

# Community Building Summit

Red Lion Hotel, Boise

April 29 and 30, 2015

Presented by Pat Wagner, Pattern Research, Inc.



## *Handout for April 29* *Community Building*

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# Introduction to Community

“... haunted by an ever-present longing for community ...  
an irresistible need for communication with each other.”

-William H. Willimon and Thomas H. Naylor  
*The Abandoned Generation: Rethinking Higher Education*

A **community** is a place where people are seriously concerned about each other's well-being and act on those feelings.

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Making Community Concrete:

Do you have a story about community? When people helped strangers when they did not have to, when there was no reward or obligation, when it was done anonymously or spontaneously?

If you don't have a story you personally witnessed, do you have a favorite event to share?

Write out your example, and then take turns telling your story.  
What do the stories have in common?

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On the other hand, a **village or tribe** is where everyone is concerned first about who are *them* (outsiders), and who are *us* (insiders), before they decide who deserves a smile and a hand.

A **civilization** is a place that creates safety for the stranger, with a minimum of meaningful, fair-handed rules, grounded in reality. Civil order keeps community from turning into ugly villages and individuals from burning out while trying to help each other. Civil order creates a workplace where boundaries are respected, and work gets done. A foundation of civilization helps grow villages beyond their limits and into communities. Civilization is sometimes counter-intuitive; it keeps our instinctive responses from turning into bigotry. On the other hand, a **bureaucracy** is a place where the rules become the goals.

**Community** is where the expectation is that if something is needed, someone can be found who will have the right answer. In community, we feel resourceful. It is where generosity is taken for granted and the sweetness of ordinary obligation provides structure and meaning. A community takes up the worst of the burdens of life on its own shoulders.

**Community** is where success is measured by different criteria from that of the bottom line. The corporate model can be a dangerous model to use in the public and nonprofit sectors; it can distract participants from truths that can't be counted.

**Community** moves at the speed of heartbeat and breath, of that of a slow stroll through a rose garden. It stops to feed the birds, pick up trash, close an open gate, and pull a blanket over the

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shoulders of a sleeping child. It stops, and asks, “How are you,” over and over again, and never gets tired of hearing the same stories, over and over again.

Creating and sustaining **community** is not without cost. The price is looking into the face of everyone you meet and saying “hello” as if you mean it. You have to pay attention to more than just your own stuff, your own needs, your own dreams, your own successes and failures, your own personal and professional space. It means compromise and putting up with the mediocrity of the crowd, sometimes. It means a loss of privacy; your pain is known; your joy is known; your self is known. It means that sometimes you are not going to win, because you have given up winning.

**Community** is the created family, the village without xenophobia, the "us and us" of public life, and a constant reunion of the practical and the spiritual.

**Community is the hello to everyone, the gift that is on the recipient's terms, the shared work, forgiveness, and celebration.**

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# Walk the Talk – Community Ethics

What score would you give yourself?

(Adapted from the work of Jamie LaRue, with permission.)

**1. You behave as if your words and deeds will be reported in public.**

Would you or your library's staff and volunteers behave differently if you knew that everyone in your town or institution knew what you were doing? Sometimes we do the wrong thing when we think no one is watching or no one will find out what we said or did.

**2. You elicit the best from everyone you meet.**

Being good is about the details of your behavior with everyone you meet, inside and outside the library, not just about the effects of official policies at the library.

**3. You add to productivity and lower the cost of running the library.**

Applied ethics is about what really happens in your library, not just the ideals. Although there's an overhead to documentation and taking time to think before acting, ethical behavior pays off with more financial support, less employee theft and absenteeism, and more effective decisions.

**4. You behave so that the people you love will be proud of you.**

Imagine someone you love and respect is watching and listening when you vote on that new policy or they watch you interact with a **member of your community**. Are they going to smile or frown? Would you want young people who looks up to you to copy your behavior?

**5. You take the high road, forget personal differences, and earn the public trust.**

Feuds and moods are self-indulgent. Do you keep your eye on the prize, or do you become distracted by petty conflicts: "schoolyard" issues?

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**6. You follow the letter and the spirit of the law in word and deed.**

When you know what good the particular law or policy is trying to achieve, do you keep that in mind and take the extra step to ensure it works? Or, do you only do the exact minimum that is required of you, in order to just get by, even if you know your extra effort will be the difference between success and failure?

**7. You are careful not to make up your mind too fast. You may have strongly held opinions, but you give other people the benefit of the doubt first.**

One of the main principles of ethical behavior is that it usually involves a thoughtful and well-considered process, with input from many points of view. If you think that if you make up your mind or act the fastest, you win (?), you are much more likely to make mistakes.

**8. You know your actions have greater consequences than when you were not working for your library.**

What works for you in your living room or in your family's business might not work for you as a public figure at your library. You now have the extra concerns of considering your behavior or decisions in the arena of public opinion in your larger institution and community. You now have constituencies of people who have legitimate input into your decision-making process, and expect, and even demand, that you justify your decisions, and how you made them.

**“I am your mom, and I said so,” is not going to work with an angry group of stakeholders at a public meeting.**

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# Specific Strategies for Community-Building

1. Everyone in your library has “internal and external community-building” as part of their job description. Everyone.
2. No one ever gets “punished” for going outside whatever boundaries are set regarding whom the organization is “speaking to” or which organizations are on the “acceptable” list.
3. Even regarding an organization with which you can’t possibly work, find one person with whom you can have a reciprocal relationship.
4. Even with a person with whom you can’t possibly do business, find one facet of that person which you have in common and about which you can chat at length, even if it is something that is not very important.
5. Play “what if” a lot. Be willing to dream out loud about possibilities all the time and with everyone, even if only the tiniest percentage ever comes to fruition.
6. If you are in a leadership position, give your staff more and more important work to do, so they can feel like full community-builders in the mission of the library. Assume your job is to grow leaders and to coax the genius out of all of the people with whom you work.
7. Keep a permanent personal and professional database. Find ways to keep in touch with people and invest in your relationships with them.
8. Do unto others as they prefer to be done to.

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# Creating Community

1. Begin with empathy and humility. Assume the people you are try to reach are your peers, not inferiors to lift up.
2. The library is not the center of their lives. They already have full lives? What will the library do to benefit them on their terms?
3. Partner from the very beginning, not when you need something from them. Partnering should start when you are planning to plan.
4. People from the target audience should make up at least the committee or group putting together the program, and they should have decision-making powers.
5. If you are serious about recruiting community members, and they turn you down, look at how you asked them, and how you structured meetings. For example, do you want to serve working-class people, but the meetings are held only when they work? Is there transportation? Daycare? Food?
6. Each time you host a program about community, invite everyone you can. Keep asking whom you have forgotten.
7. Each person in the room will know more than you do more about some aspect of the subject. Create opportunities for everyone to speak, not just the leadership or people with formal credentials, education, and experience. Everyone.
8. Create opportunities for participants to speak to and help each other. Everyone.

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9. Encourage different community members to run the presentations each time. Do not allow community to be limited to one committee or department.
10. If you leave the meeting room and people don't notice, you have done a successful job eliciting community.
11. Human beings have many facets. The more facets that can be touched and engaged in thought, word and deed by other people, the more likely that there will be the creation of community.
12. People need overwhelming meaning in their lives, but that in itself might not be enough to create a community that can sustain itself. Otherwise, there is only one connection, albeit large, with other people, and the community is likely to be more like a cult or despotism. This is the great danger and contradiction of single-minded community causes.
13. There must be a high level of reciprocity among the participants. Beware having community run by a very few generous people.
14. Community requires a higher degree of public life, where people are willing to talk with each other and reveal themselves to each other. For some people, community makes them feel naked. Not everyone needs the same level of disclosure, however.
15. Community is built in the informal more than in the formal; otherwise, people start replacing the I-Thou (Buber) with committee meetings.
16. Ritual and structure can strengthen community, but they are not, in themselves, community.
17. Community is built on the daily actions of most participants.
18. You know each other's stories and act on that knowledge.

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19. Community does not have to be based on proximity. Scholars and merchants, e.g., have shared virtual communities for centuries before there was an Internet.
20. After “you are one of us,” something more must happen.
21. Community is tested in crisis.
22. Workplace communities are fragile, because of the realities of the marketplace. However, friendships can help sustain community.
23. Community is how people interact when they don't have to.
24. Community is modeled by the leadership every day and with every person. A good “politician” runs for office every day.
25. Communities have hierarchies, but the more ways that every person has the opportunity to lead, has status, has been seen as a peer of the top people, has been a top person in some facet of life, etc., the more likely the community will survive.
26. A group where one person pays the bills is not a community. Allocation of resources impacts community-building. In library communities, this means being careful of having one small group of prosperous or assertive people with a financial stake in a project, such as the building or foundation.
27. Community dies when more than a very few people are not giving. The danger comes much sooner than most people think.

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# How to Negotiate/Influence: Three Steps

**Power: Ability to impose meaningful and significant consequences. Based on legal and fiscal duties. People have power over us.**

**Authority: Rank, status, reputation, tenure, position, title, credentials, ability. Based on tribal model of hierarchy. We confer authority. (Legitimate, illegitimate, earned.)**

**Influence: Rapport; information; action. Based on peer-based, empathetic relationships, measurable and describable data and personal responsibility and action.**

First step: Rapport - Understanding the Other Person's World

(Negotiate/design the contract—Listen and discuss.) (Excess: Placater)

1. Like or similar: part of the tribe, a peer, an equal.
2. One or more facets of each person connect with each other.
3. Pace (match) the other person's speed; use the same language.
4. Recognize the other person's story; see, hear, and understand the world from his or her point of view, whether or not you agree.
5. The other person feels visible and validated. Empathy.

Second step: Information - Understanding the Big Picture

(Write/decide the contract—Facts and evidence.) (Excess: Bureaucrat)

1. Explicit and precise.
2. No mind reading. Emotionally neutral. No judgment.
3. In the person's learning preference: visual, auditory, kinesthetic.
4. In a timely fashion. Information exchange is give and seek. In appropriately sized chunks.
5. Measurable and observable data. Objectivity.

Third step: Action - Understanding Your Choices

(Enact/enforce the contract—Change and act.) (Excess: Bully)

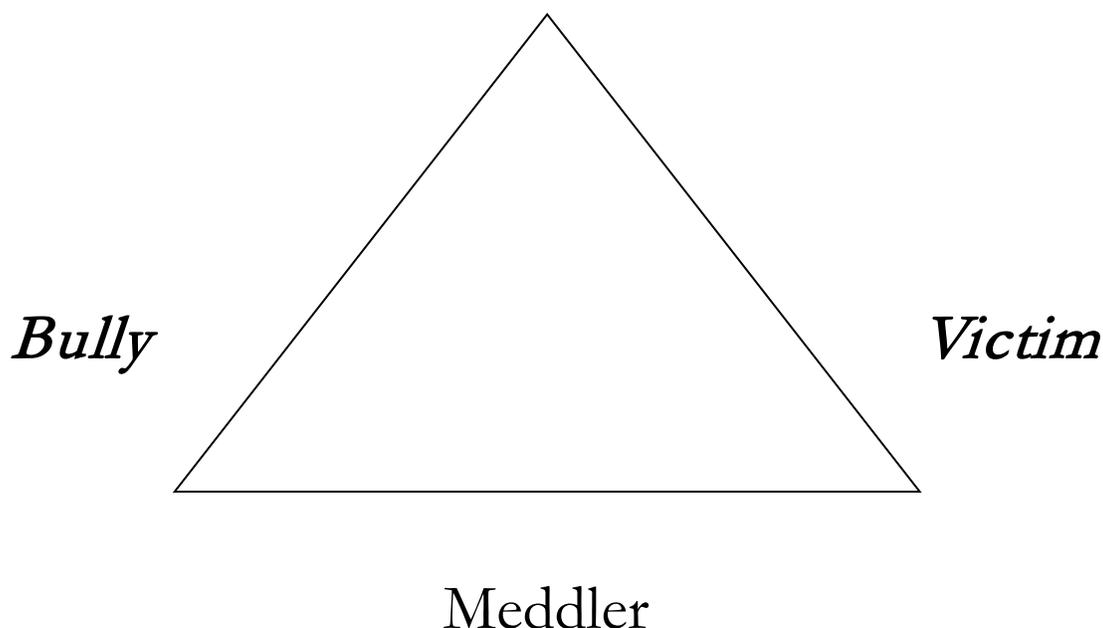
1. Take responsibility: Be accountable. Be a stand-up person.
2. Respect the behavioral impact of Cause and Effect.
3. Alternatives are created; choices are made.
4. Risks are evaluated and taken: the cost of doing business.
5. Actions can be positive or negative. Positive works best
6. Something changes. Something moves. Consequences.

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# The Conflict Triangle



1. **Bully:** Uses emotional intimidation consciously or unconsciously to influence behavior. Mostly unaware of effect of own behavior on others. Feels justified. Violates workplace boundaries. Focus of attention. Thinks s/he is the victim.

Instead: Listen, ask questions, empathize, talk and act less, pause.

2. **Victim:** Overwhelmed by the behavior of others; does not set boundaries for themselves. Feels frozen. Tends to blame others. Focuses on problems, not solutions. Becomes addicted to the behavior of the bully. Recruits meddlers.

Instead: Take action for oneself; ask for real help: assignments!

3. **Meddler:** Interferes with the relationships of others, preventing the parties from resolving their own issues. Takes over communication. Caretaker. Prevents consequences. Warm chats instead of action.

Instead: Coach, get own satisfying life, have peer relations, give assignments.

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# Five Rules for Building Community Relationships

1. A network is an array of useful relationships.
2. The art of networking is the art of exchanging useful ideas and information among individuals for mutual benefit.
3. The art of network building is the art of designing, building, and maintaining these networks of relationships.

## The Five Rules of Networking:

1. Be Useful to others on their terms and allow them to be useful to you.
2. Don't Be Boring. Abstain from loading others down with too much data, from exploiting them, and from not letting them be useful to you.
3. Listen. Think about what the other person is saying, not what you are going to say. Seek out people with whom you don't agree; listen to them.
4. Ask Questions and plan to be surprised by the answer.
5. Play the Wild Card! The least likely person can have the answer to your question and you can be useful to the least likely person.

*A weaver is someone who sees patterns and makes connections,  
and then creates their own patterns.*

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# Who is in Your Own Networks?

**Personal Networks:** Relatives, friends, neighbors, parents of your children's friends, tradespersons and service people (doctor, dry cleaner, cobbler, baker, yoga instructor, dog walker, gardener, housesitter), teachers, high school and college friends, fellow hobbyists, hobby and sports clubs members, friends from personal religious and political activities.

**Professional Networks:** Colleagues at current and previous jobs, your peers at government, nonprofit and private sector institutions, members of the media, other librarians, managers, clergy, private citizens, academics, members of think tanks, property owners, ranchers, developers, farmers, business owners, and degreed professionals.

## Types of Networks

**Networks of Geography:** Neighbors, roommates, people who work down the hall or in the same building or on the same campus or on the same block or on the same street. The people who live in the neighborhood of your workplace, or in your town, county, state, region, country.

**Networks of Intention:** Elected and appointed officials, members of task forces and community groups, members of citizens' groups, members of political parties, members of movements and action committees.

**Networks of Interest:** Members of professional associations, clubs and conferences, people who subscribe and read the same magazines and play the same sports, people with children the same age, people with the same disease, people who have lived through the same difficult experience.

**Networks of World View:** Followers of the same guru, practitioners of the same religion or spiritual path, people who speak the same language or

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who identify with the same ethnic group, people whose families came from the same part of the world, people who share your philosophy concerning politics, education, or the supremacy of the Chicago Cubs.

**And how about...**Salespeople, police officers, receptionists and secretaries, postal carriers, kids, the person in front of you in line at the grocery store, the person next to you on the plane or bus, your waitperson, your worst enemy, your best friend, your childhood crush.

**The people most overlooked:** Your parents, people who you don't like, people who you are in awe of, people who you don't know, people who you were told about years ago, people who make less money than you or who don't have your education or credentials, and those with superior money, education, and credentials.

**The people we tend to exclude:** The Others: people who you perceive are on the other side of important issues, people who vote differently than you do, people who have different ideas about: abortion, public school curricula, birth control, freedom of speech, sex, gun control, capital punishment, cats, trade laws, books, vitamins, music, how to raise children, taxes, the role of women, the Internet, the role of men, the United Nations, hunting, and nuclear power. And, people who live in the wrong city or state, people with the wrong religious ideas, people who work for the wrong employers, people who eat the wrong things, people who disagree with us. People are obviously just wrong.

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# Negative (And Sometimes Addictive) Behaviors

1. Generalizations: always, never, all, every.
2. Repeating the same negative stories or information more than once in the same conversation.
3. Repeating the same old stories in response to new information.
4. Assuming the worst of the people you don't like.
5. Ignoring or not being able to see and hear positive change.
6. Your first response is to criticize or say something negative.
7. Feeling as if feeling good means you have lost the battle.
8. Equating telling the truth as telling other people off, instead of apologizing for your own mistakes first.
9. Saying negative things if someone says something good about someone you don't like.
10. Telling new people only the negative things about the workplace and other people.
11. Spending time thinking and talking about other people's past mistakes.
12. Spending encounters with other people watching for mistakes.
13. Rejecting offers of help with "Yes, but."
14. Rejecting people who are positive and constructive.
15. Saying that your own mistakes in communication and behavior are justified, because other people did something to you first.
16. Exaggerating bad news and minimizing or discounting the good news.
17. Using punishment words. Sarcasm. Wounding others.
18. Trying to convince other people how bad things are.
19. Distorting meaning through negative filters.

*What is your score?  
How would others score you?*

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# Authors Who Have Influenced My Thinking About Community

Hannah Arendt  
C. George Benello  
Martin Buber, *I and Thou*  
Claire Raines and Lara Ewing. *The Art of Connecting*  
Roger Fisher  
Viktor E. Frankl  
John Gall. *Systemantics*  
John Gastil. *When Talk Works*  
Emma Goldman  
Paul Goodman  
Robert Greenleaf  
Ronald Gross  
Woody Guthrie. *Bound for Glory*  
Michael Henderson. *The Forgiveness Factor*  
Karl Hess  
Jane Jacob  
Irving Janis. *Groupthink*  
Arthur Koestler. *The God That Failed*  
Deborah Kolb. *When Talk Work*  
Doris Lessing. *Prisons We Choose to Live Inside*  
Stanley Milgram. *Obedience to Authority*  
Czeslaw Milosz  
Arnold Mindel. *Sitting in the Fire*  
Ray Oldenburg. *The Great Good Place*  
Michael Polanyi. *Personal Knowledge*  
Karen Pryor. *Don't Shoot the Dog!*  
David B. Schwartz. *Who Cares? Rediscovering Community*  
Martin E. P. Seligman. *Learned Optimism and Authentic Happiness*  
Carolyn R. Shaffer and Kristin Anundsen. *Creating Community Anywhere*  
Studs Terkel  
Claude Whitmyer, editor. *In the Company of Others*  
William H. Willimon and Thomas H. Naylor. *The Abandoned Generation: Rethinking Higher Education*  
Austin Tappan Wright. *Islandia*  
William Ury  
Malcolm X. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*

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