



# Empowering Volunteers

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# Why do people volunteer in General?



## ➤ **Self-serving Drive**

I volunteer because I'm going to get something I want out of it

## ➤ **Relational Drive**

I volunteer because my friend(s) asked me

## ➤ **Belief Drive**

I volunteer because I believe in the cause or the mission of the organization

## Why do people become MG volunteers?



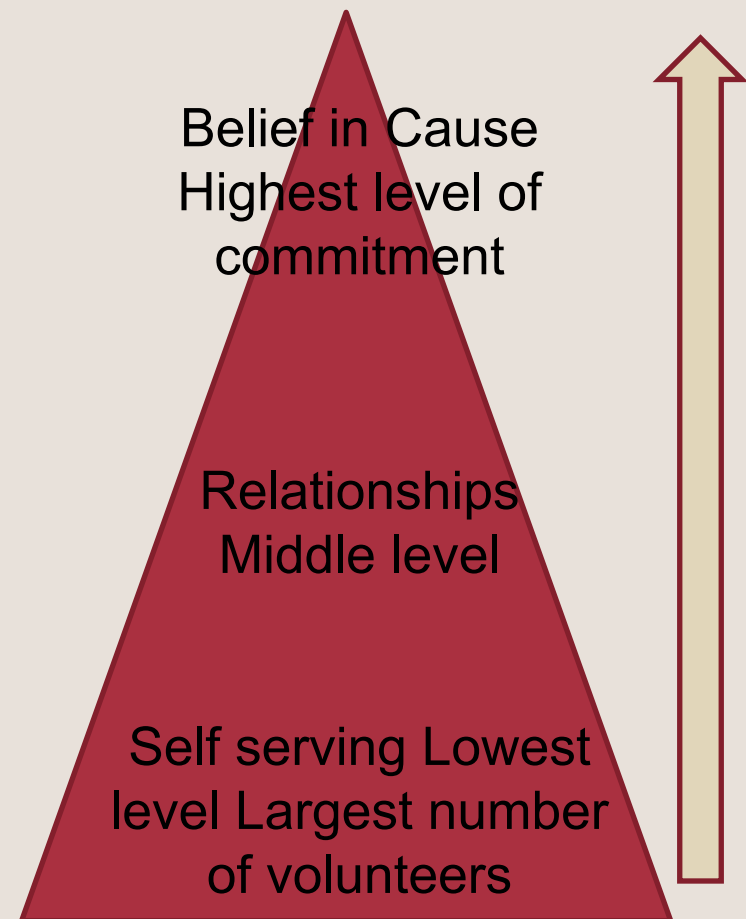
- WSU Master Gardeners volunteer to learn more about gardening & horticulture
- WSU Master Gardeners volunteer to be part of a group of people with similar interests
- WSU Master Gardeners volunteer because they believe in and have a passion for the mission of gardening education and community service

# Levels of commitment in volunteerism

Reasons for volunteering are linked to levels of commitment in volunteerism

We want to engage volunteers to move them from self serving to belief in the cause.

How do we do that?



# Empowerment defined

## **Merriam Webster:**

the act or action of empowering someone or something; the granting of the power, right or authority to perform various acts or duties

## **Giving a sense of control**

- Authority to think
- Authority to plan and evaluate
- Authority to help decide what to do
- Volunteer has a degree of autonomy

**Every volunteer  
can be a leader!**

# Leadership, Power, Personal Power

**Leadership:** the process by which one person influences the thoughts, attitudes and behaviors of others

**Power:** the potential or ability to influence decisions and control resources

**Personal Power:** derived from the person, rather than the organization

## **Personal Power:**

- We do NOT have personal authoritative power!
- We must build relationships
- We must earn trust
- We must earn respect
  - following through on commitments
  - model desired behaviors of integrity, honesty, fairness, adaptability, team work, etc

**We can make a positive  
difference through wise leadership**



# Why is empowering Volunteers important?

Empowerment  
equals successful  
organizations!





# Empowering Volunteers

- Maximizes volunteer satisfaction
- Satisfied volunteers are committed volunteers
- Committed volunteers are engaged volunteers
- Engaged volunteers go above and beyond the call
- Engaged volunteers are generally empowered volunteers
- Organization with engaged volunteers are successful organization!



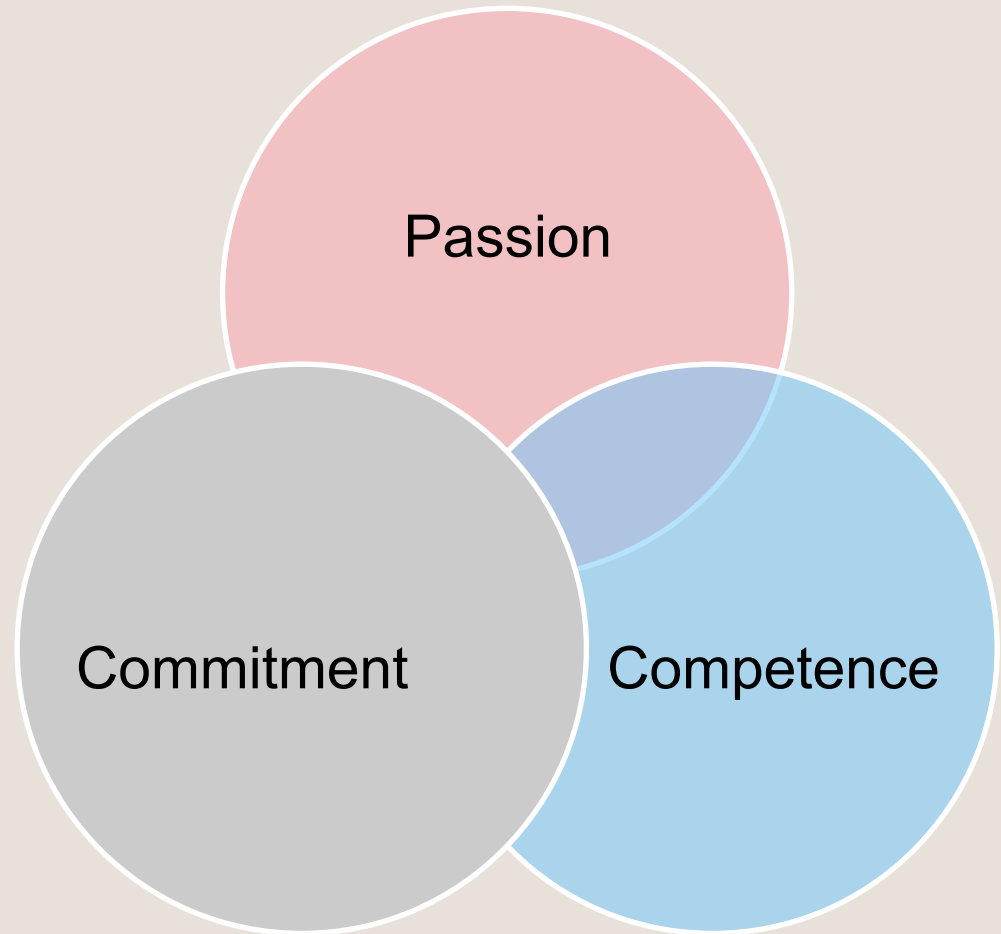
## Leaders of volunteers must be able to:

- Trust volunteers to meet or exceed expectations
- Know that your way isn't the only or the best way
- Communicate regularly and give feedback
- Define the destination
- Remove roadblocks to success
- Give them the tools to succeed
- Assure safeguards are in place

Sharon Collman  
Toni Fitzgerald



Passion, Commitment &  
Competence must be  
fully developed for  
Empowerment



## Developing Passion

Ensure volunteers:

- Have tools for success
- Understand expectations
- Can meet expectations
- Have confidence in their abilities



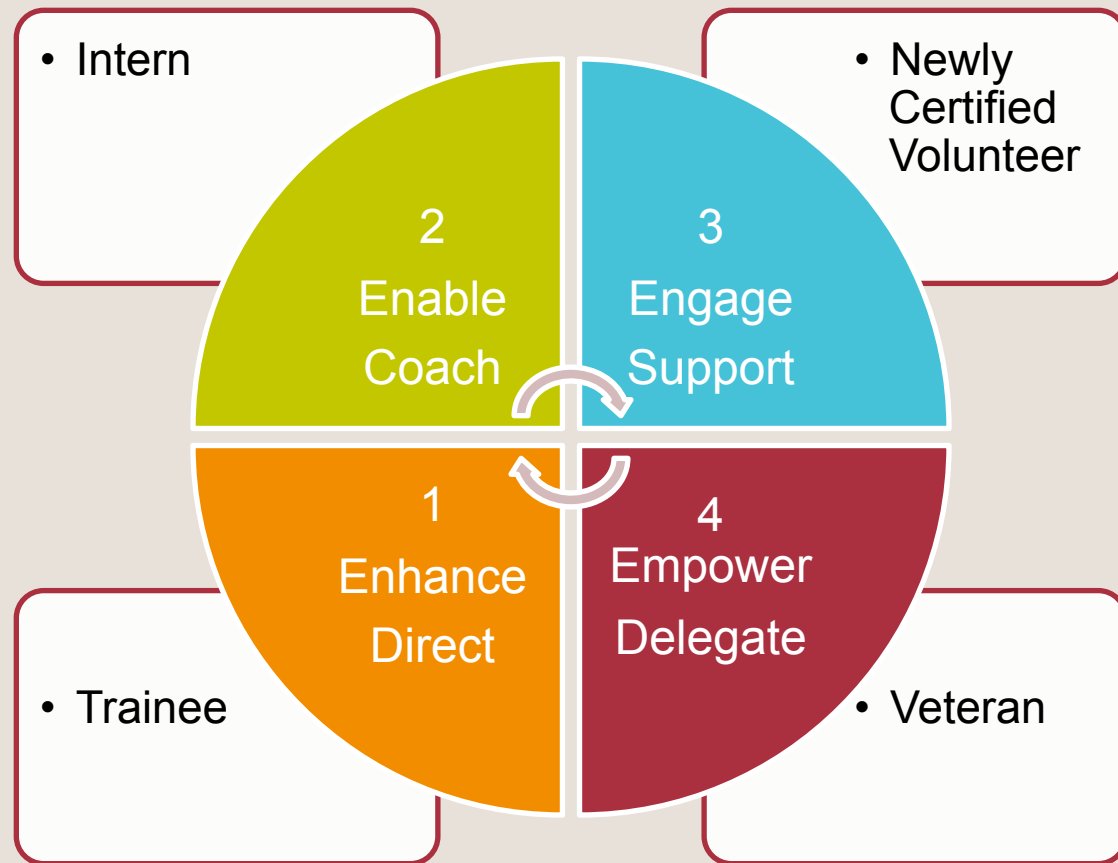
# Developing Competence

## Volunteer Competence:

- A volunteer's ability to do expected tasks and behave according to expectations
- Provide direction & guidance
- Encourage creativity
- Give positive feedback



# Behaviors of Leadership



# Characteristics of Trainees

Trainee  
Enhance  
Direct



- Have little to no experience in the MG role
- Are formative
- Are willing to learn
- Often feel insecure
- Often lack competence
- But do feel highly committed to accomplish their goal of becoming a MG



## Goals of Enhance / Direct

Trainee  
Enhance  
Direct



Mentoring is important

- Help increase competence or ability to perform needed tasks
- Model to encourage behaviours according to expectations
- Enjoy their unique characteristics as an individual



## Enhance / Direct

Trainee  
Enhance  
Direct



- Leader-driven
- Task-focused
- Be adaptable to volunteer needs
- Set performance standards
- Use informing & teaching
- Offer clear instruction
- Provide regular follow-up
- Concentrate on the volunteers strengths
- Encourage and motivate

# Characteristics of Interns

Intern  
Enable  
Coach



- Some competence has been developed
- Some confidence has been developed
- Commitment may have grown
- Commitment may waiver relative to confidence
- Need recognition from the leader that they're doing a good job

## Goals of Enable / Coach

Intern  
Enable  
Coach



- Channel the passion in a direction we need it to go
- Encourage participation
- Begin to build trust
- Give responsibility at a level the volunteer will be successful
- Give authority at the level the volunteer will be successful
- Give volunteers the resources they need to be successful

## Enable / Coach

Intern

Enable  
Coach



- Leader-driven
- Task focused
- Begin development of a relationship
- Build trust
- Listen, offer advice, suggest
- Less informing and more suggesting
- Provide recognition
- Recognition motivates volunteers to move to the next level

# Characteristics of New Volunteer

New  
Volunteer  
Engage  
Support



- Volunteer is competent
- May not be fully committed
- May not be fully confident in his/her ability
- May be inconsistent in their involvement
- May be inconsistent in their work quality
- Inconsistency and lack of commitment is directly related to lack of confidence



## Goals of Engage / Support



- Develop the passion, fan the flames, move the volunteer to the next level of commitment
- Give volunteers opportunities to use their knowledge, skills and abilities in meaningful ways that align with our mission and goals
- Encourage self leadership, volunteers should choose their own methods for completing the task
- Engage the volunteers in important and challenging work
- Support them through successes

## Engage / Support



- Follower driven
- Relationship focused
- Support development of confidence
- Engage with the volunteer
- Be sure volunteer is participating in projects
- Be open to thoughts and opinions of the volunteer
- Give volunteers opportunities to use their skills



# Characteristics of Veterans

Veteran  
Empower  
Delegate



- Volunteer is highly competent
- Volunteer is highly confident
- Volunteer is highly committed
- Volunteer is highly motivated
- Volunteer is prepared and willing to take a challenging project and bring it to fruition



# Goals of Empower / Delegate

Veteran  
Empower  
Delegate

- Unleash the passion
- Trust the volunteer to meet and exceed expectations
- Delegate important mission achieving work
- Empower volunteers to be role model for others



## Empower / Delegate

Veteran  
Empower  
Delegate

- Leader is observational with minimal feedback and follow-up
- Leader trusts the volunteer to do important mission achieving work
- Leader knows excellent results will be achieved
- Work with volunteer to determine destination
- Remove roadblocks
- Assure safeguards



# Empowering

- Empowering volunteers is a process that is never done!
- Leader's goal: move each volunteer through the levels of passion, commitment and competence to empowerment
- Leaders must utilize the leadership behavior (direct/enhance, coach/enable, support/engage to delegate/empower) that aligns with volunteer competence, commitment and the given situation
- Leaders must build trusting relationships with volunteers



YOU CAN  
BE A  
LEADER!



# We can all be Empowered Leaders

Making good decisions for our MG Program

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
 EXTENSION

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