

## Three Critical Questions: A Pep Talk for FSL Professionals

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It's Monday morning. Your alarm sounds, and as you roll over in your bed to turn it off, what are your first thoughts for the day? Is it excitement? Is it dread? Are you looking forward to the week ahead of you, or is Friday already in sight? The frame of mind in which we begin our week dramatically shapes our view on what lies ahead and how present we are in our professional role. Fraternity and sorority life staff accomplish challenging work from a multiplistic viewpoint each day: we are risk managers, relationship builders, event planners, curriculum designers, and engaging facilitators. Each role is taxing, yet many are required and asked of us each day. Our jobs are daunting yet wonderful, as we have immense opportunity to engage with and change students' lives through a values-based experience.

However, this impactful opportunity comes with a price. Fraternity and sorority professionals have one of the highest turnover rates in the field of student affairs (Block, 2015), a clear indicator that our jobs are exhausting and require a lot from us. Staying motivated may be difficult, but I believe staying true to your own purpose and values are what create successful professionals who persevere. The energetic and persuasive YouTube star Kid President poses three questions he believes have the ability to change the world – I also believe these three questions can shape our work and continue to motivate our dedication to such an influential field.

### **Question 1: What are you not ok with?**

Pause to think about this question and let it ferment in your mind. What within the field, your role, or your fraternity and sorority community are you *not* okay with? What is the concept, construct, or behavior causing the greatest dissonance in your everyday work? Identify what this is for you, and understand the view you hold may not be popular, and may cause controversy. Inherently, this is Kid President's point. Our field and work cannot change without causing a little ruckus, and cannot occur without people gathered around an identified cause. Name the cause you most strongly believe in or believe needs a transformation, and find others who are willing to work towards that goal.

### **Question 2: What do you have?**

In order to rally behind the chosen cause, tools and skills need to be identified that can help develop our commitment. Although the answer to this question is different for each person, as student affairs professionals we all have an immense amount of educational privilege. Attaining post-graduate degrees is no easy feat, and utilizing the knowledge we have learned to better the folks we interact with is essential. We are also privileged to work at or with colleges and universities across the nation – which provide an infinite wealth of educational resources that many others do not have access to. We are in a position of constant growth and gain, a privilege many are not exposed to. Utilize your education and access to resources to their fullest potential, and ensure they guide your mission for change.

**Question 3: What can you do about it?**

Although it may seem overwhelming at first to embark on a journey for change, there is so much you have the power to do in order to catalyze a movement for transformation. For example, we interact with students and other professionals on a daily basis, which creates a wide net of potential influence. No matter your cause, the web of connections you have can be used as a direct and effective change agent. Talk to your colleagues, your students, your supervisors. Create a space and climate for discourse around your cause, and generate a plan for action. Identifying and igniting your passion or need for change is only half the battle, and we are well equipped to start changing the field of fraternity and sorority life once those initial steps are established.

So when you wake up tomorrow morning, instead of recycling the same rhetoric of how tiring your day or week is going to be and the long list of tasks yet to be accomplished, I hope you think about your personal cause for change. Remember why you decided to enter this complex field, and rediscover what invigorates you to stay committed. Fuel your dedication by finding a cause worth rallying behind, and consider what you have and what you can do to make a sustainable impact. Find the passion area that makes your heart sing and go for it! After all, "life is too short not to be awesome."

## References

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