



## In Memory of Dr. Richard Krajczar

Allow us to share about the magic of the Dr. K. experience.

It has been said that, “The most important things in life cannot be told”. It is difficult to talk about that which lies beyond the reach of words. Yet today we must place faith in sharing a few thoughts to adequately represent the world community of leaders and teachers that Dick (and Sherry too!) built and nurtured. For myriad reasons, so many of us gathered around Dr. K. because we found an immediate confidante and friend whose life we now celebrate.

On some level, we do our best things when we are a little off-balance, when challenged and in a bit of discomfort—physical or otherwise— and it is here you work from mystery, from wonder and from not knowing how it will all end. This is the place of true learning and maybe a good description of a Dr. K. experience. If it was a military coup in Myanmar, an earthquake in Taipei, celebrating contribution and a retirement in Hong Kong, or a challenging community issue in any number of international schools, Dick’s email or phone call was always the first received. His was a call of hope and support.

He listened, challenged thinking and always questioned how to do things better FOR people and their welfare. It is simply not true that Dick saw the glass half full— heck, he thought the glass should be much larger and saw it almost full. He gave such abundance of good will, time and respect. It also seemed true that being with Dick was a means for re-centering your soul— as he had, through the weight of his character, a most natural way of reminding you what was really important— from family to the strength of relationships.

We surely agree that life’s experiences build character and contribute to ideas of courage, and figuring out without being told that it is important to do the thing you think you cannot do. With the community that Dick built around him, it was not so much about words— it was about people, their actions and taking on the challenges of leading. And never being alone in the process. For him it was the doing, and encouraging the magic that happens within leaders deciding to hoist the heavy thing or taking the tough stance and then to walk straight toward the conflict to find solutions. With Dick it was about being the best you can...now. Goodness knows he knew how to pick a person up, and to say again, he was always the first on the phone or with a pithy email to recognize the challenge and also to soothe.

Although Dick would never have boasted as such, his idea of helping the world was in creating an idyllic place for teaching, learning and leadership development. From one generation to the next, Dick set the tone and the shared expectation that there will always be a safe place to gather, where time, place and people come together to create and confirm ideas for what the world can be. He led us by example, he listened carefully, and included what was being said between the lines. He asked questions, often answering a question with a question, amused us with unmatched animation, humor, aphorisms and body language that brought out our best selves.

Dick didn't miss an opportunity to wonder with you– to teach. And with unmistakable purpose, he devoted a lifetime to developing happy, healthy and emotionally whole young people FIRST and by association, he pushed for effective leaders to bring moral purpose to ensuring high quality, safe and secure schools for all learners.

So over the decades, Dick brought together a remarkable community of adults into the midst of all the challenges that live within international education– everyone bent on making a difference for young people. We think an ever-lasting gift from Dick is the people he nurtured as teachers and leaders and the lessons we now carry with us into each new day because of these people. We mean of course, our international family, our mentors– who showed, through their everyday greatness the notions of decency, fulfillment, contribution and the stuff of life-long friendships.

Dick knew that the life of leaders was not listening to speeches or preachy admonitions, but rather one of absorbing through observation of others and soaking in the essence of the solid character of the leaders who bonded because Dick knew how to bring us together and then remind us that we needed each other as part of conducting our lives. Because of Dick's magical quality, he gave us remarkable relationships of uncommon strength. He always helped us know we were needed and all the stronger when working together. He was committed to the profound power of the personal pronoun "We."

It would be impossible to measure whether it was the students within our schools, the teachers or the leaders that learned more from Dick, his work and how he lived his life. But there seemed always one imperative that occupied his vision of a more perfect world, that we should do right, and do well. He held himself to the same standard.

Over time we may forget some of the stories or even how Dick talked about life of schools or ways of thinking and doing about school leadership, but we will never forget the way he lived and the way he made us feel. He won our loyalty, love and respect, precisely because he gave it.

He inspired and shaped the lives of so many people– and lived the belief that an ideal world of decency and kindness is possible through our own making– and we all know this is more than a sentiment–because such a place exists– it is the world community of educators and leaders that Dick built, from Asia and across continents.

Probably there are days for all of us that seem as though we are carrying much on our shoulders with oversized challenges–but maybe we and countless others are more certain, more courageous and more confident, because Dick helped us find our way.

All Good Wishes,

Jeff

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