Dear Editor:

I am writing to you in support of Lisa Allen as Council member, Summit, NJ. She and I were colleagues who served together on the board of IFVP Institute (International Forum of Visual Practitioners). I know her in a professional capacity only. I don’t know about her personal life (other than knowing she is married with children) or her spiritual life or her political life or her philosophies. What I can speak to with great enthusiasm is her character and her talents.

In the months I met (online) with Lisa (both in board meetings as well as individual meetings where she was working with me on a project), we made a great personal connection. Even though we don’t communicate any more, we easily could at the drop of a hat.

I am 73 years old and Lisa is half my age but when we talk, there is no age difference. I never think about it in the course of our conversation. This is rare.

Have you ever talked to someone that was either very much younger or much older than you are? Typically, you both are aware that you are in the presence of or having a conversation with a person who is “different” than you. One who may not understand you given the age gap.

Not Lisa. She sees each person as a person, not as a label with predetermined characteristics. I am a student of human behavior. I read people well. Lisa is one of the most authentic, real people I have known. For me, it endeared a trusting quality.

This is, to me, what leadership is all about.

This is in large part because she is a black belt listener. Listening and caring is what I do as a profession. I recognize her as a natural master at it. It’s an inherent talent. You can’t teach caring. It takes caring to be a good listener and stay neutral.

Because Lisa is charismatic and has great listening skills, she is a great interviewer.

This brief story will illustrate her magic. I am a shy person when it comes to public speaking. Lisa was trying to interview me to do a spot about the IFVP Institute work so she could put it on social media so we could start getting our name out. (Lisa has experience in TV, media, communications, etc.) I was not easy.

In the process, I learned about Lisa’s patience and empathy. She is comfortable and familiar. She was able to draw me out before I even knew I had been drawn. That, too, is rare.

Her values showed up in her contributions and behaviors on the board, like, respectfulness; responsibility; thoughtfulness; thoroughness; sense of equality and inclusion; do the right thing attitude.

I see a great future for Lisa, and those she serves as well.

Sincerely,

Susan Kelly

Member, Board of Directors

IFVP Institute

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