



When inspired people gather great things happen! My most recent observation of this occurred November 19, 2008 as I participated in the City of Auburn's Comprehensive Plan community meeting hosted at the Auburn Public Theater. I attended because of my interest in helping Auburn achieve its highest potential. In this case I agreed to serve as one of the co-chairs for this important project. I am honored to lead this project with one of my favorite new emerging leaders, Karin Moskov. Working on this project has given me the opportunity to focus on a type of collective leadership that emerges when inspired people come together for a common cause.

In truth, I did not know most of the people in the theater. However, from the minute I entered this beautiful facility I could feel the energy of those who truly care about Auburn. This was interesting because my professional travels don't always allow me to come into contact with my community in this way. I arrived with the intention to engage in total body listening at the event. I wanted to see the people, to hear what they had to say, and to feel their feelings as they shared aspirations for the City of Auburn. This was a powerful experience.

Attending this event confirmed something I truly believe - **the answer is always in the room**. When given the opportunity for authentic dialogue people have great capacity to find answers to even the greatest challenges. When given the opportunity to offer ideas and suggestions these inspired people leapt at the opportunity to share ideas for bettering our community. In addition, these inspired people had great capacity to speak to community challenges. I thought of each idea as a "wave of potential" for Auburn. One great idea led to another. As these "waves of potential" collided a vision began to emerge of what Auburn could be. Something else happened as well: I sensed a willingness to work with one another to lead our community toward this vision. I love when this happens!

I write a lot about leadership as an individual activity and often it is. However I also believe in collective leadership. Collective leadership results when a group or team finds common ground to address a challenge with the intent to make a difference. Once the intent is set, each person's contribution creates a "wave of potential". When "waves" collide, great things really do happen. This type of leadership is seen throughout history in movements that literally transformed our country. I believe collective leadership will transform our community too. With the right convergence of leadership and the right infusion of resources, Auburnians can make our community the great place we know it to be. I left the Auburn Public Theater that night more aware of this possibility than ever.

I believe it is important to be thankful for the good in one's life. The celebration of Thanksgiving emphasizes the importance of doing this. This year as I celebrate Thanksgiving I am thankful that I live in a community full of "waves of potential"; inspired people whose collective leadership will take beautiful Auburn, New York to a new level. Happy Thanksgiving to you and yours.

Adapted from *The Leadership Journey*, published in the Auburn Citizen newspaper

