

Life Notes

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Tapping Into Circles of Influence

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In January I was invited to talk with students in five area high schools about *Circles of Influence*. These students are involved in Youth Leadership for Vital Communities, a program spearheaded by the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce. What are Circles of Influence? How are they created? How do we sustain them and why do we have them?

I was reminded in preparing these presentations that as human beings, we are social beings. Few of us exist totally independent of other human beings. When we are “out there on our own,” we are not very happy or very successful. As humans we crave contact and welcome interaction with other humans. When we are challenged, working to accomplish a big feat or struggling to pull ourselves out of a hole, we want to ask for someone else’s advice or helping hand. Yeah, sometimes, some of us are too proud to think of doing that, but really, if we are to be hugely successful, we know we can ask for the support of others. We especially like it when others call on us if they are in a jam. Those people we can call on or invite to call on us, are our *circle of influence*. Over a lifetime, our circle grows. As many of the students said, the first tier of their circle of influence was family members and the circle was growing to include friends and friends’ families. You can add teachers, neighbors, fellow church members, colleagues at work. In small town America, we know we can count on and call on others in our communities. Our circles of influence become a huge safety net to catch us and buoy us through many challenges and in accomplishing our goals.

How often do we remind one another of the support we are willing to make available? Why is it that as our children grow up and look toward higher education and future employment, they aren’t aware of the support they can access to be successful? If you are like me, you want to see these young people succeed and thrive. I invite you to tell them that. At the same time, recognize that they are an amazing resource to us in the adult community. Young people have energy, creativity and new vision that we forget to, or are reluctant to tap into. If we include them in our *circles of influence*, they will contribute to our success as much as we contribute to theirs.

The day I visited the Floodwood School, I met Susan, the editor of the Northern Independent. We chatted about people in our respective *circles of influence*. It turned out Susan is a good friend to a neighbor of mine. Our common acquaintance created an immediate trust for and interest in one another. Our circles overlapped! I told Susan about some people in my circle of influence that could support her business endeavor. She welcomed my idea of a newspaper column written from a life coaching perspective. One meeting. One hour. One conversa-

tion. Multiple seeds were planted to help each of us grow. Aren’t *Circles of Influence* amazing?

Who will you connect with today that can influence your life in big and small ways?

It’s nice chatting with you. I’ll be back next month, but if you’d like to learn more about life coaching or visit with me about where you can influence someone’s success, visit my website at www.lifesongcoaching.com. We’ll figure it out!



Life Notes is a monthly submission to the Floodwood, MN, **Northern Independent**, and a newsletter to Life Song Coaching clients & potential clients. Contact Bonnie Henriksen, CPCC, at the above web address to request future copies of *Life Notes*.