

Message from the President, July 2017

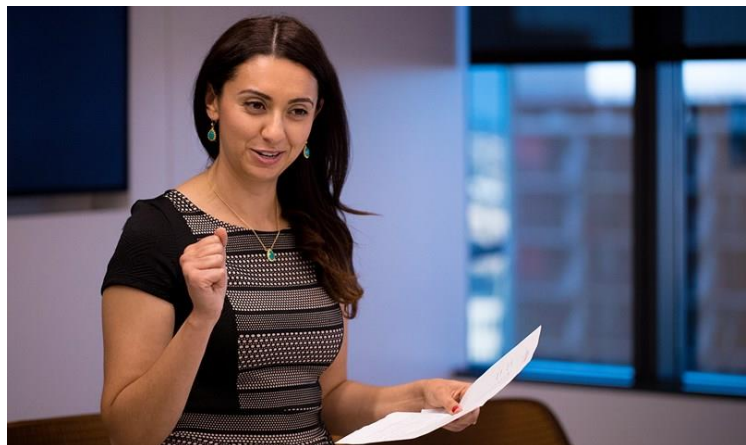


Kathy Simons (WTS-LA Chapter President), Photo © John Livzey, 2017

There is most certainly an "I" in leadership.....

Amelia Earhart said, "The most difficult thing is the decision to act, the rest is merely tenacity." How do you not love that? Merely tenacity. Ms. Earhart is talking about leadership. At its core, leadership is the decision to act. But there is a misconception when it comes to leadership. People always think of it only in grandiose terms. If you talk leadership, people think presidents, generals, CEOs, board chairmen. But in fact, leadership often starts quite small. It's one decision on one project. It's one choice when you're driving. It's one moment in a meeting when you speak up. Those are moments you build on to become a leader. And that's because real leaders are not born. They are made, cultivated and mentored by leaders that came before them, people who made one small decision and then many subsequent ones. Unfortunately, real leaders take time to emerge. And nature abhors a vacuum. So, what happens?

People get drawn to what they think leaders should look like. They habitually go for people that are charismatic, attractive, and promise to have all of the answers. Often, those leaders end up being nothing more than slick, snake-oil salesmen, and are found out eventually. But think about the venerated leaders in our history. Some of our greatest leaders were awkward, shy, unassuming, genteel, unattractive even, and not particularly inspirational at first glance. But once they started making decisions, taking stands, owning the responsibility for each and every decision, people responded to them. The blowhard charlatans eventually fall or fail, mostly because they lack the stuff true leaders learn to cultivate—the mettle to act with accountability. So, what am I on about with this?



We need leaders, good leaders, real leaders, not paper tigers. WTS-LA is in the business of training real leaders for the transportation industry. But it can't be all on us. It's never a passive endeavor. We can help enlighten you. We can help train you. We can help empower you. But we can't make you a leader. That's on you. And it's time to step up. So, what do I want you to do?

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First, write down what Amelia Earhart said. Put it in your pocket. If you want, type it into the notes on your smartphone. Memorize it. Then, use it. At work. At home. On your commute. With your kids. Even at the gym. Refer back to it during the day. Then, decide to act. And note it. Be aware of it. Remember it. Build on it. And then act again, and again, and again. Notice your pattern of making decisions and accepting responsibility for them. This sounds simple, something that most people do every day. It's not. And they don't. More people react out of fear than act out of determination, tenacity, and responsibility. Make yourself

a leader by being mindful of your actions and decisions. Cultivate your own leadership skills. And then come to us, at WTS-LA, to help you refine it and take it to the next level. Oh, and one other thing.

The law of unintended consequences dictates that there will be unexpected results in taking these actions. Fortunately, they're all positive. But there is one that you should be aware of. By acting decisively and taking responsibility for it, you are becoming a role model to everyone around you—your spouse, your boss, your reports, your kids. And it's infectious. When you start acting this way, when you demonstrate this kind of accountable leadership, others will not only follow you, but they will become leaders through your example. Yes, it's that effective.



The most difficult thing is the decision to act, the rest is merely tenacity. It is time for us all to act tenaciously and become the leaders we so desperately need right now.

Sincerely,

Kathy Simons (formerly McClure)

President
LKG-CMC, Inc.