

DIMENSIONS OF LEADERSHIP

BY KATIE DANIEL

“I came to Banff as two people; I left as three.”

At first glance, this may appear to express an interesting psychological issue. To D'Arcy Gough, however, it is his succinct way of characterizing the leadership transformation he experienced at The Banff Centre.

When Gough (pronounced as in “cough”) began his leadership journey in 2001, he felt that his emotional and physical skills of leadership were in place. What he discovered was a third dimension to leadership, the spiritual side, and that has left a lasting impression. “I found out how to trust my instincts, my gut feelings, more than I ever had. That has been a critical take away.”

A twenty-eight year veteran at TELUS, Gough has had several roles with the company. He started as a splicer, then began designing project work, and eventually became an engineering manager. He is now a regional operations manager, leading a team that designs and builds outside-the-plant telecommunication facilities, such as fibre-optics.

Gough first came to The Banff Centre for the Building Personal Leadership program. His supervisor and his supervisor's boss were both Leadership Development alumni, so the program came well-recommended. Beyond developing new dimensions in his leadership, there were other benefits. “One of the greatest appeals was the numerous different companies involved, and the interaction with other participants. That was a big deal for me, meeting people from all walks of life. Hearing their different perspectives was key.”

He made the decision early on to commit to the investment of time and energy necessary to complete his Certificate of Leadership Excellence, awarded to those who have completed five programs. “The professionalism of the instructors was part of that, they kept my interest the whole time. I also enjoyed the indoor and outdoor classrooms for learning. There was also real honesty from all the participants; no matter who you were, everyone was all one

and the same. The whole environment of Banff really allowed for the development of relationships with others that will remain for years to come.”

An added bonus for Gough was the ability to participate in programs at the Centre with some of his TELUS peers. “I developed a very key relationship with Greg Harsulla, for example.” Also from Edmonton, the two took the same five programs together over the course of five years. It provided both of them with support for each other as they implemented new business processes back in the workplace. And it was an immediate opportunity to begin downloading on the long drive home. “Drives back to Edmonton were full of lively conversation. We had four hours of talking, talking, talking about our experiences.”

Because Gough works with a twenty-person team, the Leading Teams for High Performance program was of particular value. “At Banff I learned a greater understanding of myself while dealing with others, and understanding where they are coming from. I don't find that a challenge anymore. It has allowed me to develop a very strong team. And that came about because of the learning at Banff. We'd do anything for each other. We could move mountains.”

The cumulative effect of the programs also makes the investment a good one, according to Gough. “I like the linkage of one program to another. Everything was all tied together. The programs work in tandem.” And it's an investment not only for Gough personally, but for the TELUS corporate network as well. “Through mentoring, I support my managers, and share what I have learned. Protégés have introduced colleagues to the ideas, as well.”

On a day to day basis, Gough comments that his experiences at Banff have helped him meet and overcome one of the biggest challenges he faces – the constantly fluctuating priorities that come with mergers, major business shifts, and the accompanying changes in senior leadership. “A lot of the key learning at Banff was about how to handle change. I learned how to be patient, which has really reduced my frustrations.”





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