

Leadership Challenge Spotlight

The Power of Vision

Tony Belinotti, a retail regional manager for Fifth Third Bank, wasn't really looking forward to the upcoming Leadership Challenge workshop. After all, he had "been there, done that" and, quite frankly, could use those three days to catch up on his Financial Center visits. Yet, because this was part of the Leadership Experience (LEX) program – a new high-potential leader development program for which he was selected – he complied.

Once at the workshop location, Camp Joy, Tony began to engage. The rustic venue, insightful discussions, thought-provoking videos and challenging activities all stirred his participation. "Sharing those experiences with my LEX cohorts made it even more meaningful," Tony said. "These are quality leaders, and I'm humbled to be a part of this group." An evocative exercise for Tony was developing his personal vision. He vowed to exercise his values of "honor and integrity to make a positive difference with my family, at work and in my community." Tony reflected that he had to be at his best in order to be the best for others.

The culmination of Tony's TLC experience occurred the third and final day. As people donned harnesses and began scaling the "pamper pole", Tony was comfortable just watching and cheering people on. He hated heights and saw no need to leave perfectly solid ground. What he couldn't ignore, however, were the powerful statements and commitments people were making before they climbed. They were pouring out their deepest thoughts and feelings about making big changes in their lives. "I just couldn't sit on the bench anymore," he said.

As Tony nervously approached the pole, he declared his new commitment to "be better balanced in my life and spend more time with my family." With that, he started up the pole, visibly shaking. With each peg, he exceeded his expectations. When he ultimately reached the small platform at the top, Tony's heart was nearly pounding out of his chest. "It was really emotional for me. Getting to the top represented my commitment to my family and

myself." Tony's achievement was heartily celebrated by his colleagues below.

Shortly after he returned from The Leadership Challenge, Tony had a physical exam. As he anticipated, the results weren't favorable... his weight, cholesterol and blood sugar were higher than ever. The stark reality hit him. Tony had to face this. His vision, new commitment and doctor's visit became his collective wake-up call. "If I'm going to be at my best so I can be the best for others, I can't keep going on like this."

With newfound resolve, Tony changed his course. He started eating more nutritiously. He began exercising regularly. He engaged his family in his vision and committed to family dinners and date nights. He also prioritized his time to be present for more kids' activities.

Within three short months, Tony had become the *next best version* of himself. He was 50 pounds lighter and much more energetic. His cholesterol and sugar levels were nearly normal. His shift from tactical to strategic at work afforded him more time with his family. And people were noticing.

Coworkers and neighbors alike have congratulated Tony on his progress and thanked him for his inspirational influence.

When asked what he would tell others who struggle with enacting their vision, Tony emphatically states, "You have to commit to it and make it a priority. Results aren't going to come immediately. Keep after it." For Tony, it has made a huge difference. "I'm a better father, husband and leader now. I feel like a new man."

