



My View

Courage

Thanks to June Vining in our Portland/Vancouver Affiliate, I received a very nice TIP T-shirt and TIP water bottle recently. On the water bottle it read: "Cool Minds Warm Hearts." I think that phrase is an excellent description of TIP volunteers. Obviously, each TIP volunteer is a unique individual. However, what our volunteers have in common is that they all possess cool minds and warm hearts. In other words, they can all think clearly in intense high pressure situations (something our clients need because they usually can't think clearly), and at the same time, they can convey the kindness and compassion that our clients need. I believe a major reason TIP volunteers are hard to find (just ask any TIP affiliate manager), is that most of us are lacking either the "cool mind" trait or the "warm heart" trait. To be a TIP volunteer, one needs both in good measure. In thinking about the characteristics individuals must have to be a TIP volunteer, I realized there is another essential characteristic in addition to cool minds and warm hearts...

Courage. TIP volunteers need courage. Why? Because going into unknown and emotionally fiery situations can be scary, and most volunteers (especially new volunteers) have a certain amount of fear. As one new volunteer put it to me recently: *"I was shaking in my boots on the way to my first call."* Obviously, fear is not what makes TIP volunteers courageous. It's the willingness to act in spite of the fear, the willingness to "do it anyway." TIP volunteers don't let fear get in the way of helping others in trouble. I believe that the willingness of TIP volunteers to help others even when they are afraid, is every bit as courageous as the courage shown by our police officer/firefighter partners.

Just about everyone I know thinks TIP is a "great idea," but few can put the idea into action. I believe the primary reason is fear. Of course, most people don't say *"I'm too afraid"* to volunteer. They say *"I'm too busy"* or *"I have other commitments."* But I suspect in many cases, behind the reasons for not volunteering lurks....fear. I certainly don't want to fiddle with the elegant phrase "Cool Minds Warm Hearts," but if I did include courage in that phrase to describe TIP volunteers it would read . . ."Cool Minds Warm Hearts Steely Spines."

Wayne would like to hear your thoughts.

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