

North Star Insights

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Guiding Organizations to Success

Our new minister, Greg, has been taking a rather challenging approach to leading our congregation. Actually, many people might not think it so unsettling. But, for me...well, consider a question he presented at a recent class:

"What is the opposite of good?" Easy—a few of us quickly responded.

"Indifference. Apathy. Right?" Sorry, no. What was he looking for?

Efficiency.

Oh, great. I have spent my whole adult life assisting all kinds of organizations learn how to be more efficient - that is what a consultant hopes to do! What was his point?

The article below provides some suggestions for what Greg may have been thinking. I hope you find it helpful.

Effective Inefficiency

How can inefficiency actually benefit your organization?

After reading my book, Kathy Kundrat of the Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency wrote me and asked, "We are holding a Strategic Planning retreat in April and I am looking for tools to use prior to the event in order to have staff come prepared and energized."

I don't usually think about energizing staff prior to a retreat but her question got me thinking. I thought back through 25 years of running and attending strategy retreats. People often had mixed emotions coming in: "It's a day away from routine work." "All that work will be waiting for me when I get back." "We will get excited at the session, then nothing will come of it." And a few hours into a retreat, people are checking their cell phone and disengaging. We hear the same few people tell the same stories - again. By mid-afternoon the coffee and caffeinated sodas are desperately needed.

How can we set different expectations? How do we create energy? How do we engage our staff? In response I'll share a recent experience. My husband and I are leading the annual pledge campaign for

our church. We spent all day Saturday at a local coffee shop meeting with congregational leaders and listening to their hopes and dreams for the church. We drew people out, inviting specifics but only seeking understanding—no fixing or correcting their perspectives. We asked questions, but didn't push our own ideas.

At church on Sunday, we heard people sharing the ideas they had voiced with us and brainstorming with each other. There were new ideas for community concerts, painting murals on the church walls, and partnering with an inner city school. The energy was high as people added to each other's ideas. This wasn't a retreat, but I think the eight hours we spent just listening to people individually led to the energy and engagement when they got together.

When was the last time you took a half an hour just to listen to each person on your staff (or team)? It does not sound efficient...but it does sound right.

Read More

I explain alignment theory and practice in my #1 best-selling Kindle book—[click here](#) to view it on Amazon.

Kindle Price: \$2.99



I would be interested in hearing what other experiences you have had with "effective inefficiencies."

Sincerely,

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