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## Attitude Reflects Leadership

### THE SKANNER NEWS

Rob Ingram

Two notes to share before I jump into this thought: this is but a portion of the larger, necessary conversation that needs to happen around leadership AND this might be some of the realest works I ever wrote ... might be.

I believe the phrase was “stay in your lane.” To which I responded with a smile — “YUP!” First, the message was coming from an elder; someone I respected for their contribution to the improvement of things that mattered to me. And of course they had lived more years than me, and had gone through things I’ve only read about — so I had every good reason to heed the words being spoken and treat them as laws.

But only recently that phrase, and most of what it implies, has started to fall apart for me.

Ideally, “stay in your lane” refers to respecting assignments, valuing teamwork, and understanding limitations. As soon as you try to do it all by yourself is right when you start failing. But which lane is mine? And how do I know when I’m in it? Or veering out of it? And when is it ever OK to change lanes? These are the questions that frame my challenge and discourse. But they lead to more: who decides the lanes? And who determines who will inhabit which lanes? And are they in their lanes?

Please understand this is not about challenging leadership, but identifying it; calling it out and getting it right. And what about those who lecture “stay in your lane” but always justify their

conflicts? What is quality education for our children? What do we want from those in influential roles? And what is it we expect from the justice system?

Again, I don’t have the answers, and I admit there are many more questions, but because there is not one common set of language, qualified group of representatives and spokespersons, or clear set of goals and outcomes, then we end up chasing our tails — very quickly. It ceases to make sense

swerving in and out (often correlating with dollars and/or publicity)? I guess staying in one’s lane would work in theory, if we could iron out some of the stumbling blocks. Perhaps looking at other communities and cultures that have managed to identify, promote

I guess staying in one’s lane would work in theory, if we could iron out some of the stumbling blocks

and maintain effective leadership. I don’t have all of the solutions, but am willing to do some work.

I do feel it is imperative to face one of the biggest issues that inherently have become the root cause of most of our other issues—lack of leadership. Not that we have a lack of leaders, or that those in leadership roles have not served adequately, but we’ve not been able to establish a leadership core, or universal leadership principles, or even an agreed upon direction and list of requests. (So hoping I don’t get in trouble for this...) How could we know if we’ve arrived if we never settled on a destination? And can’t you see how that creates so many other

after awhile. Bunch of activity=no results!

Like I said, this is only a portion of the conversation. And is only one volume in my take on it. So I’ve got more to share, but I think this is plenty for now. Not plenty as in complete, but as in enough to do something with. Mull it over; kick it around and see how it tastes. Perhaps we can start the live dialogue and create action steps towards what we want? IDK, but I’ll leave with this: I have nothing but the utmost respect for my elders, especially those in positions of leadership and influence; for I know some elected and strived for those spots while others were ordained and commissioned. The work that

happens in our communities now could not be possible had they not laid a foundation for equality. And I appreciate the sacrifices and diligence it took! Sincerely!

Now we are here, almost half way through 2011, and things ain’t the same. And whether we like it or not, things will not go back to the way they used to be. This is where we are now as a product of our collective decisions. I believe it was said that the same minds that got us here will not be the same minds that get us from here. And not always a different physical mind, but sometimes just a new way of thinking. And yes, there are times where just flat out need new minds; new thoughts, concepts and strategies. I think it was also said that you can catch more bees with honey than you can with vinegar—no better way to communicate these two words: **STICK TOGETHER!**

I’ll fulfill my assignment, and stay in my lane. And I hope others will too. But somehow, I don’t think that is the bulk of the issue. Someone has got to command the ship and chart our course; it’s never good to leave that up to the passengers (think about the Titanic). I guess I feel like instead of being told what to do, how to do it and what will be done TO us by those in authority, why don’t we get behind each other, show more support and respect leadership: true servant leadership and stewardship that is **FOR THE PEOPLE**. Because the old saying is still just as true: Attitude does reflect leadership.

## Disconnect to Connect: Outdoor Education

### OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP

Chris Agnew

Facebook, the new iPhone 4, Google Maps—almost weekly we’re provided additional tools to become more virtually connected. All of these new tools can increase our efficiency, expand our communication, and be great fun, but at what price? There is a growing consensus nationwide that our young people are spending less and less time outdoors with negative results, from increased childhood obesity to a more stressful pace of life.

Recently, President Barack Obama promoted America’s Great Outdoors, an initiative to reconnect Americans with our outdoor heritage. The report is the product of a year-long series of listening sessions where Americans from all walks of life let federal officials know their aspirations for our country’s outdoor spaces. While there was alignment with why many American seek the outdoors for recreation, renewal, and education, there was also concern that our young people are disconnected from their surroundings by spending less and less time outdoors and unplugged.

This is part of a long running trend as we have evolved to a more urban/suburban nation. As we move further away from our outdoor heritage, we make the wilderness less available to our children—out of unfamiliarity, fear, lack of time, lack of access or other priorities. Educational prior-

ities have pushed outdoor experiences to the backburner. As a former public and private high school teacher, I’ve experienced the pressure schools feel for annual yearly progress on test scores. Well know

It teaches students what they need to thrive—both in the wilderness of nature and in the wilderness of everyday life

author, Richard Louv, articulates much of these problems in his book “Last Child In the Woods”

hands-on education that sticks. Recently, University of Utah faculty researched the benefits of

America is at a crossroads. Will we be a nation connected by technology but detached from our heritage ...?

and his concept of “nature deficit disorder”.

I know the power of education that occurs in the outdoors. I am a faculty member and an adminis-

wilderness education through the experiences of graduates from the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS). The study, “Long

Term Impacts Attributed to Participation in Adventure Education...” found that, beyond outdoor skills, program graduates gained critical life skills including: effective handling of difficult circumstances, teamwork, leadership, strategic planning, and how to communicate effectively with diverse types of people. These are the skills that will power a 21st century globalized economy and lead to a more fulfilling life.

America is at a crossroads. Will we be a nation connected by technology but detached from our heritage, each other and the very earth we inhabit, or will we seize the challenge that the President has identified? The answer is clear—outdoor experiences are critical in the development and life education of our young people.

Outdoor experiences throughout our children’s development will build a fit, healthy, connected population and a healthy environment for generations to enjoy. Learn more about connecting children and the environment from Richard Louv this week at one of two speaking engagements at Seattle Town Hall on Thursday, May 12 or in Bellingham at Sehome High School on Friday, May 13.

*Chris Agnew Ed.M. is the Director of National Outdoor Leadership School Pacific Northwest*