

LIVE LIKE A LEADER

LIVE YOUR RITUAL

Live Like A Leader – Live Your Ritual The Sorority Ritual

White Paper by Patty Hendrickson

In another time faced by tremendous challenges young men and women reached out to one another to build a community. They built our fraternity and sorority community. Whatever the outside forces, they found strength trusting in one another to build something that would linger. These were learning societies based upon mutual respect and support. These were truly sisterhoods and brotherhoods. They were safe havens.

Young women came to campuses because they were needed. There were fewer living men after the Civil War, and institutions needed students. Allowing women was an answer to boost the bottom line of many institutions. However, with this new student population there were many rules and regulations that inhibited their ability to truly participate in the campus community. Historical stories cite many instances that are almost comical when compared to the norms of today. At some institutions:

- Women were forced to stand behind screens in the classroom so their presence wouldn't interfere with the men's ability to concentrate.
- Women were forced to stand around the perimeter of the room and only allowed to take a chair after all of the men were seated first.
- Women were allowed to enroll in classes only after all of the men were enrolled.
- Women were not welcomed by male faculty and were often ignored.

It must have been very challenging to maintain your focus on learning and doing well academically when you were faced with so many negative situations and nuances throughout your day. To know you were not welcomed by the majority of your classmates must have been hard. No wonder they reached out to one another.

Can you imagine how comforting it must have been to have a place to vent their frustration? Instead of simply banding together for the moment, they formed something that would truly bind them together. The intent was to help sustain a culture where women students would be supported and challenged to do their best. It wasn't just about them. It was about building something for future students. It was inspiring one another to fulfill their potential. It was a constant reminder of the joy of learning and intellectual development. Providing them a haven of respect and cordiality for what they were able to accomplish. This is the birth and essence of our sorority ritual.

So where are we today? Are we creating havens of respect and cordiality? Are we sustaining a culture where women are supported and challenged to do their best? Are we inspiring one another to fulfill our potential? Are we a constant reminder of the joy of learning and intellectual development? Are we building something for future students?

What's the answer to those questions? Hmmmmm. Most often, "Yes" and sometimes "No". So, I guess that makes it a "Maybe".

How do we move to that space where we can emphatically answer a resounding "YES!" How do we fulfill the lofty aspirations of our founders? We need to live like a leader. We need to live our ritual.

Ritual isn't some book on a shelf or a box full of robes. It isn't something dusty. It should be alive and growing. We should be continually bringing it up in our meetings and in our conversations. We should make it something important every day.

It requires a commitment to make ritual – our very purpose – the core of everything we do. This commitment has to be real, not just something we say. Here is a quick list of those items to start your recommitment to live like a leader – live your ritual.

- Respect the powerful intentions of your founders.
- You are three things in this order: #1 Student; #2 Aspiring Professional; and #3 Member.
- Be the Role Model – We only get better when each member decides to be better.
- Publicly define what makes a "good member" and "bad member" – Recruit which one you want.
- "Live as if everything you do will eventually be known." Hugh Prather
- Know your members – Be aware of your "Bubble Check"
- No weight is better than dead weight – Allow people to exit gracefully

- Mind the Gap – Make sure what you say matches what you actually do
- It's NOT about big events; our purpose is lived in every small moment
- Commit to continuously learning – Your competence leads to your confidence!
- Do it right the first time – “As you become more clear about who you really are, you'll be better able to decide what is best for you – the first time around.” Oprah Winfrey
- Be boldly courageous – Trust your intuition
- Your calendar should support your values

This list is just the beginning. Ritual is a powerful thing that can be transformational to the organization, but more importantly to you. Ritual is that inspiring phrase that makes you feel empowered to do more. Ritual is that warm glow of affection you feel for one another in a ceremony where you realize hundreds of thousands have heard these same words throughout the ages.

What will you do to make your ritual more alive in you?

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Patty Hendrickson, MBA, CSP has been delivering her enthusiastic messages throughout the world since 1987. In the fraternal world, she is a past Alpha Phi Collegiate President; past Panhellenic Executive Officer; Honorary Order of Omega member; Past Alpha Phi International Officer; and Chapter Advisor of an award-winning chapter for 25+ years. In her professional world she is a booked and busy full-time professional speaker. She works with organizations that want to grow leaders and with people who want more out of life. Most importantly she has an awesome husband, son, daughter; is a relentless competitive athlete; and a fan-atic for the Green Bay Packers and Wisconsin Badgers. Follow her @PattySpeaks or connect at Patty@PattyHendrickson.com.

Know Your Members -- The Bubble Check?

The Bubble Check is an excellent activity for your executive council to truly gauge the engagement levels of the chapter. It can also be a terrific tool to use during officer transition retreat conversation.

First. What's the "Bubble"?

Every year we capture our membership in a composite – a permanent record of our membership. The faces of our members are in tiny "bubbles". Panhellenic has strict rules on membership and a maximum size that we must obey. Unfortunately, we could have the numbers that say we are at maximum size, but realistically the participation and engagement level of the people in each bubble show that we are woefully below our maximum size.

The Bubble Check helps you identify if you truly are at maximum size – at your cap. It measures your engagement or participation level.

Each officer is given the challenge to come to the next Executive Council meeting with their Bubble Check score. The officers assign a percentage to each member of how fully they are participating and engaged in the chapter. The ultimate Bubble Check score is simply the sum of all of the percentages you attach to each circle divided by the number of members. Ideally, if you have 100 members you want each of those members to be performing at 100%. So the ideal Bubble Check Score is $100 \text{ members} \times 100\% \text{ (or } 1.0) = 100$.

Every officer shares their cumulative Bubble Check score. It's very fun to post these to see the differences. Ultimately you should create a cumulative Executive Council Bubble Check score averaging everyone's results for the Chapter Bubble Check Score.

Then the important and helpful conversation happens where you discuss members you discovered who were more engaged and those less engaged. Ideally, you identify those individuals that need attention. That attention could be to have the conversation if the chapter is still a good fit for the person. That attention could be to readdress some expectations with an individual. That attention could be where you simply reach out in a purposeful conversation to talk about changes in behavior.

The Bubble Check helps the chapter continue to see that each bubble really matters. If everyone in the chapter is truly engaged and continuing to participate we can magnify our impact in so many ways.

The expectation for every chapter member is to **FILL YOUR BUBBLE!**