

Although sharing much common ground when it comes to philosophy and ministry, often Mary and Bob find themselves approaching ministerial concerns from different angles... *He said* - *She said* is a venue to share differing perspectives and provide food for thought.

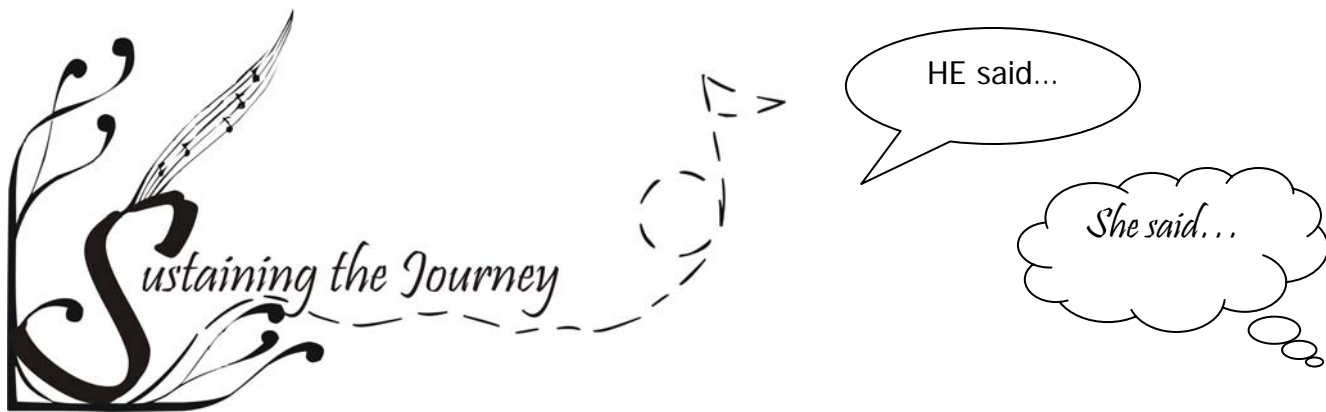
Holistically Nurturing Volunteers

Mary's perspective:

We talk a lot about maintaining balance in life. I've used the example of a wheel - the spokes being different components such as my relationship with spouse, work, spiritual life, play, exercise, etc. When one spoke is out of balance, the wheel basically still rolls. But when many of the spokes are bent or burdened, life is out of kilter. Even when I intellectually understand the concept, sometimes my spokes still get out of whack. It's those times that I need to step back, evaluate, and make smart decisions.

Whether you direct the work of volunteers, or are considering your own personal situation, taking care of self is essential to effective ministry. Read that again. Taking care of self is **ESSENTIAL** to effective ministry. It is not selfish nor a luxury. When we are out of balance, we are less able to serve others. Whether your ministry involves church or parenting or working in industry, tending to your own well-being can only help your service of others. In a nutshell, consider your whole life:

- Family
- Community
- Financial
- Spiritual
- Household/Personal Environment
- Career
- Personal Development (life-long learning)
- Recreation
- Friendship
- Health & Well Being



Identify SMART Goals:

- Specific – Who/what/where/when/why
- Measurable
- Attainable – by overcoming obstacles
- Realistic
- Timely – make a specific timeline: sense of urgency & accountability

Identify Barriers to goals. What stands in the way of balance? What choices are we making that impede progress? (Perhaps we hate to say "no" to others' requests, or the logistics of the household present a barrier.) Be honest in assessment.

Identify Actions to fulfill goals. Prioritize your goals and focus on one at a time.

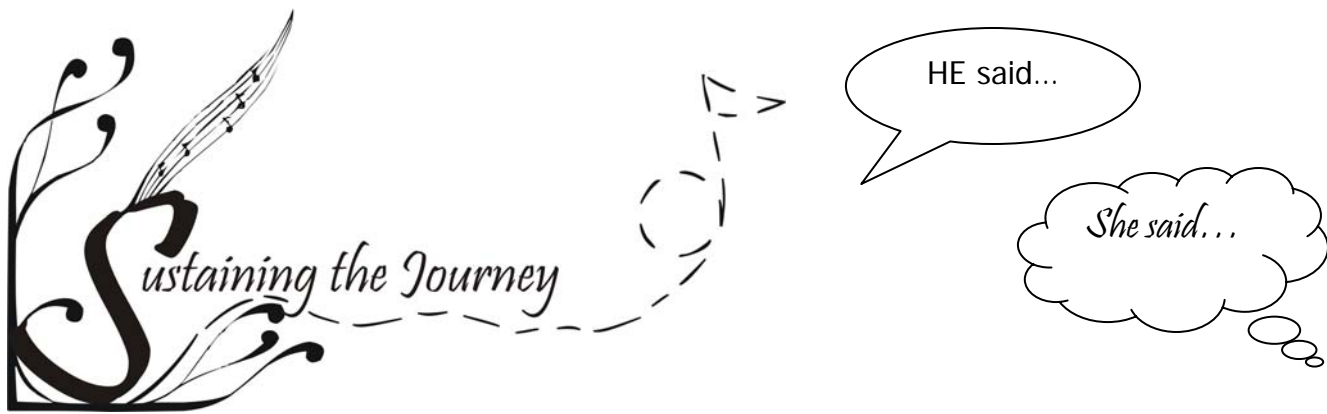
Evaluate progress regularly. Celebrate success! Re-tool as necessary for challenges. Your wheel will be rolling smoothly in no time.

Note - occasionally it helps to enlist a friend's support in this process. Often a true friend can state the obvious, or tell you you're being ridiculous (in a most loving way, of course), or help you evaluate and prioritize. And when all else fails, it's good to have a buddy to buy you ice cream!

Bob's Perspective:

Applying what Mary has said to your volunteers is equally important. Sometimes we (as parish leaders) get so engrossed in our own needs that we forget about the lives of our volunteers. It's important to realize that they too have the same considerations of family, community, financial, spiritual, etc. when making a commitment to take on volunteer activities in our parish. This realization is practical in several ways:

1. It helps to prevent burnout of the volunteer. This will help you to assess if the person is getting in over their head: besides what is now being considered for them to do, what else are they already involved in and how well are they doing in those endeavors? Will this new task cause them to burn out and thereby quit everything?



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2. Besides accomplishing the task(s) at hand, what growth opportunity for them is involved? How will doing this be of benefit to the volunteer as well as to the parish? Even though there will be no financial compensation, it is important construct the activity in such a way as to promote some sort of growth or enjoyment.
 - 3 Having clear-cut definition to the task(s) or ministry will help them to make a better decision. As Mary mentioned before, specific and measurable tasks with clear timelines and realistically attainable goals and outcomes will be much more attractive to the prospective volunteer.

Some may take issue with what I'm about to say. In my view, a volunteer is an employee that is not paid for services rendered. Taking this attitude is better for us and for our volunteers. The attitude of "whatever you can do is ok," often leads to misunderstanding, division and a less than quality outcome. Conversely, when expectations are made clear, more times than not, people will rise to the occasion. Setting the bar a little higher gives volunteers a real sense of accomplishment and lessen the attitude of doing something for the sake of getting it done.