

Reflections on Leadership



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A Servant's Heart – *Leading with Humility*

In his best selling book on leadership, *Good to Great*, Jim Collins identifies what he calls Level 5 Leadership as "Building enduring greatness through a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will". He came to this conclusion after many years of studying the leadership of companies that had demonstrated the financial success that seemed to defy the normal business cycles that affect most organizations.

This observation came as a surprise to the people who normally read and write business books on leadership. In spite of what appears to be pretty compelling evidence to support Mr. Collins observations, many business leaders still ridicule the role of humility as an essential ingredient in successful leadership. Those who subscribe to the hard charging, take no prisoners model of leadership find the concept of humility an admission of weakness.

I read Collins book when it came out a few years ago, and found that it matched my personal experience and belief about leadership. I was surprised to find out later that Mr. Collins came to this conclusion without the benefit of a personal faith or understanding of the foundations of humility and leadership found in Judeo-Christian

teachings. The connection between leadership and humility is one of the foundation stones of PHI as a faith based organization.

Moses, the most dynamic leader in the old testament, a man who had the strength to defy the ruler of Egypt, lead a group of former slaves through the wilderness and transform them into a nation, was described in the book of Numbers as "a very humble man, more humble than anyone on the face of the earth". No one reading the book of Exodus could possibly mistake Moses for a weak person.

Other connections between leadership and humility are found in the Bible. The Book of Proverbs has many references to the connections between humility and wisdom, grace, and honor. The words and life of Jesus are powerful examples of humility. The Apostle Paul's words in the book of Philippians is clear - "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should not look only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others." This was the kind of leadership in the early Christian church that turned the Roman Empire on its ear, and changed the course of human history.

Humility is not about weakness. It is the purest expression of self confidence and strength. It takes

a strong, mature person to not overreact to criticism or to accept the notion that someone else may have a better idea. Most importantly, humility changes our entire thought process from a focus on ourselves to seeing the needs of others.

C.S. Lewis, considered by many to be the most influential theologian of the last century, described humility as "not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less". As leaders of PHI, that is to be our model.

On a personal note, I believe that in order for us to be successful, the concept of humility must permeate the leadership culture of PHI. Put very simply – a humble approach to leadership is the best way to get things done. This is based on two essential truths about leadership:

- Leaders must gain the respect of those they intend to lead.
- Humility breeds respect.

It is not good enough for a few to embrace this concept. It must reach deep into the organization and the way we behave each and every day.

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Respect

The last Reflections focused on the role of humility as one of the essential truths about leadership:

- Leaders must gain the respect of those they intend to lead.
- Humility breeds respect.

This time I would like to consider the first half of this equation – Respect.

Fortunes have been made around the concept of respect. Just ask Aretha Franklin (R-E-S-P-E-C-T) or Rodney Dangerfield (I don't get no respect). Everyone wants respect. Everyone feels they deserve respect. But many of the same people only grudgingly give respect to those who they believe have earned it. That leads to the question – Is respect something that must be earned, or is it something that a person is entitled to by virtue of who they are?

It is often hard work to gain the respect of those we intend to lead. Many people come to PHI with a prior work experience where people in positions of leadership have behaved in unethical or hypocritical ways that are hard to admire. The abuse of power in small and large ways is all too common, and it can be hard to adjust to an environment where such practices are not condoned. As leaders, our personal and professional conduct should be above reproach. Over time we will earn the respect of those whose life experience has made them skeptical of people in leadership positions. This is not to say that

leaders should engage in a popularity contest. Sometimes hard decisions need to be made, and good leaders are expected to do the right thing, even when it is not easy.

The second part of the question of respect is equally important, and often harder to follow.

As some of you may know, I grew up in a large family in Michigan. In addition to having three brothers and two sisters, my parents took in foster children, often increasing the number of children in the house to 8 or 10 at a time. Many of these children came from very difficult home lives, with parents who were neglectful or abusive. It was from one of these young people that I learned an important lesson about respect.

His name was Ed, and we were about the same age. He had spent most of his life in foster care. By the time he came to live with us he was just finishing high school and wanted to go to college. We shared a room and developed a friendship. He and his brothers and sisters were taken from his mother as small children, and the story of their early life was difficult. One day on the way home from school Ed indicated that he wanted to stop in and check on his Mom. This surprised me, because I had not met her before. The apartment where she lived was run down, and not in the best neighborhood. She looked old and frail for her age. She was still making bad choices in her life and suffering the consequences. From my point of view she had not been a good mother –

certainly a great contrast from the loving home and family that I had grown up with. What impressed me was the kindness and respect this young man had for a woman who from all accounts had done little to earn his respect and love. He was concerned about her health and her difficult living environment. We only stayed for a few minutes, and he said he would be back in a few days to check on her again. It was clear to me that he simply respected her for who she was – his Mom. To this day I am humbled by the image of a young man who could be respectful to someone who had been a source of hurt and rejection.

The older people we are called to serve, our fellow employees, the families of residents, volunteers and church constituents - everyone associated with PHI's ministry are deserving of our respect – not because they have earned it, but because of who they are – Children of God.

So from my perspective the answer to the question of respect is two fold. Do everything you can to earn the respect of those around you. Give respect freely to everyone you come in contact with. It's the right thing to do. It is the way effective leaders behave.

Steve

Reflections on Leadership



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March Madness

As you may have figured out, I believe that important lessons on leadership can be found all around us. From the Bible to the pages of the daily news, we can gain valuable insight that we can apply to our role as leaders in PHI's ministry. Originally I had intended to do this month's Reflection on Leadership lessons from the 23rd Psalm. That changed this morning when I read the sports pages of the Harrisburg Patriot News. I will certainly get back to the timeless wisdom of the Bible, but the message of the sports page may lose some of its impact if it waits until next month.

This weekend, George Mason University, a heavy underdog from an obscure college basketball conference, made it to the final four teams in the college national championship tournament. To appreciate the magnitude of this accomplishment, you need to know that this was the first time in 20 years that an 11th seeded team has made it that far in the tournament.

What makes this story truly remarkable to me is that Jim Larranaga, the coach of the George Mason team, has a leadership philosophy that so closely mirrors my own that I felt that I needed to repeat it to you while basketball fever was still in full bloom. When

asked about his core philosophy, Jim tells a story of visiting a colleague at another school to find out how to craft a more effective coaching strategy. Taking his 108 page playbook along, he thought he was going to swap x's and o's with his friend. Instead, he was told that he would never be the coach (leader) that he could be unless he was able to reduce his 108 pages to a single page. Jim took this to heart, and spent two years coming up with his philosophy of leadership:

- **Level 1 - Physical** – You've got to put in the time. You've got to be there on time. You've got to work your tail off.
- **Level 2 - Mental** – You've got to be prepared. Know what we're doing and how we are doing it. Have total focus on what the team is doing.
- **Level 3 - Emotional** – You're going to have to control your frustrations, your anger because things will not always go your way.
- **Level 4 - Spiritual** – (Relational) When one succeeds, we all succeed. When one of us fails, we all fail. We are in this together. As a family.

This comes very close to what I believe we need to do to be successful as PHI's leadership team. I do have one notable change in the formula. Jim Larranaga's Level 4 definition is not really spiritual. I would call it Relational

– how we relate to those around us, and how we see other people as being on our team. At PHI we have another level that can be accurately defined as Spiritual:

- **Level 5 - Spiritual** – To understand the meaning of your work in the context of your life's calling - to make someone's life better because of the work you do.

Even those of us who are not addicted to watching college basketball at this time of year can relate to, and be inspired by, the lessons of simplicity and a clear understanding of what is important to leading a successful team. I encourage each of you to re-read the modified 5 level approach to leadership and see how it applies to your work. If you look closely, I think you will find some important lessons that can help you in your role as one of PHI's leaders.

Steve Proctor

Reflections on Leadership



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Shaping Your Leadership Perspective

The qualities of a good leader are shaped in countless ways. Sometimes it is obvious – college courses, leadership training events, reading books and articles on leadership, personally observing the behavior of effective leaders, or learning what to avoid by observing the behavior of ineffective leaders. But there are many other lessons in life that shape our character as a person and a leader. Previously we have identified servant leadership as an essential element in PHI's distinct leadership culture, anchored in the words of Jesus in Luke 22: 24-27. As a follow up to that Biblical directive, I would like to consider how being a servant actually prepares us to be better leaders.

The personal impact of how serving others can shape our lives became evident to me in an e mail from one of the PHI team members who spent a week assisting the Chateau de Notre Dame in New Orleans, helping them to re-open and return the residents that had been displaced since the devastation of hurricane Katrina:

We would like to thank you (all of PHI) for the opportunity to serve the residents at the Chateau. Words can not begin to describe the devastation that was placed upon New Orleans. We had to slow our pace down because a little bit of progress seemed overwhelming to staff and residents. The resident's returning to the nursing home gave staff a glimpse of hope. We are both proud to be a part of PHI's Katrina efforts. I guess simple acts of kindness will bring about healing. We had no idea of the difference we made

until we said goodbye---tears were streaming down the staff's faces. I did ask if we could take pictures and all of the residents and or families ok'd this upon their return. I will down load them and send them to you as soon as possible. As Mother Teresa summed it up "Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God's kindness in your eyes, kindness in your face, kindness in your smile." Again thank you for the opportunity to express God's kindness.

This sentiment has been echoed by other PHI team members who have participated in this effort. The most common response is that the experience of helping others had a profound effect on them, and changed the way they look at everything. It is as if we are given a fresh set of eyes. What is clear to me is that the benefit of the experience of serving others goes well beyond the good we are able to do for someone else. We become infused with a sense of compassion in our relationships with others, we gain perspective about what is really important, our souls are nourished, and we look beyond our own interests as we lead our co-workers in this ministry.

There are many opportunities to serve, in our own neighborhood and community to distant parts of the world. From helping a next door neighbor, serving as a tutor to an inner city middle school student, volunteering for disaster relief in New Orleans, going on a medical mission trip to Central America, or helping with aids orphans in Africa, the world is filled with opportunities to help others.

In many respects, servant leadership is about giving – giving of ourselves. The best sermon I have ever heard about giving was in a church service more than 30 years ago. The pastor told his congregation that God did not want us to give till it hurts, because some of us have a low pain threshold, and giving even a little caused some people pain. Instead he said that God wanted us to "Give till it felt good." By this definition, it is obvious that there are those in the PHI family that are true servant leaders. So the lesson on servant leadership is this – Look for opportunities to serve - Give generously, not just because it is good for others, but because it helps to develop a healthy perspective as a leader and a human being.

Steve Proctor
CEO

Reflections on Leadership



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Handling Conflict

It has been said that the way you experience conflict in your family growing up is the greatest predictor of how you will handle conflict as an adult. I don't know if this was based on any scientific study, but it is clear to me that when it comes to dealing with conflict, everyone carries around a lot of baggage. It may be from home, school, the neighborhood where you live, or a prior place of employment, but our approach to handling conflict is not a blank slate. Unfortunately we bring our baggage into work with us, and the work place is often a place where conflict is a fact of life. As leaders we need to realize that conflict is inevitable. What is within our control is our response. As leaders, our behaviors, whether we intend them to or not, are examples for all around us.

First of all, I want to make it clear that the absence of conflict is not a sign of a healthy organization. The complete absence of conflict is not harmony. The absence of conflict is usually a symptom of repression or apathy – two fatal diseases for organizations. Healthy organizations have their share of conflict, because if people care about their work, they will have different opinions about how the goals of the organization are achieved. As leaders we set the tone about how conflict is managed or encouraged, and how conflict can be productive.

Secondly, handling conflict is an essential part of any leader's job. As a leader, we cannot avoid conflict, even if we want to. Hiding from this responsibility is not an option. Just recently I spoke to a teacher who indicated that she had the worst boss in her 25 year teaching career. She said that her principal would do anything to avoid a conflict, which created a chaos that was intolerable for those she supervised. Allowing this kind of chaos to develop in our areas of accountability is clearly not acceptable. Employees look to us to lead—part of that leadership is to know when to empower staff to resolve conflicts on their own and when we must manage situations that are beyond the control of the staff.

One of my earliest lessons on how employees view conflict was with the first person I had to discipline when I was a new supervisor. As a

supervisory nurse, several nursing assistants came to me to discuss a fellow employee who was so absent minded that she was putting residents at risk for injury. After some investigation, I discovered that the complaints were valid, and spent considerable time with the employee trying to correct her behavior. After repeated warnings (verbal and written), the time came when the person left several medical implements in a resident's bed, including her scissors. Fortunately they were discovered without any injury, but the incident led to her termination. Much to my surprise, the response of the staff was one of sympathy for the departed staff member. The very people who correctly reported their concerns, and expected me as their leader to do something about it were heard to remark, "I don't know why she was fired. She was such a caring person. Why would he do something like that?" I soon realized that while my staff expected me to deal with these kinds of situations, they did not want to have their fingerprints on anything that was unpleasant. That realization allowed me to grow as a supervisor and a leader. Sometimes, we have to deal with issues in a way that, while appropriate, is not popular.

Since then, I have observed countless occasions when people have gone to great lengths to avoid unpleasantness and conflict. As leaders, we are called to engage others in a dialogue about their work, seek out diverse opinions, and cultivate differing points of view. In this process, conflict is inevitable, BUT it can be productive if a satisfactory resolution is achieved. I call this process "creating a healthy tension". The point is not to create unpleasantness, but to allow an atmosphere where everyone understands that approaching an issue from a differing perspective in order to generate ideas and new solutions is the goal.

One of the most common issues that causes conflict is the allocation of resources—be it dollars, human resources (staffing), time or space. Perhaps the best example of all of these potential "conflicts" is the budget process. The construction of any budget is an exercise in "healthy tension".

In caring for older persons we live in a world of cuts in Medicaid and Medicare revenue,

increased regulation, and more demanding residents and families, making every budget process difficult. Budgets are the friction points where all of these things grind together. But whether it is a budget process, a conflict between individuals under your supervision, or a problem between departments, as leaders we are expected to be able to handle conflict in a positive way. While I do not claim to know all of the secrets about resolving conflict, I do have a few suggestions:

- Focus on our common values and goals. The ministry of PHI is rooted in mission, vision, and values that have been clearly articulated, and serve as a foundation for what we want to achieve, and how we behave in relation to each other. Referring to these written value statements as a part of resolving conflict will help put things into proper perspective. Make sure that you do not confuse your personal bias or opinions for the goals and values of the organization. Goals and values are bedrock, personal opinions are always a work in process, and must be flexible.
- When dealing with another person who has a different point of view than you do, start with the presumption that the other person has pure motives. You may discover otherwise later, but suspicion can kill a relationship and sabotage any attempt to reach common ground.
- Search your own motives. Ask yourself "is this about protecting my territory or enhancing my own status or am I focused on what is best for the residents and the mission of PHI?"
- Always fight fair. Focus on issues, not personalities. Personal attacks are never justified, and are inherently harmful. Even if you win an argument in this way, the price of winning is too high.

Getting back to the question of conflict and baggage – we need to understand what we carry, and why, before we can leave it behind. This requires thoughtful reflection if we are to grow and develop as a leader. We can change our behavior, but it will not happen by accident.

Steve Proctor

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RELIEVING THE STRESS OF LEADERSHIP

We live in a time when everyone is concerned about stress. The terms "stressed out", "burn out", and talk of stress related illness are common in American life. Leaders are not immune from this phenomenon, especially given the demands on leaders in this day and age. Leaders are responsible for making sure that things get done. But those we lead have their own expectations about how we achieve results and maintain positive working relationships. This tension can leave one with the feeling of being caught in the middle with no where to turn – a practical definition of stress in the life of a human being.

I recently read a book called *Resonant Leadership*, by Richard Boyatzis, that was subtitled "Renewing Yourself and Connecting with Others Through Mindfulness, Hope, and Compassion." This fascinated me, because the author was not a clergy person or social worker and did not present this as a religious or moral issue, but as a central need in leadership in today's world.

The idea of leaders needing periods of renewal is not news. From Biblical times, the need for renewal has been clear. God prepared Moses for his leadership responsibilities with a lengthy period in the wilderness. Throughout the Bible, leaders used times of prayer and solitude to refresh the spirit. Before starting his public ministry, Jesus spent 40 days of prayer and fasting in the wilderness, and

throughout his ministry he periodically retreated from the crowds to gain strength.

However, by using the terms mindfulness, hope and compassion, the approach to renewal in this book was decidedly different. I was particularly attracted to the emphasis on compassion, since it is one of the cornerstones of the PHI mission statement (Christian Understanding, Compassion, and a Sense of Belonging). The intersection between compassion, renewal and effective leadership rings especially true to those of us called to serve in the ministry of PHI.

First of all, the definition of compassion is the fundamental starting point in making this connection. Compassion is not just feeling sorry for someone else. It is a "combination of deep understanding, concern, and a willingness to act on that concern on behalf of oneself and others". It is empathy in action. Compassion does not contemplate an equal exchange or reciprocity, it is selfless giving. However, the common understanding of compassion is expanded to include reaching out to help others whether or not they are experiencing pain. By using this definition, compassion can infuse the way we think and act in every situation.

For those interested in exactly how compassion works as a stress reducer, the book cites studies on how positive or negative emotions alter the body chemistry and explains how various hormones affect the brain and the

immune system. While the biology of how this works is very interesting, the conclusion is fairly simple - compassion is "a renewing agent, decreasing stress levels and improving the leader's overall effectiveness by setting in motion a restorative mental, emotional, and physiological process".

Cultivating a sense of compassion toward others is good for your health. If you want to live a life with less stress, try a dose of compassion. If you want to be an effective leader - compassion is the megavitamin that will build you up. Compassion is also part of the uniform that we wear as we lead and serve others. In the book of Colossians, the apostle Paul instructs us to be "clothed with compassion, kindness, humility, and patience." This is good advice for everyone, but imperative for those who aspire to earn the respect of those we are called to lead.

In the next issue of *Reflections on Leadership*, we will look into how organizations create a culture of compassion among its employees, and how compassionate leadership can produce better results.

Steve

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CREATING A CULTURE OF COMPASSION

The PHI mission statement identifies compassion as one of the foundation stones of this ministry. The last issue of Reflections on Leadership focused on the role of compassion as a means of relieving the stress associated with leadership responsibilities. This time, I would like to address the question of how we as leaders can create a climate of compassion among those we work with on a day to day basis. The working definition of compassion we have been using is a "combination of deep understanding, concern, and a willingness to act on that concern on behalf of oneself and others".

In his book Resonant Leadership, Richard Boyatzis offered a number of reasons why compassion produces better leaders and important organizational results. The regular practice of compassion by leadership results in the development of more people in the organization as leaders, higher commitment to organizational goals, improved responsiveness to customers, and a sense of shared community and social responsibility. All of these activities spring from truly caring about those you work with and around, listening better, and fostering compassion by personal example.

To illustrate how this plays out in the every day work in an organization dedicated to serving others he offered the following statement, used by a hospital to connect compassion with the way they should behave as employees:
You are what people see when they arrive here. Yours are the eyes they look into when they are frightened and lonely. Yours are the voices people hear when they ride the elevators and when they try to sleep and when they need to forget their problems. You are what they hear

when they are on the way to their appointments that could affect their destinies. And what they hear after they leave those appointments. Yours are the comments people hear when you think they can't. Yours is the intelligence and caring that people hope they find here. If you are noisy, so is the hospital. If you are rude, so is the hospital. And if you are wonderful, so is the hospital. No visitors, no patients, no physicians or co-workers can ever know the real you that you know is there, unless you let them see it. All they can know is what they see and hear and experience. And so we have a stake in your attitude and the collective attitudes of everyone that works here in the hospital. We are judged by your performance. We are the care you give, the attention you pay, the courtesies you extend.

Isn't this the kind of atmosphere that we would like to create for the people we have been called to serve? Don't we want to work in the kind of place where we are surrounded by people who care about us? As leaders, how can we create this kind of atmosphere?

First of all, we need to be less focused on ourselves and more focused on others. This is hard to do, and requires constant vigilance. The tendency to see ourselves as the center of the universe is a part of the human condition. Even the Golden Rule - Do unto others as you would have them do unto you - is an attempt to use the focus on self as a benchmark to improve our behavior toward those around us. I believe that this biblical standard is constructed with the understanding that all of us are essentially self centered. The byproduct of being less focused on ourselves is that we will be more open and in touch with people and issues around us. Open communication and willingness to accept criticism without defensiveness will follow.

The most effective way we as leaders can inspire compassion in those we work with is by what Boyatzis calls, coaching with compassion. Mentoring, teaching, and assisting in the development of your fellow PHI team members has a positive effect on the those you coach. Every minute we spend coaching someone, we reaffirm their value as a human being, our willingness to invest in them, and our belief that they are important to achieving PHI's mission. It also has a powerful impact on the person doing the coaching. Coaching with compassion will make us the kind of leader that we intend to be.

The final truth in the discussion of creating a climate of compassion is that the only authentic way to inspire compassionate behavior toward our residents is by fostering compassionate relationships with each other. The most effective way we illustrate our expectations is to model the behavior we want in others. We need to constantly ask ourselves "Can people see compassion in the way I relate to everyone around me?" If the answer is yes, we are on the way to creating a climate of compassion.

Final thoughts on compassion:

- It is a central part of PHI's mission to serve others.
- It is good for us as human beings – fostering better personal health
- It is a key ingredient in being an effective leader.

How do you know if you are a leader? In the words of Paul Myers, "If you think you are a leader and you look around and no one is following you, you're just out for a walk."

Steve

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FAITH & LEADERSHIP

Working in a faith based organization like PHI provides the opportunity to discuss topics that are rarely discussed elsewhere. The connection between a person's faith and effectiveness as a leader is an issue that is unspoken or ignored by most authors of management and leadership books and articles. Other than an occasional reference for a need for a strong ethical foundation as a leader, the connection between faith and leadership seems to be off limits for popular business authors.

One of the reasons we are uncomfortable talking about faith in relation to our work is because we have all known people who are outspoken about their faith and exhibit behavior that is inconsistent with their stated beliefs. Worse, some have used the appearance of being religious to manipulate others for their own benefit. However, rather than dismiss all conversation about the role of faith in the workplace as irrelevant, we should recognize that the failure is not in the message, but in the messenger.

The connection between faith and leadership is clear in the examples of great leaders in the Bible. Perhaps my favorite example of a leader is Moses, that great hero of the faith whose extraordinary leadership led a group of slaves from bondage and forged them into a great nation. It is one of the most remarkable stories of leadership in the history of the world. Reading the Old Testament, it is clear that Moses developed into the great leader that the times demanded. It is said that D. L. Moody described the life of Moses as having three distinct parts. He spent the first 40 years thinking he was

somebody, the second 40 years, thinking he was a nobody, and the last 40 years learning what God could do with a nobody.

Moses first 40 years of life was one of privilege, growing up in Pharaoh's court. As a prince, he thought he was somebody special. This period of his life was concluded in a rash act - killing an Egyptian task master. The second period of his life was spent as a shepherd, herding sheep in the wilderness - a period of reflection and humility that concluded with his call to leadership in the flames of the burning bush. The last period of his life was the one we know the most about, and where his leadership skills were the most evident. His success as a leader began when he realized that it was not his strength, but God's strength that mattered in his role as a leader.

Things were not always easy for Moses. His years of leadership were marked by periods of frustration, failure, and rebellious followers. But he persevered. The summary of his life at the end of his last 40 years was recorded in the last chapter of Deuteronomy: *"Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face."* He also prepared a successor to continue the work. *"Joshua was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him."*

Why is faith important in persons who aspire to leadership positions and how does the need for faith influence our work as a leader? As human beings, we are all susceptible to self interest and self centeredness. Virtues like compassion, empathy, humility, and serving others do not come naturally to us, and require roots that tap into something bigger - a source of

nourishment that keeps these virtues alive and healthy in the middle of a society that rewards an entirely different set of values.

Secondly, the attitude we bring into the role of leader shapes the way we behave and the way those we work with perceive us. If we are convinced that success is the result of our superior intellect or special insight, we cannot succeed in inspiring others to do important work. Other people know that we have our frailties, even if we are blind to them. By pretending that leaders are smarter than everyone else, we leave our co-workers with only three options - either we are clueless or arrogant, or both. When it comes to leadership, superiority breeds contempt.

Finally, most of the decisions we make as leaders is based on imperfect information. Whether we are hiring the right people to work with us, dealing with resident or family concerns, or making an important policy or strategic decision, we can never be 100% sure of the outcome. Being comfortable with the fact that as leaders we remain ultimately responsible for performance without having complete control over everything around us requires confidence obtained from faith in the providence of God.

PHI is a place where there is a natural intersection between faith and our work. It is important that we develop a strong "root system" that will make us better and more consistent leaders. As you contemplate your development as a leader, do not neglect your spiritual depth and awareness. It is the foundation for the other leadership skills that you need to be successful.


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On Being a Mentor

Almost everyone I know can identify someone who has had a positive influence in shaping the kind of person they have become. In our youth it can be a parent or close relative, Sunday school teacher, school teacher, or neighbor. If we are lucky, we have people throughout our lives that serve as mentors – people we continue to learn from. This is especially important in the area of leadership. Every effective leader I have ever met can recite a list of people that they credit in making them a better person and leader. In my 35 years with PHI, there have been many such people in my life. Some are obvious – like my predecessor, Al Schartner, who hired me and had a confidence in my ability at a time when my potential for leadership was obvious only to him. I have also been blessed to have been influenced by generations of PHI Trustees and board members, who have given selflessly of their time and talent to make the ministry of PHI what it is today. Much of the work of trustees is unseen, but I have been privileged to claim many of these wonderful people as my mentors and friends. One of these persons, Gordon Turner, died on November 14th, 2006, at the age of 98.

Gordon came to PHI in the early 1970's as a member of the board of trustees. As the first administrator of Ware Presbyterian Village, Gordon and I spent many hours together in his role as the chairman of the building committee for the nursing center that was completed in early 1977. In those days, we had fewer staff to handle construction duties, and every PHI building project had a trustee assigned as the building committee chair. This responsibility, while an unpaid position,

took between 8 and 10 hours a week for up to a year, working with staff to oversee every detail of construction. Gordon and I spent many hours together going through the building from the basement to the roof to make sure that everything was in order. Gordon also served as the chair of the PHI board and as a member of the finance committee for 12 years.

When Gordon retired from the PHI board, he continued to be a strong PHI advocate in his church and community, and continued as a faithful contributor. It was my privilege to visit with Gordon periodically. He would give me gentle advice, and make observations about PHI's ministry. There was always a jewel to be found somewhere in our conversation.

He also recognized the power of leadership by example. Gordon and his wife, Loma had a wonderful 77 year marriage. I had the privilege of attending Gordon and Loma's 75th anniversary, and their daughter's 50th wedding anniversary, which he and Loma hosted. It was a remarkable experience that I will never forget. Being in the presence of a 75 and 50 year marriage in the same family is a testimony to enduring relationships that is rare in this day and age.

Even in his upper 90's Gordon was concerned about setting an example. At 97 years of age when he would attend a PHI function like Chairman's Circle or the PHI summer social for trustees and board members, he would remark, "People probably wonder why I still come to these PHI events. I am old and have a hard time getting around. I can hardly hear and have difficulty making conversation. But I figure that if people can see someone my age and

in my condition making an effort to be here, they will understand what PHI means to me, they will make an effort to support PHI." Even at 97, Gordon knew about the power of setting a personal example.

The question for us as leaders in PHI is not just who we look to as our mentors. It is also about being a mentor to others who need us. Wayne Tutus, another PHI trustee that I admired greatly, took me under his wing early in my career with PHI. He was a great person to be around. He loved cars, especially his favorite BMW, and often volunteered to drive me to PHI meetings which he attended. For me it was a classroom on wheels. On one of those drives he gave me the following advice about mentors. "Don't spend all of your time with people your own age. When you are young you need to seek out the wisdom of older, more experienced people. When you get to be a bit older, you need to seek out younger people to be a mentor to them, helping them along as a person and as a leader. It is how the world should work. When you are blessed, you give back."

If you are in the first category (a young person), I challenge you to seek out mentors who will help you grow and develop. If you are a bit older and more experienced, I challenge each of you to think of who your mentors have been and what they have meant to you, and to use these thoughts as a springboard to "give back" by being a mentor to someone else. Being a mentor may end up being your most enduring legacy as a leader.

Steve