

Pull, Not Push!

by Christian B. Sager

This article was written immediately following the Death of Dr. L.D. Pankey in March 1989

As we sit here reflecting on the many things Dr. Pankey gave us, I keep coming back to his superior leadership qualities. Throughout his career he pulled people toward excellence and judiciously avoided trying to push anyone.

He chose parables to communicate ideals and concepts now known as his "philosophy". In so doing he provided each of us an opportunity to experience learning and later, after we had internalized his messages, wisdom. His parables were sprinkled with quotes from the likes of Cicero, Homer and Socrates causing the listener to seek out the works of these great Philosophers, once again pulling us toward greater understanding and temperance.

Is there an individual that was fortunate enough to share time with Dr. Pankey, or hear his philosophy lectures that will ever forget "Hands on the Rope" references? Can you imagine the frustration and ultimate failure one would experience trying to "push on the rope?" He knew true leadership is pulling people toward a worthy goal. Remember hearing Dr. Pankey quote Goethe, "If I accept you as you are, I make you worse: But if I treat you as though you are what you are capable of becoming, I help you become that."

He perpetually affirmed other people's strengths and avoided conversations or people that did not share his regard for the positive. He realized that recognizing strengths and compensating for weaknesses represents the first step in helping humans achieve positive self-regard. He correlated positive self-regard with self-motivation. He knew that one cannot give another sustained motivation and that the only person that can help an individual rise above their present circumstances is that individual. He told us as leaders we can create the environment, provide the stimuli and the example but all real motivation is self-generated. Said another way, you can pull people along, but cannot consistently push them and that attempting to change the behavior of others without changing our own is nearly always futile.

He also told us we must know ourselves and we can know and lead others only when we are progressively learning how to know and lead ourselves. Dr. Pankey became a true leader of others when he began living a fully integrated life; one in which his career and personal life fit seamlessly and harmoniously together and since he formally began presenting his "philosophy" in the late 1940's we can assume that Dr. Pankey reached the state of "self-actualized" somewhere around the age of 45 and continued to enhance his and other lives as a leader/mentor for another 42 years. Forty-two years of vigorously pulling people toward excellence.

I have no doubt the impact and influence of the Institute named after him will grow along similar lines in the future. He provided us the leadership, principles and guidelines to follow and so long as there are people of integrity and purpose willing to share his wisdom with others, he will continue pulling others toward the achievement of their vision.

Thanks, Dr. Pankey. We miss you but we will try to make you proud. We offer as our farewell one of your favorite and most cherished excerpts from James Allen's "As A Man Thinketh."

The Power of Thought

As you think, you travel: and as you love, you attract. You are today where your thoughts take you. You can not escape the results of your thoughts, but you can endure and learn: can accept and be glad. You will realize the vision (not the idle wish) of your heart: be it base or beautiful, or a mixture of both, for you will always gravitate toward that which you secretly most love, into your hands will be placed the exact results of your thoughts: you will receive that which you earn - no more, no less.

Whatever your present environment may be, you will fall, remain, or rise with your thoughts, your vision, your ideal. You will become as small as your controlling desire: as great as your dominant aspiration.