



Leadership Training: A Critical Aspect of Education



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It has been stated: 'leaders are born, not made.' This is a falsehood which may discourage many from seeking leadership development.

In truth, there are many skills and much knowledge required for effective leadership. To some, many leadership qualities are indeed innate or may come easily; however, *everyone* can benefit from training in the principles, methods and skills necessary to lead others.

Simply stated, exemplary leaders convert vision to reality, create exemplary cultures and guide others to sustained excellence. Leadership may be operative at work, at home or in the community. There seems to always be a need for improvement in every arena in life—improvement that only effective leadership can provide.

Leadership is not management. Managers do things right. Leaders do the right thing and can help others morph from 'good to great'⁵.

Why Become a Leader?

The great psychiatrist, Victor Frankl¹, noted that everyone has an inner calling that needs to be 'uncovered'. Frankl writes: "Everyone has his own vocation or mission in life to carry out a concrete assignment, which demands fulfillment¹." Which is to say, Frankl believed that a distinct vocation lies *within* each and every one of us. The recognition of this inner calling is to be revealed through self-discernment while taking note of one's passions and enthusiasm. Combining our bliss with a service orientation will lead us to our life's purpose. Once one's vocation is determined, it naturally follows that the more people engage in a service pursuit, the more good one can render in one's life.

For example, many of our residents have a profound passion for global health and ensuring the wellbeing of those less fortunate. Thus, the formation of 'Global Health Clubs' and 'Global Health Conferences' is extreme leadership in action. One person's passion combined with heroic leadership can help engage countless others to effect real and meaningful change². Indeed, strong leadership can literally transform an enthusiastic vision into quantum service to the world.

Furthermore, each of us will be confronted with challenges at home and in our communities which will demand effective leadership in order to realize success. In fact, in *every* event or arena in life lies a call for leadership and an enactment of essential core values including humility, selflessness, benevolence, discipline and consensus building.

Whether providing direction to one's family, place of worship or community, leadership needs will always be omnipresent.

Orthopedic Surgery

Orthopedic surgeons are called to be leaders of the musculoskeletal care team in clinic, the operating room and the research arena.

Clinically they are often called to the helm of patient care as many treatment decisions are dependent on the surgeon's judgment. It is incumbent upon the surgeon to recognize effective means in leading health care teams toward the singular goal of improved musculoskeletal care. Often medical management of a patient does in fact lead to a surgical solution. The surgeon leader recognizes his or her role as merely another responsible member of health care team who happens to be able to provide an effective means of treatment. Surgeons are not 'heroes'; they are merely 'healers'. In the example of a sepsis of unknown origin which culminates in a surgical 'I and D' of a joint, the leader surgeon is obliged to convey the results of the surgery to the entire team in a courteous and timely fashion so that proper follow up is ensured. If the diagnosis was perhaps delayed due to a missed diagnosis, the leader surgeon is obliged to instruct, not blame, so that future care of other patients is enhanced. *Leaders focus on solutions and do not devote energies to finding fault.*

In surgery, Orthopedists are indeed the 'Captain of the Ship' when executing a procedure. The Surgeon Leader determines the 'culture' of the operating room. The exemplary surgeon treats staff with kindness and dignity while never losing their sense of purpose.

The same can be said of one's overall practice. If the 'culture' at work is less than desirable, there is a leadership issue. Leaders create safe and secure environments where workers can let their God given talents flourish. Fairness and honesty are the order of the day and every worker knows that they will be treated justly and compassionately.

In the research realm, orthopedists are often called to lead investigations in an effort to ensure clinical relevance. For example, if research is conducted on the biomechanics of an implant which is technically difficult to employ, it behooves the surgeon leader to inform the research team that the study of other more 'user friendly' implants would be more meaningful. By keeping the research collaborators in line with clinically relevant aspects of the particular study, the surgeon may ultimately lead the way to the solution of an important clinical problem.

Life Skills

In his masterpiece, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Steven Covey emphasizes that self-mastery must precede the ability to truly influence others². That is, how can one lead

others when one cannot manage their own lives? Once a life dedicated to timeless moral principles is attained, one has gained control over one's life and then can proceed to truly influence others.

When the 'habits' of proactivity, adherence to a mission statement (begin with the end in mind) and adoption of executing around priorities (putting first things first) are mastered, then real ability to influence others is finally gained. Implicit in Steven Covey's seven habits is the adherence to a changeless and principle based core set of values. These include honesty, integrity and faithfulness to commitments.

Thus, the same virtues necessary for strong leadership are also essential for a peaceful, powerful and integrated life. Psychologists for many years have noted that the most joyful and self-actualized human beings are also the most kind, compassionate and moral. *Leadership skills are synonymous with 'life skills.'*

In addition, one must 'walk the talk' to lead. No one will commit to follow one who is duplicitous and not of sound moral constitution. It has been said that 'leadership is merely *who* you are'. How we conduct our lives communicates volumes more than what we say! When we become our best selves, we are simultaneously growing as leaders.

The study and incorporation of effective leadership skills and traits will lead each of us further into lasting and meaningful self-growth.

Penn Leadership Forum

The Penn Leadership Forum was conceived as an effort to convey tried and true principles of real leadership to residents, students, junior faculty and all interested members of the health care team.

A consortium of leaders from the Wharton School of Business, the Penn Perelman School of Medicine, industry, and sports will convey to attendees key principles necessary to lead others to a common good. Chief elements of exemplary leadership such as integrity, selflessness, decisiveness, organization, benevolence, vision, ingenuity and heroism will be discussed in detail⁴. A unique feature of the forum includes 'case discussions' whereupon real life situations will be presented to a panel of experts so that the audience will learn how proven leaders negotiate common challenges. The responsible practice of orthopedic surgery as well as effective living requires consistent leadership. It behooves every surgeon to study what makes great leaders great and enact these skills in daily practice.

In conclusion, leadership is a way of life and requires an ongoing process of self-development. The Penn Leadership Forum will provide future leaders meaningful insights regarding this journey and hopefully help many realize, as Jim Collins would call 'Level 5 leadership'—the highest level of executive function.

References

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5. Collins, Jim. "Level 5 leadership: The triumph of humility and fierce resolve." *Harvard Business Review* 83.7 (2005): 136.