

Great Leadership

STRATEGIES FOR LEADING HIGH-PERFORMING COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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Leadership is a Matter of How to Be, Not How to Do:

A conversation with Frances Hesselbein

By Vera Leonard, *Editor*

Many of you probably already know who Frances Hesselbein is. Perhaps you have read one of her books; she is co-editor of 24 books in 28 languages including, *Be Know Do: Leadership the Army Way*, which is reviewed in this newsletter. Ms. Hesselbein was CEO of Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. from 1976 to 1990. She was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for her work with the Girl Scouts and her lifelong commitment to women, diversity and inclusion. She currently serves as chair of the board of governors of the Leader to Leader Institute (formerly the Peter F. Drucker Foundation for Nonprofit Management). I had an opportunity to speak with her about leadership and the mission of community colleges in the U.S.A. today.

VL Why do you think leadership is such a big issue today? Is it a bigger issue than it has been in the past?

FH Oh it's much, much bigger now. When we began the Peter Drucker Foundation we focused on leadership and ethics. People considered that "the soft stuff." They thought the "nuts and bolts" of management was where the future would lie. Today we all appreciate that if you don't have disciplined, principled and ethical leaders, you don't have anything. If you are not investing in the development of these leaders, the other expenditures, the other investments really won't matter.

VL You are often recognized for your leadership and your guidance for women. How do you feel about the perception of you as a pioneer of leadership for women?

FH I believe that all of us, men, women, young people; we are all part of this great leadership movement. The women who are in leadership positions today are not there because they are women; they are there because of what they bring to the work. Now you and I know that our gender adds a special *dimension* to our contribution. But that's not why we are there. I never talk about women who are leaders. No, we are leaders who are women.

VL We have mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter that community colleges are facing a "perfect storm" of demand for services coupled with new challenges to

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A conversation with Frances Hesselbein

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funding. What advice would you give community college leaders who are facing this challenge?

FH I think that this perfect storm gives community colleges a new opportunity to tell their story. Some time ago Peter Drucker said that community colleges were the future of higher education in the United States. We must communicate the richness of this experience; the inclusion and the diversity that is part of every community college around this country. Look at the soaring cost of private colleges and universities. With the imperative of educating all of our young people, we have a great story to tell.

If you are not investing in the development of these leaders, the other expenditures, the other investments really won't matter.

VL You and General William E. Ward have spoken of “learning about the social sector as a means for significant change.” What impact will today’s social issues, fiscal turmoil, and the globalization of world economies, have on the development of future leaders?

FH It will be expressed in leadership and ethics. There will never be a substitute for disciplined, principled and ethical leaders and difficult times bring them to the forefront.

VL How can community colleges help prepare those future leaders?

FH The best way to build them is everyday, at every level. You and I spend most of our lives learning how to do and teaching other people how to do, but in the end we know it is the quality and character of the leader that determines the results. People watch to see if leaders embody the values they preach. When leaders walk the walk and do what they say they will do, they provide the model for leaders of the future. We have right now the opportunity to build leaders who are passionate about their organization and social responsibility.

VL The book “Be Know Do” describes the benefits of the military’s leadership development style and the profound effects that training has on excellence in execution throughout the

military. How does that leadership development strategy translate to other organizations; especially community colleges?

FH When Peter Drucker was asked which organization does the best job of developing leaders, everyone expected him to say GE or another large corporation. They almost dropped dead when he said, “the United States Army, they develop their leaders from within.” And when we look at some of the most successful corporations in this country, you’ll see that they are the ones who have learning opportunities for people at every level across the organization.

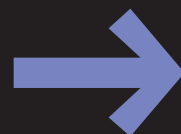
VL In his book “Leader To Leader” Warren Bennis talks about leadership qualities that include a kind of confidence. Community Colleges often work with individuals who may not have had many wins or who may have been bruised along the way. What can leaders in community colleges do to help build that student’s confidence?

FH We must appreciate that everyday lives are being changed on the campuses of community colleges. This is a remarkable opportunity to embrace people, to give them hope. When we are projecting the power of respect for every student, the power of inclusion, it comes through our words, and our actions. We provide a kind of healing even as we educate.

VL You frequently end your articles with the statement “to serve is to live.” Please share what you can about why that statement is important, or how it defines your life.

When leaders walk the walk and do what they say they will do, they provide the model for leaders of the future.

FH I learned the importance of service, courage and commitment at my grandmother’s knee. She taught me about the courage and sacrifice of my ancestors. As a result, I am called to serve others and to try to make a difference in people’s lives. ■



Community Colleges' Perfect Storm: **A Survival Guide**

By **Kim DiCaro**, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, WCCCD

Community Colleges are experiencing a “perfect storm” of increased demand for services and, at the same time, reductions in funding. As community members experience job loss and home foreclosure, tax-based funds for community colleges are disappearing. Corporate and private contributions to colleges evaporate as companies and foundations struggle to meet their operational challenges.

At the same time, displaced workers are increasingly looking to community colleges for retraining and learning new job skills. Individuals who see their plans for retirement draining away with their investment portfolios and pension plans are returning to school to prepare for new “retirement” careers.

This can be an especially stressful time for community college leaders who face the challenge of keeping employee morale up while facing difficult personal and financial choices. The following discussion focuses on the Do's and Don'ts of managing through financial crisis.

Do:

- [1]** Be visible. In times of stress, people need to see the leader – leading.
- [2]** Talk about what is going on. In the absence of facts people will start rumors. And rumors always focus on the negative.
- [3]** Identify your key employees and re-recruit them. This is the core team you will need to keep the organization running healthily. Make sure they know you value them and that their position is secure. Give them a role in helping to manage any transition (make them a part of the solution).
- [4]** Prepare for possible staff reductions by assessing critical projects and making sure they are assigned properly.
- [5]** Identify staff members that may have to be let go and prepare an outsource-and-support plan for them. By showing compassion and support you will win the trust of those who remain.
- [6]** Get personal; involve yourself personally. Communicate optimism!
- [7]** Provide emotional support for the staff members who must pick up the additional responsibilities. If they are distracted by the departure of friends and colleagues you will lose the efficiency just when you need them to pick up extra responsibilities.
- [8]** Pay attention to the general morale of the entire institution. Create a network of individuals who can let you know how morale is faring and provide suggestions for keeping it strong.

- [9]** Take the pulse of the leadership team frequently. Do this one-on-one and in small groups. Pay attention to any lack of involvement or other signs that they may be “checking out” and build your plans accordingly.

- [10]** Thank the team for their commitment and let them know how important they are to the future of the organization.

Don't:

- [1]** Communicate through memos and voicemails. This is the wrong time to be impersonal.
- [2]** Delegate the tough stuff. It's your job; do it with courage and compassion.

Be visible. In times of stress people need to see the leader – leading.

- [3]** Treat everybody the same. People need individual respect and recognition.
- [4]** Assume your employees aren't job hunting. In difficult times, people look for safety nets. Be prepared to do what is necessary to keep your top staff.
- [5]** Expect your senior team to focus on morale building. If you build their morale, they can present a confident picture. But the staff at large needs to hear from you.
- [6]** Stop investing in employee development. With fewer staff you will need to make sure you have the best people and are giving them the development and support they need. Make sure you position this investment as a demonstration of the value you place on each of them individually.
- [7]** Assume people know you care. You have to tell them...and tell them again.
- [8]** Try to do it all yourself. If you get too tired or take on too much, you'll miss something or make mistakes. Identify your most trusted aides and assign them some of the background work. This will free you to be more visible and energetic.
- [9]** Neglect your own needs. A broken leader isn't of much use to anyone. Make sure you are well rested, well nourished and can bring positive energy and vision to the team.
- [10]** Let the need to trim costs or reduce staff weigh on your conscience unduly. Instead, focus on the jobs you have saved and the future of the institution you have helped secure. ■

Empires of the Mind: Tools for the Next Generation of Leaders

By Dr. Denise Barton, Director of Human Resources and Leadership, Wake Technical Community College

To develop leadership skills for the global economy, we must first define those skills. In Howard Gardner's book, "5 Minds for the Future," he defines five minds needed to be successful in the global economy. This gives us the framework to create curriculum to teach the core competencies needed to lead the global economy.

He labels the five minds as (1) The Disciplined Mind, (2) The Synthesizing Mind, (3) The Creative Mind, (4) The Respectful Mind, and (5) The Ethical Mind. The development of these minds can be tied to current research in brain development. Noted researchers include David Rock, Jeffrey Schwartz and Dr. Benjamin Amen.

The fourth mind is the respectful mind and this requires that we realize we are all in this together.

The first mind, the disciplined mind, requires the ability to focus, learn and understand complex information. It is logic-based thinking that may use a variety of disciplines such as psychology, economics and science to develop a theory. It requires practice to develop a disciplined mind.

The second mind is the synthesizing mind. It helps you view multiple sources of information, discern their value and integrate it into a cohesive mold that makes sense to you. This requires the ability to know what information has value and what information does not.

The third mind is the creative mind and this is where innovation occurs. To develop the creative mind, individuals must be willing to take risks, to experiment, and to fail. Sometimes the only measure of success of this mind is if the innovation changes how others think and behave.

The fourth mind is the respectful mind and this requires that we realize we are all in this together. Each person's ideas must be valued because collectively every decision we make affects

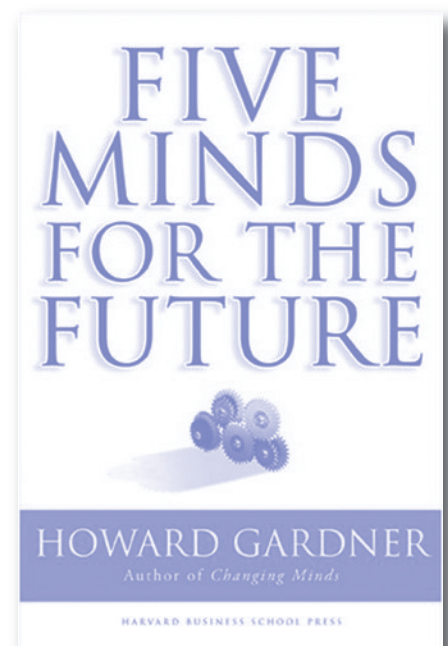
another person. Additionally, some problems are so complex that they require we work across borders to solve them.

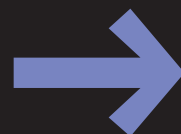
The fifth mind is the ethical mind and it involves a much higher level of thinking. As a citizen, an employee, a mother, a father, a friend; the ethical mind demands that each of us be responsible for the way we conduct ourselves. We have seen many examples of how destructive lack of ethics can be to our global economy.

David Rock and Jeffrey Schwartz, authors of The Neuroscience of Leadership and founders of the NeuroLeadership Institute, have researched the brain/body connection. These neuroscientists use the institute to help leaders understand how the human brain works in order to improve and transform the way individuals and institutions learn, behave and perform.

The Amen Clinics, Inc., formed by Dr. Benjamin Amen, documents more brain research. Dr. Amen conducts brain research using *single photon emission computed tomography*, referred to as SPECT scans. His research reveals that brain circuitry when corrected can lead to higher functioning and higher IQ ratings.

With the definition of the five minds needed to lead a global economy and the research on brain development, we can create curriculum to develop core competencies for global leadership. This will ensure we have an available pool of applicants for key positions in the global economy. ■





Are Your Strategies Aligned for Action: Seven Questions to Ask

By Kristin Kaufman, Founder & President, Alignment, Inc.

Why are Southwest Airlines, Whole Foods Market and Target stores continuing to perform well in spite of the reduction in people's discretionary spending? From my perspective, these companies have built their brands to embrace the customer experience; and their employees, from top to bottom, are equally sold on the strategy and on making it happen.

So, how do you insure that your teams line up and focus on your strategy? How do you insure that you are focusing and moving in the same direction?

Let me offer seven basic questions to ask yourselves and your teams:

[1] Where and what do we want to be? As Stephen Covey has said, "Plan with the end in mind." What is the overall end game? What does it look like? Be specific. Be visual. Communicate a clear picture of your destination. Visioning is a powerful technique which has proven successful time and time again. Do it – individually and collectively.

*Without execution, great strategies
are useless.*

[2] How will we know we are all executing (rowing) in the same, consistent, synergistic manner? If one executive is rowing out of pace or rhythm, the boat simply won't move forward in the most streamlined, smooth way.

[3] Are we all in agreement with the approach needed to achieve our goals? Specifically, do we agree on the hard decisions which need to be made: changes, resource allocation, new initiatives to build, old initiatives to be cut? These difficult conversations must happen and hard choices, once made, must be honored.

[4] Do we communicate our mission, vision, approach, and success metrics consistently – to the market, to our teams, and the individual contributors in our organization? This is a powerful question. When leaders

'put their own spin' on what needs to happen or insert their own personal agenda, they plant seeds of dissention that will derail even the most powerful strategic vision.

[5] How do we reward the behaviors that will support the overall strategic intention? Beyond money, what public recognition and appreciation do you apply? What behaviors do you want to encourage? Think about how you will reward it when you see it.

[6] What are the few critical things that absolutely must go right for us to be successful? This is your "can't fail" list. It's the critical key factors you will use to measure your success. Identify and communicate these. Make it a part of the entire organizational consciousness.

[7] What benchmarks do we put in place to track and reward progress? What gets measured gets managed. If you don't have your fingers continually on the pulse; you won't know how you are doing.

Strategies provide an overall map and vision. Remember, however, maps are not the actual terrain; they help us understand and navigate the terrain. Strategies don't ensure success. Without *execution*, great strategies are useless. Alignment around a common strategy that is consistently delivered becomes actionable and measurable, and will guide your teams to the ultimate destination. ■



Leading During A Crisis: Be Kind to Yourself

By Dr. Ann M. Valentine, *President, Minnesota State Community and Technical College*

The Christian Lord's Prayer asks that God "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." My prayer for those brave enough to lead during a crisis is that we be led "not into self-doubt, and delivered from the judgments of armchair quarterbacks." Leadership in ideal circumstances is fraught with the weight of second-guessers; should your path lead you into a crisis situation, my wish is that you find yourself strong and resolute, even as you stand amongst your critics.

During March 2009, the Red River of the North coursed through the Fargo (ND)-Moorhead (MN) region with a previously unseen vengeance. Rapidly rising floodwaters, incoming heavy snow, and treacherous road conditions combined to create an urgent need to save a city from disaster. With a college campus in the heart of the city, Minnesota State Community and Technical College mounted a herculean effort and became "Sandbag Central" for several perilous days. Students, faculty and staff were indispensable.

***In a crisis, you must lead:
make decisions and implement them.
No excuses, just results.***

Sporadic access to resources (pallets, empty bags, forklift operators, even the sand itself) led to frustrations and delays. With limited city personnel on hand, and in lieu of a coordinated National Guard operations command, management for the production of some 650,000 sandbags fell on the shoulders of local college personnel, and to some extent, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) personnel. What had begun as a request to use the college parking lot for a staging operation became a full-blown, college-based effort. Campus and college-wide staff took turns working long shifts under intense pressure while also working to secure their own homes and families.

We found that emergency plans are helpful in guiding rational thought during a crisis, but emerging conditions call for

adaptability and creativity. Saving a city depended on tough mindedness and resolute determination. In a crisis, there is no time to second-guess. Use prior planning as it applies, but be willing to adapt quickly to changing conditions. In a crisis, you **must** lead: make decisions and implement them. No excuses, just results.

Ensuring the safety of others during a chaotic, high-pressure operation requires a quality of fortitude that will be tested at many levels. Those who are off-site will not appreciate the gravity of your situation; those who are on-site may question your every move. In all, you must create quiet moments in which to center your thoughts, and renew your strength to persevere until the mission is over. ■

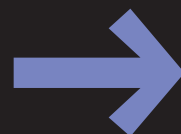
7 Steps to Boost Your Leadership Self-Confidence

By Dr. Marshall Goldsmith, *Executive Coach*

In my work with CEOs and potential CEOs I rarely encounter leaders whose bosses say they need to exhibit more self-confidence. As a rule people at the top of huge organizations don't have self-confidence problems. But I have had several inquiries lately about helping future leaders who need to demonstrate more self-confidence.

Here are a few suggestions that I give leaders who have self-confidence issues:

- [1]** Decide if you really want to be a leader. Many of the individuals who report self-confidence issues are brilliant technicians. They often find the uncertainty and ambiguity



of leading people very unsettling. They are looking for the "right answers" - similar to the ones in engineering school. In some cases, brilliant technical experts should continue to be brilliant technical experts - and not feel obligated to become managers.

Demonstrate courage on the outside, even when you don't feel it on the inside.

- [2] Make peace with ambiguity in decision making. There are usually no clear right answers when making complex business decisions. Even CEOs are guessing.
- [3] Gather a reasonable amount of data, involve people, then follow your gut and do what you think is right.
- [4] Accept the fact that you are going to fail on occasion. All humans do.
- [5] Have fun! Life is short. Why should you expect your direct reports to demonstrate positive enthusiasm, if they don't see it in you?
- [6] Once you make a decision, commit and go for it. Don't continually second guess yourself. If you have to change course, you have to change course. If you never commit, all you will ever do is change course.
- [7] Demonstrate courage on the outside, even when you don't feel it on the inside. We are all afraid on occasion -- that is just part of being human. If you are going to lead people in tough times, you will need to show more courage than fear. When direct reports read worry and concern on the face of a leader, they begin to lose confidence in the leader's ability to lead. ■



BOOK REVIEW:

Be Know Do: Leadership the Army Way

By Dr. Jacqueline Hodges, *Vice Chancellor of Learning Support Services, WCCCD*

Can anyone forget August 2005? That was when, as a result of Hurricane Katrina, the levees in New Orleans, Louisiana were breached leaving 80 percent of the city submerged. Many of us were glued to our televisions, or out helping gather rescue materials as we watched the wide-spread suffering and chaos.

Chaos, that's the word. From the White House, to the Governor's Office, to the Mayor's office, chaos reigned. Amidst the blame, rhetoric and despair, little-to-no progress was made until the U. S. Army came in. Under the leadership of Lt. General Russel Honore, order and hope were gradually and systematically restored.

I can think of no better example of the message of Be Know Do: Leadership the Army Way. According to Frances Hesselbein, interviewed for this newsletter, "The Army does two things each and every day: it trains its soldiers, and it grows them into leaders."

Peter Drucker has said, "The Army trains and develops more leaders than do all other institutions together--and with a lower casualty rate. Be Know Do shows how to develop leaders--and how Army methods can be adapted by the nonmilitary: businesses, colleges and universities, nonprofits, and churches."

A mere 171 pages, the book is a quick read. The material is organized into seven chapters, followed by a conclusion that reviews the most important points. Based on the Army's leadership framework, it provides a clear, jargon-free description of what leaders must be, know, and do in order to be effective.

Be: An effective leader is trusted by the people around them. Trust is an outgrowth of character and ethics. A leader must be ethical and of strong character.



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Know: A leader must know about strategy and tactics, organizational imperatives, resource management as well as the tendencies and needs of people. Knowledge and character shape a leader's identity.

Do: Knowledge and character have little value until it is applied. A leader's actions in conjunction with character and knowledge define the influence they will have on others.

The statement in the book that had the most powerful impact on me was, "No one is only a leader; each person in an organization is also a follower and part of a team. In fact, the old distinction between leaders and followers has blurred; complex twenty-first-century organizations require individuals to move seamlessly from one role to another in an organization, from leadership to 'followership,' and back again."

To me, this means that in order to be an effective leader, one must be willing to follow. Sometimes, one must even follow one who is in a position of less authority than one's own.

The book is rich with ideas and information that is practicable and effective. It doesn't make leadership sound easy because it isn't easy. However, leadership is crucial for the survival of any organization. I believe this is a book to read, highlight, underline and re-read periodically. It is certainly worth a fresh look today. ■

Mission Statement

WCCCD's mission is to empower individuals, businesses and communities to achieve their goals through excellent and accessible services, culturally diverse experiences, and globally competitive higher education and career advancement programs.

Great Leadership Invites Guest Authors

Do you have an article you've written, the description of a successful work process, or the details of a leadership program that you want read by a broad audience of colleagues? The Great Leadership newsletter seeks to publish well-written, informative, forward-thinking articles and ideas. The topics we publish deal with leadership and leadership development. We also consider book reviews, reviews of videos and any other relevant leadership content. **Articles submitted should be 200-500 words in length.**

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