



My View

THE SURVIVORS

We all know how hard it is to recruit TIP Volunteers. Everyone who hears about TIP thinks: *"Oh, what a good idea."* However few people actually go on to become TIP Volunteers. Somewhere between hearing about the TIP program and signing up for the training academy most people say to themselves: *"Do I really want to do this?"* or *"I don't think I can do that."*

Even when citizens complete the training and become TIP Volunteers, there is a high turnover rate. Most volunteers decide to leave TIP after one or two years.

But then, there are "The Survivors." These are the volunteers who stay with TIP for 5, 10, 15 and more years. Many of them refer to themselves as "lifers". Who are these volunteers who month in and month out, year in and year out continue to do the challenging work of a TIP Volunteer? What makes them tick? How are they different from the volunteers who only volunteer for a short period of time?

I have asked myself these questions for years, and when I get the chance I ask The Survivors themselves. I don't pretend to have all the answers to the longevity of Survivors, nor do I think that there is a profile that defines all of them. But here are 7 attitudes and behaviors I'm sure that all Survivors share in common....

1. They love the TIP mission. When I talk to Survivors they are as enthusiastic about helping those who have experienced a tragedy as they were when they joined TIP. They have not "burned out" or become jaded. They talk about their TIP calls as their most important activity in TIP, and it's clear they are in TIP primarily to help others.
2. They are "good at" dealing with survivors of tragedy. They say *"I have found my niche."* Helping other seems to come naturally to them, and being a TIP Volunteer utilizes their strengths and talents.
3. They are very careful about what they volunteer for within TIP. They don't respond to every appeal from TIP leaders for help. They volunteer for activities they enjoy and that utilize their individual talents.
4. They have learned to live their normal lives when on call. They don't wait around anxiously for a TIP call. Rather they make good use of their time when they are on call. Some devote their time on call to taking care of business that can be done at home, others just engage in their normal activities making sure that they can drop what they are doing if a call comes in.
5. They are philosophical when they go long periods without getting called. For example, one Survivor said to me after a long "dry spell" *"I think of it as a vacation."*
6. They have the support of family and friends. They make an effort to obtain and keep this support by communicating how important TIP is to others and by involving them in appropriate TIP activities (Dinner, graduation....).
7. They can let go of TIP calls. One Survivor described his mind as a "shredder" which shreds TIP calls from her memory. Do Survivors have TIP calls that deeply touch them? Yes, but they are able to let them go.

Perhaps those of us who aspire to become TIP Survivors can learn from the Survivors. The above attitudes and behaviors can be learned, developed and nurtured.

Finally, let me express my sincere appreciation to the TIP Survivors. You bring perspective, experience, knowledge and stability to TIP. Thank you!

Wayne Fortin, Founder
Trauma Intervention Programs, Inc.

TipIncCeo@aol.com

714-314-0744

See all of Wayne's *My Views* at www.tipnational.org