

Turbo Leadership Systems™

The **TURBO** **Charger**

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To our clients and friends

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Landfill Overflow



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*All leaders
take risks*

Gerry, newsmill shift coordinator for a paper mill in northern Ontario, Canada, told Session 3B of the Leadership Development Lab:

“In 1993, shortly after myself and wife Keri had relocated to the area, in the unorganized Haggart Township, the permanent citizens and seasonal cottagers lost access to the only area landfill when it was closed by the MNR.

After seeing the closed sign at the landfill, I called the MNR who confirmed that the site was closed because of a lack of use by permanent taxpayers and that we were welcome to use the next nearest public landfill 30 kms away in Cochrane or burn it in our backyards. After contacting a few close neighbours to see how they felt about the situation we decided that we should sit down and discuss this further. I was asked by the group if I would be willing to write down a few ideas and address the group at a meeting. The small risk I took was to agree to lead what I believed to be 10- 15 friends and relatives. I was a little nervous because I had not really spoken French during the 8 years I was away attending University.

When I walked into the local community centre I was greeted by a group of about 100 angry citizens in a warm smoky room who interpreted me as the proponent of the landfill closer because I was sitting at the head table. Walking down the corridor to open the door and let in some fresh air, I half considered

leaving and abandoning the problem to be solved by others – anyone but me. Once I began to address the group and it took a great deal of convincing that what I was saying in French and English was indeed the same. After regaining the confidence of the group, we managed to set up a committee of five people which I was asked to lead to achieve the opening of a landfill. Three months later after numerous meetings and calls with local municipalities, MNR and Provincial Government we were successful in signing a three way contract with the Town of Fauquier, the MNR and the Haggart Landfill Committee for a user pay landfill.

What Haggart got out of the deal was a letter of apology from the MNR, \$10,000 to cover the user fees of Haggart residents for the first 3 years and a landfill with a forty year life. Our new site is still in operation and will be for at least the next 20-30 years.

The lesson I learned from this experience is that when I act out of principle, face and overcome my fears, I can make a real, valuable difference. The action I call you to take is when you see a wrong that needs to be righted, don't wait for someone else, don't fall prey to the 'somebody else' auto-syndrome. Go into action, do what you can. Remember, courage has a language of its own.

The benefit you will gain is a sense of achievement that money can't buy, and you can make our world a better place for the next generation.” **###**

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