

Ronald Pritchard's Legacy: One Man's Leadership Wisdom

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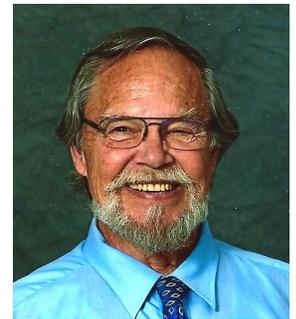
I recently attended the services for our Mid-Atlantic Regional Vice-President, Ronald "Ron" Pritchard in Virginia Beach, VA. Ron passed onto his next spiritual journey on February 16th at the youthful age of 81. None of us would believe that Ron was 81; he did not look it or act it, though at times, you could get a glimpse of his age through his stories. Ron served 28 years in the U.S. Navy, and he had more military sayings than anyone I know. During his time there, he served in the Overseas Diplomacy Program which culminated for him in Sardinia, Italy as the military liaison between the Italian government and the U.S. Navy. Knowing this, it was clear why he was so set in talking things out and having each person he debated with think about their own convictions and ideas and communicate them with vigor.

During the Celebration of Life service in honor of Ron, his daughter and the light of his life, Sybil, shared the wisdom of leadership that he taught her and that rang true throughout her childhood and adult life. Ron's three main elements to leadership were as follows:

1. Be accountable to yourself and to others. Leadership is an inside job first and foremost. Be accountable to yourself, and if you say you are going to do something, do it! Do not procrastinate or allow yourself to talk yourself out of it. If it was a promising idea at the time, why is not now a good idea? And be accountable to others. Keep your promises and do them to the best of your ability. Be committed!
2. Show up and speak up. Leadership is showing up to the meetings and saying or contributing what you have to offer. Do not ignore injustices along the way – speak up to injustice as well. Raise your voice to be an advocate for those who cannot raise their own voice. Ron was especially an advocate for the homeless and those suffering from addictive disorders. For more than 30 years, Ron raised his voice to bring attention to the issues experienced by veterans and individuals with substance use disorders. Ron did not tarry long and did not humor people who would not respond to these injustices. He wanted others to see the needs of people suffering and do something about it!
3. Take care of yourself and take care of each other. Care for everyone you meet. Mentor the younger minds and help them along the way. And care for yourself so you can keep caring for others.

Ron lived these three main elements, and it was evident to everyone he met along the way in every position he held at NAADAC, at his church, and in his community. He was committed to all that he signed up for and he would test your own convictions with one simple question: "Why do you want to do that?" whatever "that" was. It was not to argue, but rather to test you, your thought process, and convictions. And he was teaching as he was testing.

There are a lot of things one can say about leadership and leadership styles, but leadership does begin with yourself. Leadership starts with an inside job – a review of yourself, what is important and of value to you, your own thoughts and convictions, and a willingness to share them. In the willingness to share, there also must be a willingness to know you may not have it quite correct, and that at times, there may need to be



a change in course because your thought process may not be the best thinking. And that others you converse with, work with, share with, and debate with may have a more accurate point of view, process, idea, or way. This is true power and leadership – the ability to support rather than control and to allow the process to be the process. The process of life is mystifying and magical. Ron had that mischievous smile and twinkle in his eyes as he spoke up – even if you did not like what he had to say, you knew he had something behind it all. And that was Ron!

Ron has left a large hole in our hearts and in the work he left behind. Safe travels back home, Ron! And thank you for all your leadership, lessons, and hard work!

And to the rest of us, let us take care of each other! Together – we can – and do – make a difference!



Cynthia Moreno Tuohy, BSW, NCAC II, CDC III, SAP, is the Executive Director of NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals, and has worked as an addiction professional for 48 years. She has been a trainer in Domestic Violence/Anger Management and Conflict Resolution for over 30 years as well as an international, national, and state trainer. Moreno Tuohy is also a curriculum writer in addiction screening and evaluation, counseling methods, conflict resolution, co-occurring disorders, ethics, documentation, and medicated assisted treatment and recovery, and has written articles published in national and other trade magazines. Her book, *Rein in Your Brain; from Impulsivity to Thoughtful Living in Recovery*, was released May 2014 through Hazelden Publishers. She has served as President of NAADAC, Certification Board Commissioner, International Chair, Treasurer and Legislative Chair for NAADAC.

