

Bill Boyd

Speech at 2010 CALLERLAB Convention

Ladies, Gentlemen, Board members, distinguished guests and Callers from all over the world,

Let me start with this statement - Being a Square Dance Caller can be fun. If it wasn't fun, why do it? Being a Square Dance Caller can be challenging, challenging, in that our music and dancers are always changing and seeking new things. Being a Square Dance Caller is hard work. Hard work because we need to create new, interesting and fun things for those dancers and being a Square Dance Caller is very rewarding, rewarding, because we make, create and bring joy into the lives of so many people.

This morning I will briefly share with you some of my thoughts and ideas on our future, responsibilities, leadership and teamwork. You, you are a Square Dance Caller and you, you are a member of CALLERLAB as a CALLERLAB member this means that you are a member of a team, a team member as well as a Square Dance Leader. Here I must emphasize leader, because all Square Dance Callers whether they know it or not or whether they like it or not are leaders of our activity. And – whether callers realize it or not, they are all as Square Dance Callers, leading us into the future the future of our entertainment venue, the future of Square Dancing. Alan Kay said “The best way to predict the future is to create it”. Thus, we as Square Dance Callers and Square Dance Leaders are the creators of our future. We as Square Dance Callers and Square Dance Leaders get to choose the success or failure of this great activity. We as Square Dance Leaders must find a way, while spreading our activity to our Communities, Cities, States, our Nation and yes, worldwide, must make sure that we ourselves as leaders enjoy, no, more than enjoy, we must love our work. George Burns once said, “I'd rather be a failure at something I enjoy than to be a success at something I hate.” But I say, I say, I would much rather be a success at something that I love. I say, and I believe this because when you love something you have enthusiasm, and Charles Schwab, a man who made a few dollars in his day, said, “A man can succeed at almost anything for which he has unbridled enthusiasm.” However, here a word of caution as we must be careful. If we love our activity but love where we are at, then we might, not might, but probably would become complacent. The attitude of I'm already having fun, I have achieved all that I care to, and I do not want to work any harder. How many callers do we all who know which are just like that, they enjoy what they are doing so much, they fail to see the leadership needed or teamwork necessary to make the Square Dance activity as a whole more successful. How many times have we seen callers, the very leaders of our activities say that they have started one club or one class, and they are content and happy. These callers started on the right track, but...as...Will Rogers Said, “Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there.” If and when the Caller becomes too complacent he or she stops growing and if the Caller stops growing and moving forward moving forward, so does our activity. How many of us take the time to and let me paraphrase here, with apologies to President Kennedy “Ask not what Square Dancing can do for you, but what you can do for Square Dancing.” These Callers the ones who are not leaders, the ones who shun continuing education. These are the Callers choose not to go to a Callers School, These are the Callers who choose not to attend workshops and seminars, like our training on this weekend, training designed to improve leadership and calling skills. These Callers are the individuals who, like it or not, harm our activity. Experienced callers and trainers, like the ones in this room, we have the responsibility, the obligation to provide an example, influencing these complacent callers as well as new callers in education, leadership and teamwork and responsibilities. I don't know about other areas but in Florida we have our Florida Callers Association and in addition six other regional associations. The FCA meets once a year with an Accredited Caller Coach for continuing education. The Callers in attendance may have as much as forty years experience, they attend and still learn or contribute at every session. The regional associations meet up to four times a year for continuing education. These offer all callers both experienced and new opportunities to work on and improve their skills. If any Caller chooses not to improve his or her skills, they then choose to remain in the past; if you remain in the past you stalemate the present and doom the future. As far as I know every professional organization, and we are professionals, has a need for continuing education. There are doctors, lawyers, school teachers, actors, actresses, bankers, if you can name it, if you want to improve yourself and your craft; you work through education and training to improve and sharpen your skills. To the best of my

knowledge, CALLERLAB is the only worldwide professional square dance organization that holds national and international sessions for caller improvement. As professional entertainers and CALLERLAB members we must act like the professionals that we are. We as callers must strive to improve and update our skills talents and capabilities. We as Callers must strive to keep dancers on the floor and well entertained. We as responsible Callers must work continuously to grow our activity. We as callers must realize that Square Dancing will not grow by the short, frenzied outbursts of emotional outpourings, but by a steady dedication of a lifetime of work with skilled knowledgeable Leaders and Callers. To paraphrase John Buchan, The task of leadership is not to put fun into square dancing, but to elicit it, for fun is already there. We are leaders of our activity, some say managers and some have even said caretakers; I'm not into that much doom and gloom. A caretaker is someone who buries the body, - we are here to resurrect, resurrect the enthusiasm of both callers and dancers after all we are leaders - We are Leaders, not managers Management is doing things right, Leadership is doing the right things. All great leaders have had one characteristic in common: it was the willingness to confront unequivocally the major anxiety of their people in their time. We as members of CALLERLAB are leaders; as leaders we must now confront our anxieties, the diversity of our programs, our aging population, and myriads of other factors, we must face and resolve our problems. As Callers and team members we are someone, someone who cares and someone who acts and you know...You know, it is absolutely amazing how many cares disappear when you decide not to be something, but to be someone. Something is a Caller; someone is a Caller who is continually growing, changing and improving. As Callers you are someone. As callers you are special, special in the fact, undeniable fact, that you are a leader as well as a team member. We know that in square dancing there is always going to be differences of opinions, we cannot always eliminate all of our differences, too many opinions, ideas too much diversity, be we can all agree as callers, team members and leaders that we should all be working for one common cause. That common cause is to foster the recreational enjoyment of our dancers, in such a way that have a strong desire to remain in our activity and encourage others. As Callers, we strive to achieve excellence, as Callers we must understand that excellence is not an accomplishment; excellence is a spirit, a never ending process. We as leaders of our activity combined ourselves as a team, a team dedicated to that goal of achieving excellence in our chosen field of Square Dance Calling. We are members of CALLERLAB. We are members of a team dedicated to make these dreams, ideas and goals come true. No one of us is as smart as all of us. Combined we create an energetic force called synergy. Steven Covey said that synergy is the highest activity of life: It creates new untapped alternatives: it values and exploits the mental, emotional and psychological differences between people. In CALLERLAB working together we create synergy. We generate synergy as a team working together and the key elements in the art of working together are how to deal with change, how to deal with conflict, and how to reach our full potential. It is interesting to note that the needs of the CALLERLAB team are best met when they meet the needs of each individual Caller and yes, you are a Caller. You are a caller, and whether you like it or not, a caller is a symbol of authority and power given to you by all who attend your dances and clubs. As a caller and member of CALLERLAB you are a member of a team and a leader. And what is a team? A team is more than a collection of people. It's an emotional force rooted in the feelings, thoughts, and actions of all members with a common goal of achievement, sharing and mutual support. We must work with each other to create a healthy, dynamic organization, an organization of which everyone can be proud. With this in mind, I challenge each and every one of you to be both team member and team leader in which we as members of CALLERLAB can all be proud. For those who attended last year, please realize that I did not even once use the word Synchronicity