How to Find the leader Within

A new wave of potential

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"I define a leader as anyone who takes responsibility for finding the potential in people or processes and who has the courage to develop that potential." — Brené Brown

For some, leadership is something that comes naturally — they have an inexplicable drive that pushes them to want to be in the forefront of change in a profession or industry, rallying others to join the cause brings them great joy. But for others, being in the spotlight is so uncomfortable that their potential can remain dormant until something — or someone — "sees" that hidden strength and pushes them into the limelight. Think back to the days when you were new to leadership or new to anything for that matter. Mistakes were made and things felt awkward. But over time, skills were learned and confidence gained, making you the leader you are today. Encouraging individuals who are new, just like you once were, will give them the freedom to make mistakes and learn from them as well as grow in their leadership role.

Leadership can take on many different forms. Leaders aren't always the person jumping up and down saying, "Put me in, coach!" More often than not, it is actually the person who sits off to the side, listening intently, observing, and every now and then, speaking up to lend a voice. Think about that quiet member at Chapter events who always seems to be hovering on the outskirts of the action but always shows up. They could have a wealth of unique experiences and original takes that is just waiting to be shared, if only someone asked. Sometimes, all it takes is a little push — a reminder that someone cares what they think and believes in them — and they will follow their own path to leadership. This is, as we have all experienced, the art of "voluntelling."

While seasoned leaders can provide crucial historical context, new leaders bring a fresh perspective that can keep an organization looking ahead and moving forward. IRWA has flourished for almost a century due to the wide variety of experiences that our members have brought to the table. If leaders took a moment to foster that potential in others, there's truly no limit to how far the Association could go. It's exciting to think we all have a chance to be a small part of IRWA's future and create a thriving space for our up-and-coming right of way professionals.

At the February meeting of the International Governing Council (IGC) Spring Meeting in Phoenix, Arizona, the main topic of discussion was how to identify and empower new leaders within the Association. An essential element that came out of the discussion was the importance of creating a welcoming space for fresh ideas that will encourage potential new leaders. Our Region leaders will soon be communicating the ideas discussed at the meeting, as well as sharing resources and tools on how to identify and cultivate leaders at the Chapter level. Keep an eye out — exciting things just around the corner! ✪