

Dear Visitor,

I am glad you are visiting our site and hope you'll come back.

This is the first of what I hope will be many occasional communications from me about our work, the Center and Bowen theory.

This message was inspired when I read an article that our webmaster, Jeannette Gibson wrote in her capacity as outgoing president of our Chamber of Commerce, for its newsletter, here in our little town of Mt. Jackson in the wonderful Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.

As you'll see, her message was all about geese. Since I have used the lead goose in the "V" formation frequently in my teaching slides, and on our brochures for Extraordinary Leadership Seminars, it really got my attention. There is so much food for thought in the piece that I reprint it here, just as Jeannette wrote it. We all have much to learn from the geese.

I usually use this space to let you know what the Chamber has been doing and the plans for the future. With about 10 weeks left of my presidency, I wanted to write something different and from the heart. This year has been full of victories and defeats, joys and frustrations, laughter and tears. I wasn't quite sure how to relate this to you until I was working at the bowling alley last night. I came across a tattered, 20 year old paper, stuck between the cabinets. I thought it was trash, but after opening it up and reading it, the old piece of paper turned out to be a treasure. I think it says it all.

"Lessons from Geese" by Milton Olson

As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an "uplift" for the bird following. By flying in a "v" formation, the whole flock adds 71% greater flying range than if the bird flew alone.

Lesson: *People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.*

Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to fly alone, and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the "lifting power" of the bird immediately in front.

Lesson: *If we have as much sense as a goose, we will stay in formation with those who are headed where we want to go (and be willing to accept their help as well as give ours to the others.)*

When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies at the point position.

Lesson: *It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing leadership. With people as geese, we are interdependent on each other.*

The geese in formation honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

Lesson: *We need to make sure our honking from behind is encouraging- and not something else.*

When a goose gets sick or wounded, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with it until it is able to fly again or dies. Then they launch out on their own, with another formation or catch up with the flock.

Lesson: *If we have as much sense as geese, we too will stand by each other in difficult times as well as when we are strong. Interdependence!*

*Jeannette Gibson
President*

As I said before, we all have much to learn from the geese!

Sincerely yours,

Roberta Gilbert