

Entre Nous



THE PUBLICATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF EXTENSION 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS

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"PERSONAL GROWTH"

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Entre Nous means "between us" and serves as the official publication for members of the Wisconsin Association of Extension 4-H Youth Development Professionals.

Articles should be submitted via e-mail, either in the body or in an attached Microsoft Word document. The e-mail should be addressed to Amanda Kostman at amanda.kostman@ces.uwex.edu

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The theme of the Winter 2008 issue of *Entre Nous* is "Professional Growth", so start writing your articles now. The due date will be February 1st. You don't have to limit your articles to the focus theme. The *Entre Nous* is your newsletter. Express yourself! Share personal and professional concerns and triumphs.

What did I get myself into...

Amanda Kostman, Entre Nous Editor

Lincoln County 4-H Youth Development Program Advisor

As many of you know, I have started my masters degree work online. The first semester was wonderful... loved it! The second semester...not so much. Why? Well the professor has not made it pleasant.

From the start, I was frustrated. When I tried to answer questions, we (the professor and I) argued (via email), when I disagreed with his point of view, we argued again. Seemed my every move was awful. I just could never get it right.

When it was turn to submit an editorial paper, I was nervous. I couldn't submit a 5 sentence post with out him raising 20 points of why I was wrong, how will I ever survive a paper! My self-esteem was already really low and I thought I was already not doing well (he does not post grades). But like me, I worried and worried over the paper and finally submitted it. To my surprise he had little negative to say and of course little (but a little is better than none) positive to say but at the end of his critique was an almost perfect score...

"What??? From him?" was my first thought. I had to re read... to make sure he wasn't kidding. I did something right for once!

After talking to someone in my class, it turns out he likes to challenge people on everything but grades easily. We still don't agree and argue about a lot because I really believe in what I am arguing but I don't sweat him as much. Don't get me wrong, I still get this sinking feeling as I log on.

I learned that I shouldn't take it so personal. This class is not about me. I am just part of the class. It is not personal... I will be gone at the end of the semester (yippy). Sometimes it is not worth getting all worked up over. Some things are just a temporary hick up and I am the one who needs to take a deep breath and just get it done. I need to take control over what makes me upset and decide if I need to really worry.

Measure Twice, Cut Once

Dawn Kuelz, Entre Nous Past Editor

Door County 4-H Youth Development Agent

I know that I have heard many times in my life always double check everything! In fact, I've heard that is a mantra for many technical professions, "measure twice, cut once."

My dad impressed that upon me when we were remodeling the deck in my back yard over the summer. We didn't have extra boards, and I certainly didn't want to make an extra trip to Green Bay to purchase more (2 hours in the car with an upset father wouldn't be a pleasant time). So one would think that I had learned a lesson about the importance of always double checking before moving forward with something, but that wasn't the case.

I recently had a New Volunteer Orientation for a new club that is starting in my county. The meeting was held near their homes in Sister Bay, which if you aren't familiar with the geographically-challenged county I live in, it's a 45 minute drive north from Sturgeon Bay. I had all my handouts prepared, had the AV equipment all

reserved and packed in the car and had the powerpoint presentation saved on my Flash Drive...or so I thought.

This was one of the largest orientations that I have done so far; I was prepared for 10-12 people who were scheduled to attend. And to add another dimension to the story, I also didn't realize that it was a Full Moon that night.

I got to the site 20 minutes early to set up and get things ready to go. As I unpacked my materials and AV equipment, I realized that something was terribly wrong. I noticed that I had the power cord for the projector, but I didn't have the cord that would connect it to the computer. At this point, I didn't panic, I thought we could just all huddle around the laptop and view the presentation that way, and all would be well. So I went to fire up the laptop and get the Flash Drive plugged in. And then the moment of shock and frustration to find out that the powerpoint wasn't loaded on the Flash Drive, like I had initially thought. By then, some of the participants had started to arrive, and I was scrambling! I wasn't sure what I was going to do, but I had to pull it together and try to make it look like I wasn't freaking out. I had to punt and make the best of the situation and still conduct the orientation. Luckily, my audience was mainly a group of teachers, so they were very understanding.

"I had learned a lesson about the importance of always double checking before moving forward with something."
- Dawn Kuelz

So to bring it into the context of personal growth, I have learned that I need to check AV equipment and computer equipment twice, no matter what equipment I am using or what program I am conducting. And always have a backup plan -- no one was going to be able to rescue me in Sister Bay by rushing me an extra cord or bringing me another disk of the presentation.

I think there is another quote that says something about the "best laid plans of mice and men" and I definitely believe that. I had planned this to a T, but unfortunately, all the planning in the world couldn't have helped me in this situation. It was certainly a lesson learned and a big moment of personal growth!

Taking Care of You

Annette Bjorklund, WAE4-HYDP President

Washburn County 4-H Youth Development Educator

Your Wisconsin delegates to the 2007 NAE4-HA Conference in Atlanta, GA experienced a full and engaging week of events, seminars and activities. As much as I had to admit it, the Georgia folks put on a great conference. I would say it could rival the 2006 conference in Milwaukee as far as enthusiasm, organization and fun. But WE know that ours was still the best.

I wanted to share with you a bit of a seminar that I attended, "Balancing the Triangle--Work, Family and Care of Self," presented by Margaret Miltenberger, West Virginia University Extension Service. She and a colleague have spent the last several years researching and putting into practice in their own lives ways to balance the triangle. I was intrigued by this session because it included an emphasis on self, which can get lost in the balance of work and family.

Margaret shared that self is the challenge for most people. It seems self-centered and we think there are more important areas. However, self is critical. The best way to serve others is to take care of ourselves and change ourselves for the better. Some days we need to do something for our "inner" selves -- take a nap, exercise, meditation, etc. Doing them will make you a better parent, friend, spouse, or co-

worker. Others days our "outer" self needs to be a priority, like calling a friend to cheer them up or volunteering in our community.

Usually, when the distraction of daily life depletes our energy, the first thing we eliminate is the thing we need most: quiet, reflective time—time to dream, time to think, time to contemplate what's working, and what's not, so that we can make changes for the better. Brief moments of time each day help to balance self, but maximum recharging occurs if once a week or month we block off large chunks of time for ourselves.

The easiest way is to schedule an afternoon or morning just like we would a meeting. During this time, start by doing nothing. Allow your mind to wander over a hot drink. Take yourself out to breakfast and let the next three hours unfold. With practice you will learn what you need to do to take care of yourself. It will be different for everyone – reading, lunch with friends, bible study, riding horses, swimming, stock market club, writing, golf, yoga, sitting quietly, knitting, learning Spanish, painting, etc. Whatever it is, just do it and give it your undivided attention.

"The best way to serve others is to take care of ourselves and change ourselves for the better."
- Annette Biorklund

Margaret also shared several books you may want to read. It is important to take some time to identify books and resources that are useful to you and your personal style. She recommended spending some time in book stores and libraries to find the right books for you. Even just reading 15 minutes a day on the topic can be helpful and supportive of positive change.

The "balancing the triangle" concept which served as the background for the presentation is drawn from Eyre & Eyre's book "Life Balance." This book was written by a husband and wife team.

"Simple Abundance," by Sara Ban Breathnach is written for women. It offers one year of daily readings to bring about positive change and a focus on what is important in life.

"Life Matters—Creating a Dynamic Balance of Work, Family, Time and Money" is written by Roger and Rebecca Merrill, a husband and wife team. Roger has 35 years of experience in the field. Rebecca helped to edit Stephen Covey's "7 Habits of Highly Effective People."

René Mehlberg attended a different balance seminar that suggested these two books. Rene will be reading them both. Perhaps she'll do a book review for us.

"Eat That Frog! 21 Ways to Stop Procrastinating and Get More Done in Less Time" by Brian Tracy is a good place to start, an easy read and humorous.

"Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity" by David Allen balances "big picture" with "day to day" details and interruptions.

Remember to take care of you.

Leading vs Managing

Denise Retzleff, Fond du Lac County 4-H Youth Development Educator

If one is leading, teaching, dealing with young people or engaged in any other activity that involves influencing, directing, guiding, helping or nurturing, the whole tone of the relationship is conditioned by one's faith in human possibilities. In every group there is something waiting to be awakened.¹

Throughout 2006 I had the opportunity to serve as the Interim 4-H Youth Development Educator in Waukesha County. This was my chance to be awakened. By working in another county I was able to be part of a 4-H program that was different than the 4-H I had been part of in Fond du Lac for the previous 8 years. There were different policies, procedures, personalities and priorities. The Waukesha County 4-H program was going strong due to effective leadership by previous educators and eager volunteers. One of my roles was to further strengthen the 4-H program in the eyes of elected officials. During this time I had the opportunity to reflect on the comparisons between the 4-H programs I have worked in and to consider my role as educator.

What I gradually came to realize is that my style of leadership back in Fond du Lac was more of a management than a leadership approach. What helped me to see this was that I was immediately put in a leadership role in Waukesha that would last just one year and it needed to produce results. There really wasn't a lot of time to focus just on managing, and fortunately there were many volunteers who could, and already were taking on some of those tasks within the 4-H program.

One of the resources that helped me think about my leading versus managing roles was a Youth Emphasis WisLine, "Getting Extension Educators and Volunteers on the Same Page" from January 2006.

(<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/4h/resources/profdev/index.cfm>) Dr. Jim Rutledge, Executive Director, Oklahoma 4-H Foundation, Inc. talked about the Developmental Stages of an Extension Educator. The stages include service, education, management, and leadership. As the 4-H Educator moves from managing to leading he or she empowers others. Volunteers are key resources to achieve the vision that they help to create. The program moves from expanded to unlimited opportunities.

"I had the opportunity to reflect on the comparisons between the 4-H programs I have worked in and to consider my role as educator."
- Denise Retzleff

I knew that when I completed my term in Waukesha and returned to Fond du Lac that I wanted to move further toward the leadership phase of the continuum. Doing this would strengthen the 4-H program, infuse new life and energy, and provide greater opportunities. A professional development opportunity that has helped me with this process was a six week on-line course "Leading vs. Managing in Human Service Administration" offered by UW Madison Office of Continuing Education. Participants read and discussed "On Leadership" by John W. Gardner. The text contrasts how a leader and manager are different, while valuing the skills that each offers. Chapter two of the book outlined the tasks of a leader and the remaining chapters covered those areas in-depth. The leadership areas included envisioning goals, affirming values, motivating, managing, achieving unity, explaining, serving as a symbol, representing the group and renewing.

Some of the ways that I have begun to apply my growing understanding in the area of leading vs. managing is working with the Leader Association Executive Board to help them better understand their roles and for me to let them carry them out; working with the board and others in the 4-H program to develop a mission statement that provides direction for where we are going as a county; and being more proactive in addressing challenging people. For those of you who know me as "green" from the personality assessments, I have also made conscious efforts to build stronger relationships with volunteers so that they know me as a person as well

as a professional. County committees, such as camp, are taking on more responsibility that used to be led by staff. Through encouragement, other committees have broadened their focus, such as the music festival committee which will now be adding drama to their event. We have become more open to ask why we are doing things and seeing new possibilities instead of just doing things the way we always did them simply because it worked, or because it was the easiest route to take.

The Rutledge Wisline in early 2006 was an introduction to new ideas. The interim position was an opportunity to reflect upon what was, what is, and what could be. The on-line leadership session provided further insight to skills I could develop. These opportunities, along with the knowledge that leadership development is a lifelong process, is enabling me to have an exciting and challenging year as I work to awaken the human possibilities in 4-H members and leaders in Fond du Lac.

¹Gardner, John W. *On Leadership* New York, The Free Press 1990 p. 199

Take a Chance to do something different...

Chris Viau, Dunn County 4-H Youth Development Educator

This past summer I had the opportunity to travel to Southern California with my wife Stacy. I was a celebration of sorts as I had completed my Master's Degree, we were celebrating 10 year of marriage, and most importantly our two children were still in Wisconsin.

I had many memorable experiences that I could share from that trip but would one specific journey that support my theme, "take a chance and try something different."

The first event includes raw fish and Hollywood, what a combination. We met up with my high school classmate Dustin Booth, an aspiring actor and all around good guy. While searching for something to eat Dustin loudly stated, "You need to try sushi while you are here, Sushi it is." At this point I had two feelings, one was when in Hollywood, do as they do, and second was my stomach churning at the thought of raw fish on a plate. Being from Wisconsin I am used to eating fish that has been thoroughly battered and deep fried until you can scarcely recognize that it is fish, especially when covered with tartar sauce and accompanied by French Fries.

We sat down at our table and I was a bit nervous. Taste was the least of my worries, as I was more concerned about keeping my dinner on the inside. Now that it was time to order, the menu looked quite enticing with fresh vegetables, rice, sauces, and all types of seafood. Feeling quite adventurous I only drew the line on octopus as one of our choices and everyone else agreed that was a good idea.

When the sushi and California rolls came with a number of sauces (which I have no clue what they were) and fresh sliced ginger root, the moment of truth arrived. How would it taste, how does it feel in my mouth, where is the rest room were some questions that flashed through my mind. After a brief lesson on how to eat such from Dustin to took my first bite and ...It was great! The fish and vegetables created a great flavor. I had nothing to worry about...except using the chopsticks.

Many of us have been part of a similar experience regarding food. In most cases we know what we like and do not voluntarily step outside of our comfort zone. The same can be said for your 4-H involvement, are you only comfortable doing the same things that you have done in the past? This year try to learn new things by taking at least one new project. Work with your club to do at least one new activity whether it be community service, or a social event.

Take a chance and do something different. I am glad I tried sushi and I will eat it again.

"take a chance and
try something
different."
- Chris Viau

Taking Another Look

Susan Marino, Life member and Director of The Etiquette Center

Do you remember the day you were interviewed for your current job? Have you ever put that much effort into making sure you were mentally and physically prepared since that day? Were your manners modern and ready for the professional world or were they limited to what your grandmother taught you?

Today technical skills and knowledge account for 15 percent of the reason you get a job, keep a job and advance in a job. Eighty-five percent of your job success is connected to your people skills. Business etiquette and protocol are grounded in one basic principle: "it's not about me"; it is about the person on the other end of the line, on the other end of the e-mail, or the person in front of you.

A basic etiquette presentation includes such topics as eye contact, handshaking, introduction of yourself and others, remembering names, electronic communications, networking, etc. Separately, but just as important, would be table manners—for use in social and business situations. An advanced presentation would include customs and practices beyond the American standard.

If you haven't recently reviewed your professional etiquette skills, you may be surprised when you look around. New hires may not know all the rules, but in their backgrounds many will have had at least one session or course on basic professional etiquette and feel comfortable in various situations. Longer career professionals may be able to respond technically to their clients better, but might not have updated their etiquette and protocol skills since college.

Why is being etiquette savvy important for you? It positions you to distinguish yourself from other professionals, develop and maintain business relationships, project a positive image, and exude confidence and authority.

Where can you go for help? While a good reference book in your library may be readily available, sometimes it is out of date just when you look for guidance. Better would be to read all the short articles in today's magazines, newspapers, and on the net or watch the video clips on current etiquette practices. You will be able to assimilate the information better because it is so focused, like "remembering names" or "dealing with a thorny question". The best way, however, to update your soft skills is to participate in a group or individual presentation, because it will be interactive and give you the opportunity to ask questions.

Etiquette is comprised of knowledge, courtesy, and common sense. If you feel unsure or awkward in a work situation, be sure to smile. It relaxes everyone and makes you look like you've got everything under control. Above all, remember to use those first three words of manners you learned as a toddler: please and thank you.

By Susan R Marino
Professor Emerita
Department of Youth Development

"Eighty-five percent of your job success is connected to your people skills."
- Susan Marino

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Fast Fact

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