



My View

ACTION

Every Labor Day I think of my father who was, as he would say, "a working man" all his life. When I think of working men and women like my father I think of people who roll up their sleeves to get a job done; I think of no nonsense practical people who are on the front lines making things happen; and I think of TIP Volunteers. TIP Volunteers are our "working men and women." They are the ones who roll up their sleeves and make things happen. They are the no nonsense people who put compassion into action.

One of the things I've always valued about our organization is that we are action oriented. We don't spend too much time thinking about, meeting about, and planning about helping those in crisis. We just do it. They call...We go.

I came to appreciate our action orientation in 1991 after we won a major national award from Harvard University and the Ford Foundation. The winners of this award were invited back to Harvard to attend a number of seminars on "replication" i.e. how to expand one's program to other locations. Throughout these seminars the speakers referred to themselves as "thinkers" and to people like me and the other winners as "practitioners." I realized that many of those at these seminars spent their professional lives thinking about and writing about "replication." Myself and the other award winners were considered merely "working men and women" who were simply toiling away running our programs.

I left those seminars thankful and very happy that I was a practitioner, and that our organization is a simple action oriented one. Which brings me back to our TIP Volunteers. I am very grateful to them for taking our noble mission and putting it into action. I'm sure even as I write this a TIP Volunteer somewhere in the country is taking action to try to make someone's horrible situation bearable.

Yes, TIP is a "good idea." Everyone agrees with that. But this good idea would have come and gone without the day to day action of the caring "workers" we call TIP Volunteers.

Wayne Fortin, Founder
What do you think? Contact Wayne @
Tipncceo@aol.com

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