

How To Delegate: The 3 L's

By Shar McBee

If Elizabeth tells me she needs to "delegate" one more time, I am going to bolt! Elizabeth and I serve on a committee together. As chair, she started out enthusiastically. Now she's wondering why no one else has volunteered to help.

Elizabeth knows the project's success depends on more people joining us. What she doesn't know is how to delegate. Delegate does not mean dump. Delegate means to empower, to entrust. However, in our high-speed age, the word has taken on such a negative connotation that when Elizabeth says she wants to delegate, she actually means she has taken on too much and wants to get it off her plate and onto mine. This variety of delegation is no more than a child's game of hot potato.

Why would anyone want to take on a burden? On the other hand, if the project is fun, rewarding and exhilarating, who wouldn't want to join in?

The next time you are required to delegate, remember this: Delegate with delight. People aren't looking for ways to give up their time, but they are looking for ways to enrich their lives. Question yourself: What drew you to the project in the beginning? What is great about the mission? What is fun about it?

Keep your warmest memories in mind when asking someone to help you. Offer an opportunity to do something great. Make it sound delicious. Empower, entrust and use the 3 L's to delegate with delight.

Look for Good People

You don't want people to be growling through their tasks. You want people who will gleefully participate. Pay attention at meetings. Stand off to the side and see who is energetic in one direction or another and who just wants to get through with it.

Cub Scout leader Steven Gay says, "If you are in charge of the yearly camp-out, you'll find that some people really like to camp and some people really don't like to camp. The goal is not to force the people who don't like to camp into camping. The goal is a high quality program. So pick individuals who are enthusiastic about camping and it will go off like clockwork."

Listen to Them

Mary Castleberry has recruited a legion of volunteers for her church. She says, "Learn what people need from you before you try to delegate to them. By listening first, you learn what they like to do and what they want to do. Then delegate things to them that they like and want to do."

Let Them Shine

Give credit to others. Steven Gay says, "It makes them feel more important and gives them a feeling of fulfillment. Of course, when they look good, it makes you look good, too. In the meantime, it frees you up to concentrate on organizing the whole project."

The 3L's are an excerpt from the *To Lead Is To Serve* video set. Additional topics include: Prepare for Good Luck, Ways to Deter Discouragement, Meet People Where They Are and 5 Steps to Reach a Goal. \$29.95 includes all of the above plus a discussion leader's guide.