RLF Understands Reading is Fundamental … to Continual Learning and Business Success

One of the most renowned components of SIM's Regional Leadership Forum (RLF) program has always been challenging one’s mind and broadening one’s exposure to multiple leadership principles through reading and discussing more than two dozen books throughout the nine-month program – no easy task in our world of 24/7 information and non-stop distractions.

Yet, each RLF participant embraces this rigorous element of the program, designed to promote thought and discussion leading to a greater self-awareness and deeper understanding of ideas, concepts, leadership capabilities, and critical competencies.

Each Forum’s list is continually revised and refreshed to introduce new ideas or additional leadership competencies. One recent addition to every Forum’s curriculum is Cultivate: The Power of Winning Relationships by Morag Barrett.

Barrett is the CEO and founder of SkyeTeam, a woman-owned global leadership development and HR consultancy. She is an executive coach and well-known speaker, a contributor to CIO Magazine and Entrepreneur.com, and was one of the keynote speakers at SIMposium 2015 in Charlotte.

While relationships are integral to business, Cultivate provides a very insightful new take on the importance of relationships to business success. But, not just any relationships, they must be “winning relationships.” It’s not about “being nicer,” rather, it is about proactively and deliberately “cultivating” our working relationships. Barrett’s perspective is based on three premises:

1. Recognizing that the world of work is a team sport
2. Acknowledging that your success is dependent upon others
3. And, that relationships matter

She explores the elements of what she terms the “relationship ecosystem” (Allies who always have your back, Supporters who appear to have your back until the going gets tough, Rivals who are competitors focused on their own agenda, and Adversaries who can be overt or covert) as well as how to build strong winning relationships, the generational aspects of relationships, dealing with politics and adversarial relationships, and assessing the health of your relationships (what’s working and what isn’t, what could we do differently, are they are founded on trust and caring).

Barrett’s practical approach gives our RLF grads yet another “tool” in their leadership “toolkit,” but the idea that relationships are so critical to success in business and in life is not new to the RLF program. Darwin John, former CIO, facilitator, and one of the founders of RLF has shared one of his core concepts with many RLF groups over the years: The quality of our lives is a function of the quality of our relationships.