

MOMENTS AT VIRTUAL DKG INTERNATIONAL SAN ANTONIO CONFERENCE

DKG regional conferences are not called regional anymore since 2018 Convention in Austin, but international. International San Antonio conference, organized by Southeast and Northeast regions, took place on July 23-24, 2021.

As International Conference in Tampere was postponed to 2023, the SE and NE regional directors Debra LeBlank and Candace Martin invited me to their preparation team. I registered to the virtual San Antonio conference 'Opportunities, Contributions, Impact'. When NW and SW International Conference in Portland was only in-person, then NE and SE San Antonio conference was hybrid – in-person and virtual.

Here are three moments I would like to share with you about the conference:

DKG International Society president Becky Sadowski's opening speech.

Becky Sadowski opened the General Session I in San Antonio with a thought-provoking speech. She addressed the members with sincere words which came from her heart and touched all listeners' hearts. I would point out 4 things our president forwarded to all members:

- Even though the membership in many international organizations is declining, DKG has many members. Among new members there are young educators. International DKG Society is in good hands – it has excellent leaders in Administrative Board, in Executive Board and in international committees who always find time and motivation to continue moving DKG Society forward with new ideas which impact education worldwide.
- International president calls members for nimbleness which is quickness and alertness of decision making. We often spot problems, talk about them, but we are not solving the problem, and this way problems stay on.
- Every member can find a prospective new member to her chapter, but a frequent attitude is 'oh, some other member will find her, why me'.
- Becky Sadowski's favourite quotes is from C.S. Lewis: 'You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream.' Really, we are never too old to take the opportunity, to challenge ourselves, learn new things, teamwork, take the leadership position. This is the way to grow personally and professionally, collaborate with other members through a huge international network and collect many memorable experiences.

**I introduced the key-note speaker from Europe, from Estonia,
Eva-Maria Kangro, who made an excellent presentation –
*Impact of social bonds on wellbeing and longevity.***

Having earned a Ph.D in psychology, Eva-Maria Kangro has had years of experience making sense of human behaviour. She has had remarkable practices in re-search, training, and consulting in the areas of human relations, education, health, and consumer behaviour.

Her journey has brought Eva-Maria through 11 exciting years of psychology studies and research on self-regulation skills, decision making, and health behaviour. Since getting a Ph.D, in psychology she has been following her mission to put scientific mindset into action, helping leaders to make progress in self-awareness and leadership practices. As a partner of a change management and consultancy company Milton, Eva-Maria is engaged in various initiatives which aim to empower sustainable and socially responsible business. One of the examples is Green Tiger Academy where organisations make steps towards carbon-free economy. Another initiative was a 6-month-long experimental research project in the software development company Helmes, where they were looking for the best models of hybrid and remote work.

12 years of music studies have given Eva-Maria the understanding of the power of art. Besides, as a true ballet lover, she cannot imagine her life without dancing. Eva-Maria values meaningful life. She sees how contributing into better self-awareness, courage and empathic activity **makes a difference**, both at the individual and interpersonal level.

You can watch Eva-Maria Kangro's presentation in dkgeurope.org webpage, under the layer Educational Topics: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLJtmoLWnAk>

Breakout session. Leadership and Communication Matters by Dr.Teri Cox

It is always so that there are up to 10 workshops at the same time and although we would like to take part in many of them, you must choose one. I chose Dr. Teri Cox's workshop **Leadership and Communication Matters**.

Good leaders lead from the front and make sure others are following her. How we communicate raises up the leaders behind us. Dr. Teri Cox gave 5 ideas for leaders to make a good communication with her followers.

Trust. Communication issues may become a barrier that breaks trust. Quality communication comprises five aspects: honesty, timely, inspiring action and changes, good listening skills and reflection. Qualities which do not contribute to the leader's communication skills are dishonesty, gossiping, hurting, one-sidedness.

Speaking the truth without love is harshness, speaking in love without truthfulness is hypocritical. Leaders do not have to say everything they think, and they do not have to have the last word in every discussion. Trust can be built with good relationship, integrity, and clear purpose.

Inspire. How leaders lead? They know their people. Leaders are always prepared to meet their people. They do not go alone. They maximize their assets and her resources. Good leaders are active, involved, seen in community, they are enthusiastic, interactive, growing, recruiting, retaining. People who follow feel that the leader found integrity in them.

Truly listening. Leaders listen to the spoken and unspoken. Leaders are truly listening, not listening - and waiting only others to talk. Leaders must avoid 4 unproductive listening patterns:

- Judgement listening – you cannot believe
- Autobiographical listening – hijacking – make conversation about herself
- Inquisitive listening – I wonder...
- Solution listening – you should ...

Lead. How do I lead? Look back to three previously mentioned qualities.

New leaders will be different. Environment is different, and it reflects in new leaders' heads. Simplicity and timing are the key words in the future, also for DKG.

Remember 4Cs:

COMMUNICATION

COLLABORATION

CONNECTION

COMMITMENT

Leaders should remember that **connection** is the most difficult. It needs time, and persistence.

Both International Conferences were successful. I have seen the happy faces of all 4 Regional Directors. I was happy for them too.

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