



My View

NOW I GET IT!

A very interesting and at times frustrating phenomenon that I and many of you have observed is what I will call the *"now I get it"* phenomenon. I've experience this phenomenon when I encounter someone who I know has lots of experience with TIP yet who one day suddenly says... *"now I get TIP."*

Over the years, I have heard many of these *"now I get it"* moments which can also be describes as "Aha" moments. They include Aha moments expressed by new TIP Volunteers after their first call(s); Aha moments expressed by spouses of long time TIP Volunteers who "get it" after attending a Heroes With Heart Dinner; and Aha moments expressed by community leaders after hearing a TIP Volunteer share a TIP Call.

I'm always taken aback when I hear someone who after months or years of TIP involvement say *"now I get it."* I think to myself *"what took you so long? You have been familiar with TIP for a long time."*

But of course what takes those who know about TIP so long to really "get it" has nothing to do with their ability to understand. It has everything to do with the nature of our program.

It seems that an understanding of TIP happens gradually and in stages. The initial stage is an intellectual understanding of what TIP does. This understanding leads people to say "how nice" or "what a good idea." This intellectual understanding can be obtained by reading about TIP, from hearing a TIP presentation, by hearing about TIP from a family member or by attending the TIP Training Academy. The next stage in understanding TIP is the *"now I get it"* stage. In this stage those who know about TIP intellectually now understand TIP on a deeper emotional level. They understand the power that having a TIP Volunteer alongside a person in crisis has and how important (and even necessary) our service is.

I believe that a major task we have in TIP is to move our constituents from "TIP is nice" to the "TIP is necessary". How do we accomplish this? First it is important that we don't assume that those who know or are involved in TIP really "get it." Then we should continually do the things we know move others from the belief that TIP is "nice" to the belief that TIP is "necessary." Generally these activities are all efforts to touch people's emotions. They include...

- > Share "touching" TIP calls at continuing education meetings, advisory committee meetings, board of director meetings, Volunteer Training Academies, and at community presentations. Of course this call sharing must be done in a way that protects the privacy of our TIP Clients.
- > Using pictures and videos to "show" TIP to others.
- > Asking our grateful clients and emergency responders to share their positive TIP experiences at special events, the volunteer training academy and wherever possible.

In short, those of us who "get it" must continually look for ways and opportunities to move others into our ranks. Only when our organization is filled with those who get it and consequently are "fired up" about TIP will we reach are full potential.

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