2: WHY OUR EXPECTATIONS ARE SO BAD
#3: WHAT STUFF REALLY INCREASES HAPPINESS
#4: STRATEGIES TO RESET OUR EXPECTATIONS
#5: PUTTING STRATEGIES INTO PRACTICE
REWIREMENTS

Week #1: Signature Strengths
Week #2: Savoring & Gratitude Journal
Week #3: Kindness & Social Connection
Week #4: Exercise & Sleep
Week #5: Meditation & Gratitude Visit
Week #6: (SHHHHHH, It’s a Surprise)
Week #7: Rewirement Challenge Part 1
Week #8: Rewirement Challenge Part 2
I never could have dreamed that reaching out to a Yale Professor to essentially “steal” her class would have ended so positively. That positive experience has encouraged me to take more risks with other trips and outings, and enabled me to try things that I might not have tried before. Like taking Senior men on a Day Trip to Joliet State Prison or ziplining, or driving in a van to Louisville with 6 Senior guys for a 3 day trip.
In my experience, the more excited I am about a program, trip, presentation, etc., the more excited our participants have been. The more in tune you are with your likes and strengths, the better you will be able to utilize them and “pay it forward”.

ENTHUSIASM IS CONTAGIOUS
I wish I had someone to teach that

I say all of this because I’ve heard at several conferences something along the lines of, “Oh, that sounds so neat! I wish I had someone who could teach that!”

Take it from me... that someone may not be that great.
I WISH I HAD SOMEONE TO TEACH THAT

It may not have been better, but it definitely wasn’t any worse!

Maybe I should try to do some more...?
BRAIN FITNESS

BRAIN LIMITS

Everyone has a photographic memory, some just don't have film.

BRAIN TRICKS

Are the 2 Squares the Same Color?
Put your finger across the tunnels. You might be surprised.

CREATIVITY AND USING TECHNOLOGY

HOW YOUR BRAIN WORKS AND CHANGES

Are You Right or Left Brained?

SCIENCE OF AWKWARDNESS

Awkward Family Photos

How Awkward Moments Work
PSYCHOLOGY FOR SENIORS

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE

DREAMS

I DON'T CARE ABOUT YOUR WEIRD DREAMS

and then it turned into a spider and walked around, and my dad was there! And then I was in a plane and:

NEWS FLASH: EVERYBODY’S DREAMS ARE WEIRD

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GENERATIONS

It’s about guiding the next generation, and forgiving the last.
— Peter Krouse

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEN & WOMEN

Here's all you have to know about men and women:
Women are crazy, men are stupid.
And the main reason women are crazy is that men are stupid.
— George Carlin

PERSONALITY TEST

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY: WHAT SHAPES OUR BEHAVIOR?

Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it.
— Charles Swindoll
WIDE WORLD OF WEIRD

UNSOLVED MYSTERIES

WORST NATURAL DISASTERS

SUPERSTITIONS

WORST PARASITES AND AILMENTS
TECH TOPICS

ANDROID BASICS AND TIPS

THE INS & OUTS OF AMAZON

FACEBOOK BASICS

INTERNET SAFETY

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR IPHONE

CYBER SAFETY
HEAVIER TOPICS

WHY IS OUR COUNTRY SO DIVIDED?

WHY DO WE HATE AND HOW DO WE FORGIVE?

WHY DO WE HATE?

USING GENETIC GENEALOGY TO SOLVE COLD CASE MURDERS

WHO ARE WE: WHAT MAKES US, US?
YOU CAN DO IT!!

If it’s something that interests you, go for it! Be creative! Tap into your passions. Thanks to a few not so great presenters, I have over 70 presentations that I’ve created about everything from questioning the existence of ghosts, to the differences between Android and iPhones, to why we live in such a divisive political climate. I can’t think of any topic that would be off the table if you have an audience willing to listen.
ANY QUESTIONS?

If I can help in ANY way, please let me know.

Jim Dalbec
847-438-9160
jimd@elatownship.org