



# WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE: *It Starts With YOU!*



by Jennifer Kwan

Have you ever wondered why the mantra for Toastmasters International is “Where Leaders Are Made”? When you joined Toastmasters you probably joined to work on your communication skills. When I first joined Toastmasters, developing my leadership skills was not the priority and wasn’t even on my radar.

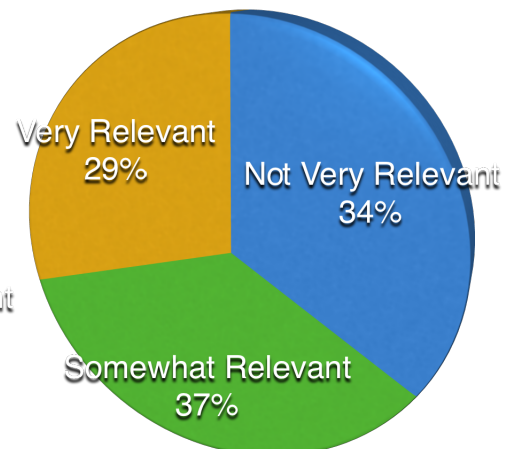
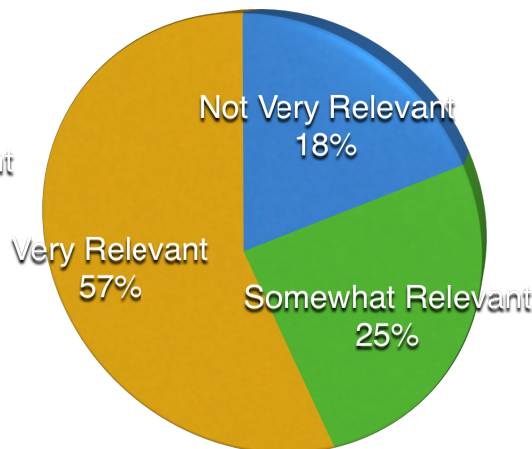
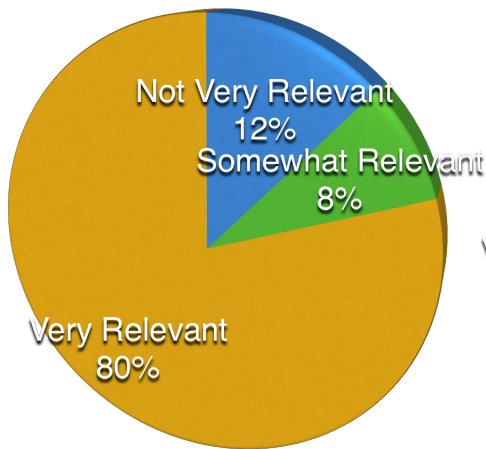
Our Founder, Ralph C. Smedley, officially started Toastmasters in 1924 in Santa Ana, California. But did you know the first unofficial Toastmasters meeting started in 1905 in Illinois? Mr. Smedley started the efforts there, but would later move to California. Unfortunately, lack of leadership prevented the groups that started in Illinois from flourishing.

In the fall of this year, I conducted a survey that collected **91 responses** from members, former members, and guests of Toastmasters from the Founder’s District area. The survey reported that most individuals join Toastmasters to work on their communication skills. Their next priority would be confidence. And at a somewhat distant third place is leadership skills.

**Communication**

**Confidence**

**Leadership**



*Survey participants were asked to rate on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high) how relevant Communication, Leadership, and Confidence pertained to them. Ratings in the range of 1-4 considered Not Very Relevant, 5-7 Somewhat Relevant, and 8-10 Very Relevant.*

If individuals join Toastmasters to work on their communication skills, then why would Toastmasters International build their brand with the slogan “Where Leaders Are Made”? It is my theory that some individual or group of individuals brilliantly figured out that without leaders there is no way we can support the organization. We need leaders in order to have our space to develop our communication skills and confidence. The problem is our members list developing leadership skills as a lower priority.



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When we asked our survey participants what they did not like about Toastmasters, the most frequent responses included **lack of commitment, participation, or motivation from fellow club members, and the need to improve structure at club meetings**. And almost an additional tenth of our survey participants noted that just a few people are doing all of the work at their clubs. From observing these results, it can be discerned that leadership is key to resolving the concerns we have at our clubs. If more people stepped up in leadership roles or at least worked on their leadership skills in the club arena, we would have more committed members and better structure at our club meetings. A rise in leadership would greatly add to the quality of our clubs.

	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES IN SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT</b></li> <li>• <b>PRACTICE AND DEVELOP SKILLS</b></li> <li>• <b>BUILD CONFIDENCE</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>LACK OF COMMITMENT, PARTICIPATION, OR MOTIVATION FROM FELLOW MEMBERS</b></li> <li>• <b>STRUCTURE AT CLUB MEETINGS</b></li> </ul>



## **Leadership is key to resolving the concerns we have at our clubs**

With the help of gathering membership information from Toastmasters World Headquarters, I did some additional research to see how active past and present members of my own club have been with the Leadership Track (data only available from 2002-2016). The data shows that minimal members have actively participated in the Leadership Track in our club since 2002. The data was discouraging.

I also looked at the educational awards of our members. Of those who obtained educational awards in our club, what percentage earned awards in the Communication Track only, the Leadership Track only, or earned awards in both the Communication and Leadership Tracks since 2002? The data looked a little better. Of all who worked on educational awards, more than half had leadership in mind. Almost as many are working on the Communication Track only as those who are working on both the Communication and Leadership Tracks. It would be ideal to have more members actively working on both tracks.

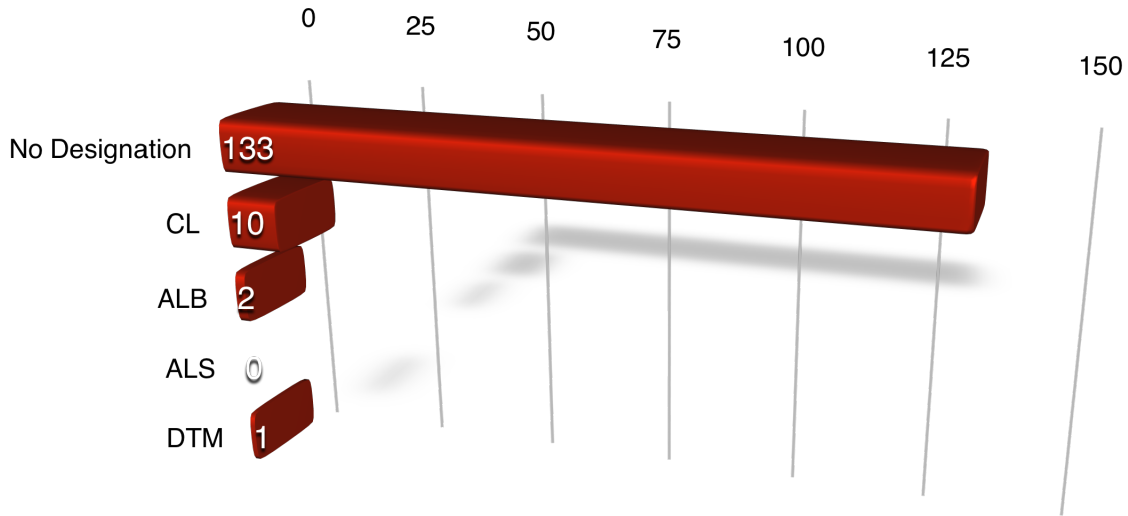
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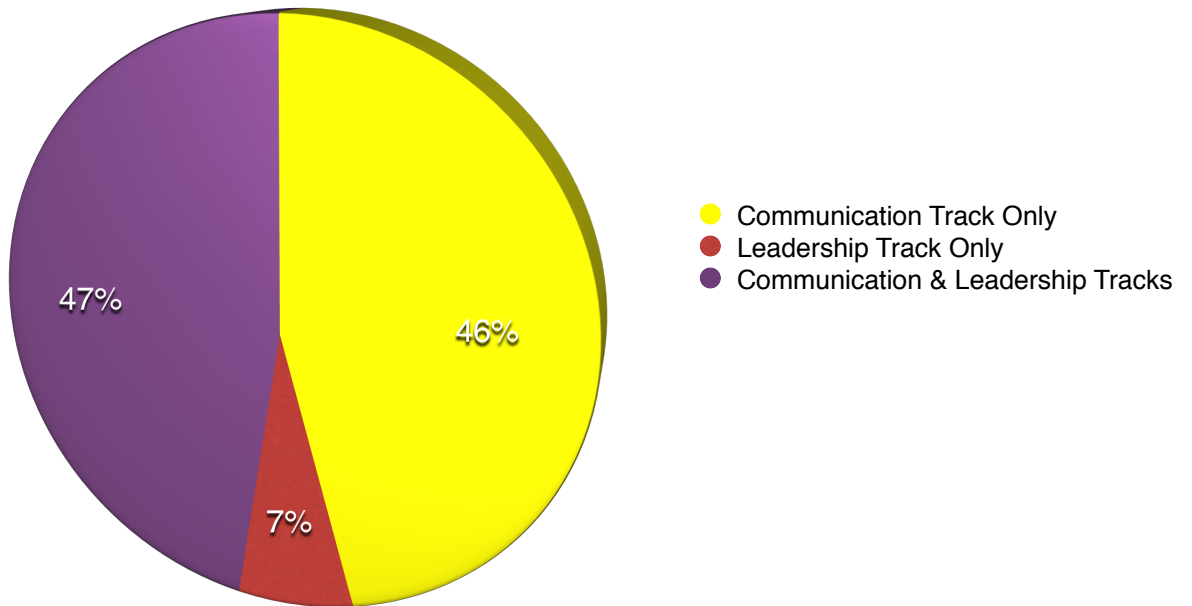
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**Club #356: The Communicators  
Leadership Track  
(2002-2016)**



**Club #356: The Communicators  
Education Awards  
2002-2016**



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The data overall did not show strong support for leadership. You may notice this in your own club as well. In such a situation, if there is to be hope for any progress, it has to start with YOU the member. At least in my own experience, I knew that progress would not occur unless I was willing to make the effort in leadership myself. We are fortunate in Toastmasters that an excellent curriculum is already made for us. The system is constructed in a way where individuals can have goals to strive for, groups can have goals to strive for, and the organization remains active and healthy through leadership.

**“While most of us may have entered Toastmasters to learn to make speeches, that benefit is but the beginning of the good which may come to us, and the good which we may do for mankind.”**

—Ralph C. Smedley

In my last report, I saw that it may be most practical to promote leadership by giving members “doable” tasks to complete within the club setting to start. And it was my hope from there that individuals would be motivated to venture out to do more. By “doable” I mean it does not require a large amount of time and it does not appear to be too difficult to achieve. If something seems simple enough, it is more likely to get participation. I made the effort to grow the leadership in my club by making it a point to further educate my club about the how the Toastmasters Educational Program and Distinguished Club Program works, and host an Open House event in order to give new members, existing members, and club officers “doable” roles to fulfill. From working through these goals, I noticed three important steps to keep in mind when attempting to build leadership: educate your crew, accept that you can’t win them all, and keep the faith.

## **Educate your crew**

- **Make individuals aware of resources**
- **Show individuals that goals are possible to reach**

In my own club setting, we were starting to notice a decline in member attendance during the fall and early winter period of this present 2015-2016 year. Though we were starting to see more guests visit our club, we were without the membership strength to support the new individuals coming in.

From learning that leadership was a significant factor for our clubs from the survey conducted in the fall, I believed it would be beneficial for our club to make members more aware of resources. Or rather, have members start to be come more Toastmasters literate. I like the term literacy as defined by the Central Georgia Technical College (CCTC), which says “Literacy is the ability to read, write, compute, and use technology at a level that enables an individual to reach his or her full potential as a parent, employee, and community member.” Though the CCTC was referring to literacy as the ability to read, we may want to consider what becoming more literate of resources can do for us. Educating members about Toastmasters resources may increase their likelihood for growth and chance of making an impact in our communities.

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**“Literacy is the ability to read, write, compute, and use technology at a level that enables an individual to reach his or her full potential as a parent, employee, and community member.”**

<b>Club #356: The Communicators</b> <i>2015-2016 Attendance/Members Retention</i>				
<b>MEETING DATES</b>	<b>Members To Date</b>	<b>Members Present</b>	<b>Members Absent</b>	<b>Guests Present</b>
July 7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
July 21	19	10	9	1
August 4	19	6	13	4
August 18	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
September 1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
September 15	20	13	7	1
October 6	21	11	10	3
October 20	21	11	10	2
November 2	18	9	9	5
November 17	18	9	9	5
December 1	18	8	10	3
December 15	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
January 5	19	11	8	3
January 19	20	12	8	4
February 2	21	11	10	2
February 16	22	15	7	2
March 1	22	N/A	N/A	2
March 15 (Open House)	22	17	5	16

*\*N/A = not available; information was not recorded*

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Come the later winter period, I decided to make a couple of presentations at our club to boost leadership: Meeting Roles and Responsibilities, and Mentoring. It was my hope that by giving members resources they would feel empowered to see possibilities for themselves.

Presentation Date	Presentation	Connection
January 19	Meeting Roles and Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competent Leader manual</li> </ul>
February 16	Mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toastmasters Educational Program</li> <li>• Distinguished Club Program,</li> <li>• Toastmasters Year At A Glance</li> </ul>

Regarding Meeting Roles and Responsibilities, I made emphasis on how the Competent Leader (CL) manual is often overlooked as we tend to give more attention to giving speeches. I added that the CL manual is part of the Leadership Track of the Toastmasters Educational Program and that it is essential to practice leadership in the club setting. If you think about it, leadership with communication is what builds confidence.

Next, I used the topic of Mentoring to cover resources a mentor would provide to new members. Not all members of Toastmasters are familiar with the Toastmasters Educational Program and how it ties in with the Distinguished Club Program. If all members at least have the knowledge of that information, they can start thinking about goals they want to reach. If they had not already received this information from their mentors, they had it now and can be more productive with their mentors on achieving educational goals in the Toastmasters curriculum. In addition, I created a Toastmasters Year At A Glance chart to note typical events to expect in a given Toastmasters year (e.g., contest season, club officer training, etc.) to help guide members.

My goal in providing information was to help make individuals aware of how they can pursue goals within the Toastmasters curriculum so that they are not lost and without a plan. If they can see that goals can be planned and are possible to reach, then they are more likely to pursue versus having an unaccomplished year.

On the side, I would sent out e-mail reminders to members to bring their Competent Leader (CL) manuals to meetings, and inform them about upcoming educational workshops offered within our district. I hope that eventually I can encourage individuals to pursue Advanced Leader Bronze (ALB) awards. At this point, the ALB is a lower priority in our club setting. Only 2 members from our club have achieved ALB since 2002. The Competent Communicator (CC) and Advanced Communicator manuals are given more attention.



**THE DISTINGUISHED CLUB PROGRAM**  
CLUBS MUST HAVE 20 MEMBERS OR A NET GROWTH OF AT LEAST 5 MEMBERS AS OF JUNE 30

9-10 GOALS ACHIEVED = PRESIDENT'S DISTINGUISHED CLUB  
 7-8 GOALS ACHIEVED = SELECT DISTINGUISHED CLUB  
 5-4 GOALS ACHIEVED = DISTINGUISHED CLUB

**AWARDS**

**GOAL #1:** Two CCs  
**GOAL #2:** Two more CCs  
**GOAL #3:** One ACB, ACS, or ACG  
**GOAL #4:** One more ACB, ACS, or ACG  
**GOAL #5:** One CL, ALB, ALS, or DTM  
**GOAL #6:** One more CL, ALB, ALS, or DTM

**BUILD**

**GOAL #7:** Four new members  
**GOAL #8:** Four more new members

**COMMUNICATE TO T.I.**

**GOAL #9:** Minimum of four club officers trained during each of the two training periods  
**GOAL #10:** One membership renewal report and one club officer list submitted on time

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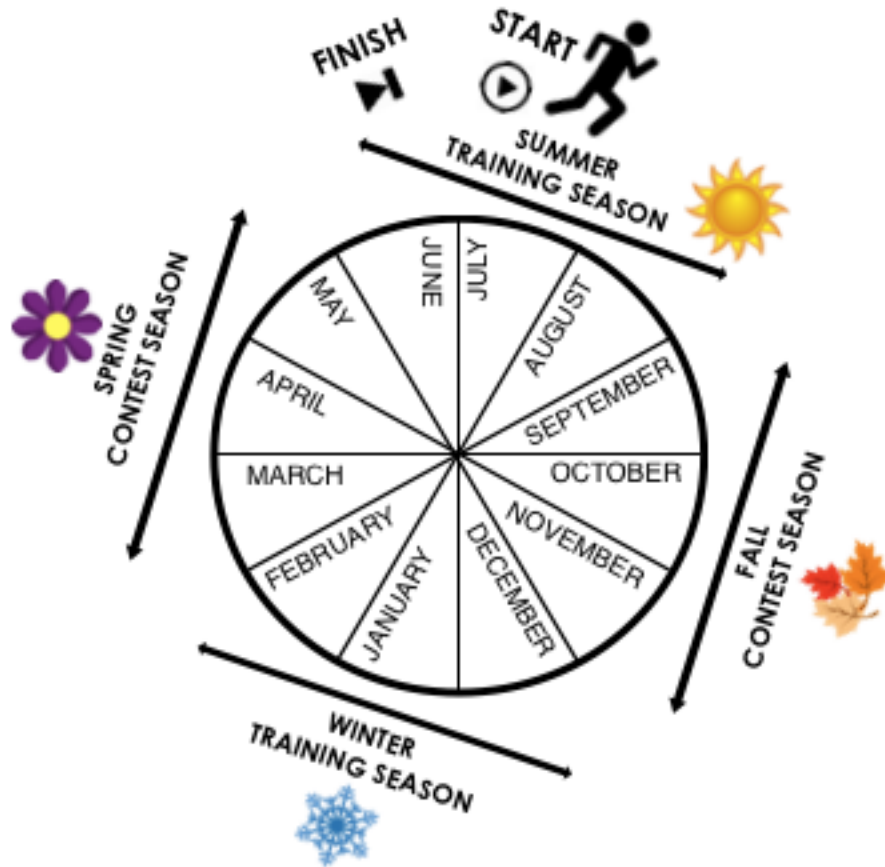
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# TOASTMASTERS YEAR AT A GLANCE



In planning for the Open House, I wanted to be strategic about having the event develop leadership in our club. I banked on the fact that it is our club's 70th Anniversary in order to build excitement amongst our members. Though the typical Open House event is about drawing new people, I made the bigger goal of this project to be about building leadership by assigning "doable" tasks for members to complete. I hoped that from the experience members would feel empowered by being a part of a grand event and that they would see that it is very possible to do something great for our club, individually and collaboratively. I organized the major items of the event so that no one would be intimidated by the workload. I wanted as many members involved as possible in this event, no matter how much or how little they could contribute. I assigned club officers to be in charge of the bigger tasks (e.g., speaking, preparing membership applications, leading crews, etc.), and had members take on the smaller roles available (e.g., greet guests, pass out flyers, etc.). And I invited leaders in our division to attend to inspire our group. The Open House event included Lorrie Briscoe, DTM, as our guest speaker. It was my hope that having our accomplished former Division and Area Director would spur interest in

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leadership amongst our club members. I hoped members would even start to become interested in being involved in Toastmasters beyond the club level.

## **Accept that you can't win them all**

- **It is impossible for anyone to win them all, but it is certainly possible to make a difference**

I hoped that some of the efforts in educating individuals about the Toastmasters Educational Program, the Distinguished Club Program, and upcoming workshops would encourage members to be more involved in Toastmasters. Though excited about the many possibilities for our club, I found myself with challenges.

Regardless of efforts through e-mail, and in-person announcements and presentations, we would have some members that who remained unfamiliar of the Toastmasters curriculum, our Open House event, Toastmasters events, and forget to bring their CL manuals to the meetings. There were times that I was close to burning out and wanted to give up all together due to the lack of interest or attention I was witnessing. I share this not to point out a great fault in my club. In fact, I belong to a very great club with great people. What I share here is a common problem amongst our clubs across the Toastmasters community.

Despite some struggles, I was encouraged through our Open House event experience. We had the greatest number of members present that I have ever seen in my history in the club. We may have seen the greatest number of visitors come to a single meeting in many years. Club officers and members stepped up at the event to help fill in loose ends to make everything run smoothly. Following the event, club officers mentioned wanting to become more involved by tracking the progress made from the event and collecting feedback. I have yet to discover a strategy that would make individuals more self-motivated when it comes to leadership. Hopefully, the spark from the Open House event will lead some in that direction.

I learned that I had to accept that not all efforts will necessarily get the desired results. I can educate and announce, but that does not mean that information will be fully received. I can win some, but I can't win them all. In fact, it is impossible for anyone to win them all. Though, it is certainly possible to make a difference. Not everyone will want to pursue leadership, but some will. The Toastmasters Survey results already show that leadership is a lower priority amongst individuals across our district, which means few are likely to be receptive to working on leadership skills.

Despite a lower interest in leadership amongst our Toastmasters crowd overall, that does not mean the answer is to simply give up. What I gather to be of most importance from this experience is that one must always stay true to oneself. If you value leadership and desire to grow leadership in individuals, you should hold on to that. In other words, make the information available to potential future leaders in the making and let each individual decide what they will choose to do with it. Otherwise, leadership will never flourish. Maybe most may not take a bite, but some will.

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# CLUB #356: THE COMMUNICATORS

Boys & Girls Club of Pasadena | 3230 E. Del Mar Blvd., Pasadena, 91107

We meet every first and third Tuesday of the month from 7:00pm-8:30pm.

**OPEN HOUSE**



## 70th Anniversary Celebration

Club #356: The Communicators chartered on March 1, 1946



**GUEST SPEAKER:  
LORRIE BRISCOE, DTM**



**TABLE TOPICS**



**FUN TOGETHER**



*Thank you for celebrating with us!*

*Please come join us again! We meet every first and third Tuesday of the month from 7:00pm-8:30pm.*

FOR MORE INFORMATION

[admin-356@toastmastersclubs.org](mailto:admin-356@toastmastersclubs.org) | <http://356.toastmastersclubs.org>



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## Keep the faith

- Be the example

**“Ours is the only organization I know dedicated to the individual, we work together to bring out the best in each of us and then we apply these skills to help others.”**

—Ralph C. Smedley

As of March, Club #356: The Communicators is leading the Area B5 group with 6 DCP goals achieved so far and counting. Since the start of 2016, or midyear of our Toastmasters year, we've seen a slight growth in membership and steady member attendance at club meetings compared to where we were at the end of winter. All in all, things are gradually moving upward for our club.

I cannot say for sure that I have successfully contributed to advancing leadership in my club setting. I hope that I have made some progress in helping to bring out the best in my fellow members. Hopefully, in time, members will become more interested in leadership and become more involved beyond the club level. More knowledge of the Toastmasters curriculum, and awareness or participation in Toastmasters events outside of the club setting is what will strengthen leadership within the club setting. Developing sustaining leadership is what I believe will ultimately make the club and the Toastmasters organization as a whole endure.

## Conclusion

To promote leadership, it has to start with YOU. If you want to see a positive change in your own club setting or other collaborative setting, it starts with YOU. I've learned from this project that I still have a lot to learn. But one great takeaway that I've gained is that leadership grows through individual leaders and through the examples of leaders that are set before the individual. Don't give up on doing your part, and let the others decide where they want to go from there. There will be some who will decide to take on leadership. But it won't happen if there isn't someone to help point them in the right direction. It starts with YOU!

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