

“INSPIRATION: THE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITIES!”

Dear Friend,

Inspiration is key to growing and vibrant communities. This inspiration comes from gathering together, being open, brainstorming new ideas, planning for the future, and turning these new ideas (dreams, visions) into realities.

Communities can become stale and lifeless without inspiration. We’ve all experienced stale communities. And we’ve experienced communities that were creative places where new things were emerging. I know that when I’ve experienced inspired and creative communities, it was very life-giving for me!

Very simply, the easiest way to become an inspired and creative community is through a process of coming together and planning. Time after time in the “coming together of people” in an ideation and planning process, I’ve seen nothing but excitement in everyone involved. Personally, I think more organizations and communities need more inspiration, more coming together, more sharing of ideas, more creating of initiatives, and more enactment of plans.

Many of us have been across the country and the world. In all this traveling we’re able to bring back home to our home communities some amazing ideas and initiatives. By incorporating some of these great ideas into what already exists in our communities, we are able stay interesting and relevant. As an old professor once told me, “Wherever things are interesting is where you’ll find God.” God is a life-giver; he’s always bringing about new things.

Many of us know that a definition of inspiration is “the process of drawing in breath and new life.” The inspiration process can be a difficult process to describe. But, we know it when we’re experiencing it. And it is a great thing to be part of!

Many people of all kinds (writers, thinkers, painters, builders, sculptors, cooks, speakers, etc.) have difficulty pinpointing where these inspirational ideas came from. But, these new ideas give them and us life! These inspirations are like breaths of fresh air. Maybe that’s a good definition of inspiration: a breath of fresh air! Inspirations of all kinds make us more alive. As the old GE commercial used to say: “We bring good things to life!”

To go a little deeper, two psychologists, Todd Thrash and Andrew Elliot, have identified three core aspects of inspiration: evocation, transcendence and approach motivation:

- Evocation means that new ideas and ways of being seem to come forth spontaneously
- Transcendence means that these ideas go beyond “what is” to “what is new and greater”
- Approach motivation simply means that we try to make these ideas into realities, we try to bring good things to life

Inspired individuals and communities are always bringing new things to life.

Believe it or not, this process of inspiration was given to us in a “spiritual” reading of Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:23: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son.”

- First, we must be virginal or open to new ideas and new ways of doing things
- Second, if we are open, we shall conceive, and new things shall be planted in us
- Third, if we are open, and if new ideas are conceived in our hearts and minds, then these new ideas will eventually come to life

In reality, lively individuals and communities are open, conceiving and giving birth over and over again!

In my experience, the best way to have an inspired, lively, interesting and relevant community is by bringing people together in a planning process (master, strategic, long-term or 5-year). I would also say that in this day and age, the only way to be a successful community is to be an inspired community! So, as always, the three questions are “How do you feel affirmed?” “How do you feel challenged?” and “What can you do about it?”

Strategic Planning Process questions? Contact Mark Filips and VisionWorks at 402.999.2970 or markf@VisionWorksCo.com.