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THE REGION'S MONTHLY NEWSPAPER FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS & PHYSICIANS

LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

Leadership in a Changing Healthcare Environment

BY RICHARD HEIM

Leadership has always been about ensuring the organization has the right vision for the future, the right strategies to fulfill that vision and the right people who can help carry out that vision. As leaders, the organization relies on your skills and talents to ensure the future success.

Over the next few years, the healthcare industry will be experiencing significant changes and as leaders, utilizing effective management skills and learning new ones in order to improve

performance will be critical. Remember that the skills that got you "here" may not get you "there" in the future.

A couple of the key skills and talents that leaders must have today are the ability to manage the vision and future of the organization, effectively communicate change at every level, motivate and inspire others to set the course for the future and to take the organization to the next level.

The vision of the organization must be effectively managed and communicated by leaders. Key leadership must ensure they are

strategically agile enough to chart the course and make changes when necessary. The magnitude of the changes in healthcare will mandate being able to change quickly. Agility and quick decision making will help any healthcare organization to sustain.

No change can happen in any organization without effective communication. The vision and direction of the organization must be communicated and embraced by all levels. While it may be easier to manage when the organization is

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Richard Heim

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Fearless Leadership: Navigating Your Organization through Turbulent Times

BY WILLIAM J. HEJNA

"Many people do not recognize opportunity because it arrives dressed in overalls and looks like work."
- THOMAS EDISON

After interacting with healthcare leaders, attending conferences and reading various trade publications over the past year or two, it would be easy to conclude that our industry is in the midst of a dramatic tailspin over which healthcare leaders have little control. As one senior leader stated recently, "there is just

so much uncertainty right now - it's difficult to set clear direction and make decisions. What will happen to utilization? What about the availability of capital? To what extent will reimbursement decline?" In addition to the economic downturn, many believe that changes associated with the recent healthcare reform legislation will inevitably lead to the deterioration of care and service delivery over time.

Certainly, hospitals are experiencing difficult financial challenges; investment portfolios have lost value; high unemployment

means fewer covered benefits; elective services remain depressed. Reform will bring change in the form of new business models, structures, incentives and practices. Embedded in these changes is a dimension of uncertainty: Who is impacted? When? How much?

But despite the uncertainty and the dire predictions by those who believe that the sky is about to fall on the healthcare system, this is neither the time for timidity nor inaction. In fact, healthcare leaders today face an enormous and

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William J. Hejna

Health Care Leaders Can Learn From Aunt Mona

BY GEORGIA CASCIATO, FACHE

Healthcare reform legislation passed with its more than 2000 pages. Now more than ever, the complexity of healthcare delivery needs to be simplified and communicated behind values, goals and principles that are understandable and actionable beginning with front line employees moving through all levels of the organization and ending in the boardroom.

Today's health leaders need to reiterate values and align their

workforce to meet reform deliverables. Inspiration and knowledge can come from many sources including leadership teams; professional associations, informal networks or perhaps my 97-year old Aunt Mona - who grew up in depression times, when you had to do more with less and opportunities came as a direct result of attitude, direction and personal leadership.

Not everyone gets to be 97 years old. If you do, there are lessons to share that can help in personal and business life. Aunt Mona journals daily. Here are a

few of her pearls of wisdom with strongest application for health leaders:

1. "HAVE A PURPOSE"

As health leaders and employees it's easy to go through the day without connecting to the essence of why our organizations exist. Exceptional patient care is our purpose.

2. "CULTIVATE A STRONG SENSE OF VALUES AND FAMILY"

Take this message to your institutional families, manage-

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Thoughts ON LEADERSHIP

Ethical Leadership



BY DOUGLAS
MCKINLEY, PSYD.

Recently I had lunch with a high capacity leader and asked him the question, "What is leadership to you?" He didn't even blink before saying, "Leadership is all about character." I have a great deal of respect for this leader and he has shaped hundreds, if not thousands, of people's lives. I was not only stunned but also thrilled at his candid and immediate response. What is the relationship between ethics and leadership?

In recent months we have witnessed ethical leadership collapses in both the financial and energy industries with Bernie Madoff's demise and BP's incomprehensible oil spill tragedy. Madoff was ruthless in his pursuit of wealth. His leadership was apparently driven by a lack of character so therefore being ethical was never a consideration. BP's CEO, Tony Hayward, is allegedly blaming his Swiss contractor for the disaster. Character screams for a voice of truth, but who is willing to listen?

People do follow leaders without character for various reasons. They may have a character blind spot themselves or perhaps they are just naive and get taken advantage of by toxic leaders. If I asked you what leadership is, can you define it clearly in your mind? Can you do it with one word? If you can, I predict it will have something to do with integrity or honesty. The reality is that all authentic leadership is destined to be ethical leadership.

The etymological basis of the word ethics is the Greek word *ethos*, meaning habitual or customary conduct. Ethics and ethical are often used synonymously with morality and moral, as when reference is made to the ethics or morality of a person or

group, or to their ethical or moral values. Ethical leadership demands that leaders play by a set of principles that are both universal and innately understood. Problems may arise when leaders get distracted by score keeping and rule interpretation. Rules are set in place to offer guidance to the principles in which we believe, such as honesty. Honesty as a universal principle has never been questioned, but is frequently compromised and justified.

McKinley Leadership's conviction about leadership is that we lead from who we are; therefore, character is essential to be an effective leader. No character, no lasting impact. If people can't trust the messenger, they won't trust the message, so being a person of character and integrity is imperative. Why then, do toxic leaders get to such high levels of success both in terms of fame and fortune?

Perhaps it has something to do with the reflection of who we want to follow. Maybe followers of such people are intoxicated with the same sort of desires and forgo the consequences for momentary pleasure.

Ethical leadership is non negotiable. Leaders with any value will align themselves with an ethos based character. The essence of character is one of those things. If you have to ask what character is, you are overcomplicating it. One of my mentors has a saying that is germane to this topic: "There is never a wrong time to do the right thing." Isn't it time for leaders to lead from truth and love rather than from fear of disapproval and need for greed?

For more information regarding ethical leadership or leadership development, contact Dr. Douglas McKinley, CEO/Founder of McKinley Leadership, at Dmckinley@tmleader.com or (630) 983-2861.

COVER STORY: Health Care Leaders Can Learn From Aunt Mona

(Continued from page 1)

ment meetings and interdisciplinary teams we deploy to deliver healthcare.

3. "HAVE GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION FOR WHAT WENT WELL TODAY"

Be appreciative of the healthcare role you have and stay focused on what you want to accomplish. Per Aunt Mona, every night vow to do better tomorrow.

4. "CONTRIBUTE TO OTHERS HOWEVER AND WHENEVER YOU CAN"

When her eyesight and arthritis allows, Aunt Mona crochets hats for women who have lost their hair to cancer and cannot afford wigs. Healthcare is all about making the difference in somebody else's life. Don't lose the opportunity to reinforce this important message.

5. "CARRY NO MALICE IN YOUR HEART FOR ANYONE"

Healthcare is an environment that has more than its shares of kingdoms and chiefdoms. There is always potential for political interference undermining collaboration. Hidden agendas are a waste of everyone's time. Unresolved problems become toxic when not addressed and hence poison the workforce.

6. "FIND THE POSITIVE EVERYDAY"

Ours is a culture that delivers health, healing and above all hope. Many of our institutions incorporate a strong spiritual component that is part of healing. We understand the concept, just need to apply it to ourselves. Your life is what you make it, so make it a good one."

7. "STAY ENGAGED IN THE GAME AND BE A LIFELONG LEARNER"

Have a thirst for knowledge. Aunt Mona is a voracious reader-taking in as much info as she can; requiring eye drops when she overdoes it. There is a lot of information coming down the path. Find it through reading, seminars and connec-

tions with professional associations. Have a passion for what you do.

8. "NO WHINING RULE"

Having grown up through the depression, Aunt Mona has a very different perspective with regards to what it means to go without. She went to school at night and worked in a button factory during the day to earn \$12 a week; \$10 of which helped to cover family expenses. In Aunt Mona's world, no problems can be brought forth without simultaneously also bringing forth some potential solutions. Great problem - solving advice for health care providers.

9. "GET ALONG"

Checking your ego at the door, may be the best plan. Cooperation always advances progress more quickly than competition. Put politics aside and do the right thing--just because--even when no one is looking.

10. "IT REALLY IS LIFE OR DEATH-- SO LEARN TO LAUGH AT YOURSELF"

When Aunt Mona shows-up for her doctor's appt--she promptly announces to the doctor, staff and in the lobby, "Can you believe I'm still here? I don't quite get it myself." It's so important to find the levity in reality and life. There is always something to take seriously if that is the path you choose. Levity or humor always opens up a new perspective.

Take some lessons from Aunt Mona: Life (and healthcare delivery) is an art form. Be creative. Be committed. Be passionate. Do what you know is instinctively right. According to Aunt Mona, "There is always a little voice inside of you that tells you what to do. Listen to it."

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