YOU have the POWER to SPARK CHANGE

Since the late 20th century, the question of how to nurture a healthy organizational “culture” has persisted as a hot topic for keynote speakers and corporate coaches in the business world. Experts of all stripes have taken up the subject with various objectives – improving employee recruitment and retention, maximizing productivity and profitability, and gaining PR credibility among them. And it’s no secret that those goals are all hugely relevant to the business of hospitals; running a streamlined, effective, respected, and financially viable operation is critical. But hospitals across the nation are asking questions about their organizational cultures for reasons that go beyond these. Because hospitals are in the business of care.

In the articles that follow, Pat Falotico of the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership and Joe Tye of Values Coach, Inc. offer tangible measures that any hospital can use to examine and energize its workplace culture. Inspired by the transformative leaders they’ve encountered in their own careers, both of these internationally known experts show us what the world of a hospital can become when it is more fully engaged, more fully empowered, more fully human.
The Perspective

By Pat Falotico

Before Joseph N. Patrchnak founded Green Summit Partners and stepped into his current role as chair of the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, he worked as the Chief Human Resources Officer of the Cleveland Clinic. It was there that he learned first-hand what a profound opportunity a servant-leader has to engage employees and transform cultures. In his book, The Engaged Enterprise: A Field Guide for the Servant Leader, Patrchnak offers practical insights – informed by his experience – on how to embrace a model of servant-leadership in your organization. This cultural shift, he says, dramatically transformed the Cleveland Clinic: A staff that was once largely disengaged is now consistently rated five stars in patient satisfaction.

The following are his top five proven ideas for creating an engaged enterprise:

Real change starts with real dissatisfaction.
Dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs may be the most powerful catalyst

The Commitment

By Joe Tye

An organization’s culture does not change unless and until people change. Hence, the most important work of leadership is not to change organizations – it is to transform people. True leaders help other people grow as leaders in their own right.

This insight – set out by James MacGregor Burns in his Pulitzer Prize winning book, Transforming Leadership, makes the distinction between leadership that is transactional and leadership that is transformative, what he calls “transforming.” Managing an organization is about outcomes, productivity, accountability, policies, and rules. True leadership – leadership, that is, with the power to change a culture – is about people. It’s about achievement, growth, ownership, and values. These exemplary leaders can – and must – work in all roles and at all levels in an organization to inspire a thoroughgoing cultural change. Raising oneself to the place where both leader and followers are working from that higher plane of personal values holds the power to change expectations and to change lives.
for bringing about lasting change. Joe explains that improving the clinic’s HCAHPS scores became a top priority and sharpened the need to focus on all aspects of the patient experience. Making the essential connection between increasing employee engagement and enhancing the patient experience was intuitive for many leaders at the clinic; others had to be convinced. With the leadership group on board, the Cleveland Clinic Experience was born.

When a mission becomes personal, it becomes a cause. Millennials will become the workforce majority within the next couple of years, and they want to know that their work matters. But isn’t that true for all of us? The difference is, unlike other generations, millennials won’t join your team or stay with your organization if they cannot see how their work contributes to a higher purpose.

At the Cleveland Clinic, everyone on the team embraces the slogan, “We are all

In the summer of 1984, I was an intern at HP, where Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard built one of the most successful companies in the world. There, I experienced their practice of MBWA, or “management by walking around.” I worked in Hewlett Packard’s Personal Computer Group at a time when HP’s revolutionary touchscreen personal computer was being clobbered in the marketplace by Apple and IBM. Rather than follow the lead of other tech companies and resort to layoffs, HP asked each of us to tighten our belts by working five (or six) days a week but only being paid for four.

One Saturday morning, HP founder Dave Packard – who had long since retired and could have been out playing golf or buying a yacht – came walking through our department. I watched him stop at a dozen or so cubicles, put a hand on an employee’s shoulder, and ask about the work that person was doing. These were not boss-to-subordinate pep talks, they were humble, human-to-human connections. At a time when disgruntlement about the financial squeeze could have been rampant among employees, 15 minutes of Dave Packard putting himself at our level transformed the culture of our department for the rest of that summer. This was my first time to see transformative leadership in action, and the change it sparked in me guided my career.

Here are the five essential commitments, or principles, of transforming leadership:

Practice personal humility. In his description of great leaders in the book Good to Great, Jim Collins explains that top-level leadership is a paradoxical blend of intense determination to achieve big goals and a genuine sense of personal humility.
Servant leadership begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead.

—Robert Greenleaf

Practice loyalty. Transformative leaders value and nurture relationships. They understand that building relationships takes time, and they know that tough challenges will undoubtedly arise throughout the process. By its very nature, transformation occurs under pressure. When the going gets tough, great leaders do not desert those who trust them; they know that the highest-pressure point is often the moment when the greatest growth takes place.

Practice personal accountability. Transformative leaders have the courage to accept personal ownership for failures, even if the failure was not directly their fault. They also do not seek to avoid personal responsibility by scapegoating underlings.

Practice selflessness. Truly effective and inspiring leaders devote themselves selflessly to service, above all else. They listen as much, or more, than they speak; they give – and give without resentment – more than they take.

Build bridges, not walls. Transformative leaders seek community rather than separatism or insularity. They build and nurture connections among individuals, departments, and roles – eliminating dissent, divisions, and scarcity mindsets.

When my Values Coach colleague and coauthor, Bob Dent, left his position as Chief Operating and Nursing Officer at Midland Health in West Texas for an executive position at Emory Healthcare in Atlanta, his protégé, Kit Bredimus, moved seamlessly into Bob’s vacated role.

Here’s why: He was already a transformative leader. In the previous years, with Bob’s encouragement, Kit had become one of our top Certified Values Coach Trainers. While identifying and living by his own personal values, he lost more than 150 pounds and earned a doctoral degree. Following Bob’s example, he also invested his own time and energy into helping his colleagues become better leaders.

In the conclusion to his article, “Changing Culture to Drive Nurse Engagement and Superior Patient Experience,” Kit
whole, and to act only when we have the
time to make a thoughtful decision. Think
about processes you are automating or
outsourcing: How are those decisions
communicating that you care?

Old habits die hard, so hardware desired
change. Like me, you might agree that
you get what you measure. If you are
trying to create change, how have you
connected it to your leaders’ success
metrics? How do you celebrate the
behaviors you want to create, and how
have you imbedded change into the way
every team operates, every day?

Unlearning old habits and relearning
new ones takes ownership, repetition,
and reinforcement. Leaders must set the
tone for their teams and reinforce the
behaviors that contribute to the engaged
culture you are trying to create – at the
same time rejecting those behaviors which
detract from such a culture. Feedback
and storytelling are key skills that each
leader must develop to achieve servant-
leadership aspirations and to continue
moving forward.

It’s about building pyramids, not
sandcastles. Lasting change requires
building a strong foundation. It will take
time if you expect it to be sustainable.
Think of the solidity of a pyramid versus
that of a sandcastle. A sudden wave, a
poorly placed process step, or someone
else’s priority can smash the sandcastle;
but the pyramid is built to withstand
the crisis of the day, the mistakes that
inadvertently will happen, or any changes
in leadership that might occur.

True change can take five to seven
years. Yes, you will begin to see the value
of your servant-leadership commitment
earlier, but imbedding it into the culture
will take time, practice, and commitmen
t at every level in your hospital system.
You will suffer disappointments along the
way, but you need to learn from them and
apply what you learn, in order to grow
stronger.

Servant leadership is not a program.
It defines how we all should be in
relationship with one another. As Robert
Greenleaf told us, “The best test, though
difficult to administer, is: Do those
served grow as persons? Do they, while
being served, become healthier, wiser,
freer, more autonomous – more likely to
themselves become servants? And what
is the effect on the least-privileged in
society? Will they benefit, or, at least, will
they not be further deprived?”

As health care providers, you likely
chose your profession because you care
about people. Broaden your “patient
first” focus to include every part of a care
team, allowing each member of that team
to be at their best. What are you doing to
help others be the best possible versions
of themselves?

Pat Falotico is CEO of The Greenleaf Center for Servant
Leadership. For more information and resources to help
you grow on your servant leadership journey, please
connect at www.greenleaf.org.

describes the ultimate outcome of our
Values & Culture Project as follows:
“The project helps participants enrich
their personal lives through being
authentic to their values. In addition
to improving their work performance,
some nurses went back to school and
earned advanced degrees. Others got
themselves out of debt or lost a significant
amount of weight with healthy living,
even running marathons. The rallying cry
for the ED now is, ‘Proceed until
apprehended,’ which
is about being empowered to take the
initiative and get things done.
“Shifting the staff mindset from fear of
retribution to a culture of ownership leads
to more awareness of how the medical
staff’s personal values and behaviors
affect the patient’s experience of their
care. When someone can reflect on how
their values incorporate into their actions,
they are more likely to do the right thing
as a result.”

Management is a job description.
Leadership is a life decision. You do
not need a management title to be a
transforming leader. And, in today’s
world, we need leaders in every corner,
not just in the corner office.”

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