

The So What? Questions

“The work begins with questions. Asking a question can be a sacred act. A real question assumes a dialogue, a link to the source from which answers come. Asking a question in a simple, profound way initiates a relationship with the energies and powers around you.” –

Hard Questions for an Authentic Life, Susan Piver

Lead Self

There is a new leadership economy where leaders are developed at all skill levels and in all areas of life... Ultimate leadership development is the process of self-knowledge. – *Leadership Challenge*, Kouzes & Posner

Are Self Aware

What are the implications of being self-aware for leadership development? Simply put, being self-aware helps the leader make sound decisions. Decisive action is a hallmark of leadership.

Email Question: Would you pull the cord? What do Greenleaf and Jerry Maguire have in common?

Manage Themselves

“Mastering others is strength; mastering yourself is true power.” – Tao Te Ching.

Leaders who understand themselves, their own performance and their own health demonstrate an inner discipline that enhances their power to influence.

Email Question: Are we balancing the wrong things?

Develop Themselves

The ability of leaders to monitor themselves increases effectiveness and encourages new learning. The ability to self-adjust reinforces a leader’s confidence to take risks.

Email Question: Can you change a losing game?

Demonstrate Character

“Leadership is character – it is not a superficial question of style, but has to do with who we are as a human being and with the forces that shape us.” – *Learning to Lead: A Workbook on Becoming a Leader*, Bennis and Goldsmith.

Leaders who consistently “walk the talk” are believable and therefore are more credible and trustworthy.

Email Question: Can compassion and competence coexist?

LEADS SELF (Byte 1)

Email Question: Would you pull the cord? What do Greenleaf and Jerry Maguire have in common?

In becoming and continuing to be self-aware, one needs to realize that at some juncture an important decision will be looming. The real purpose behind being able to clearly articulate your inner life—your assumptions, principles, values, strengths and limitations, is to prepare you to be ready and sharp for decisive leadership moments. Greenleaf (1996), well known for coining the term “servant leadership,” uses the metaphor of an iceberg to distinguish between the conscious and unconscious behaviours that are guided by our deeply held inner belief system. The conscious part, the behaviour that yourself and others witness represents the small part above the water. The unconscious, our inner landscape, is the large body below the surface. Our day-to-day actions, the way that we lead and make decisions reflect our assumptions, principles, values and our identity. Our inner life speaks to us in a unique language and for the most part our responses are automatic. This is why it is crucial in a leadership position to continually seek clarity and “know thyself”.

Tom Cruise, cast as a sports-agent in the film Jerry Maguire, is portrayed as a young man searching for a meaningful career. In his painful journey he acts on his beliefs. Both Maguire and Greenleaf address the importance of aligning one’s belief system in times of stress. Greenleaf relates a story of saving a man’s life on a New York subway by pulling the cord and getting the train to stop. There were seventy-five other people on that train but he was the only one that acted. On reflection, he believes that one’s response in an emergency is to act with one’s preset reasoning. In order to be strong successful leaders, he contends that we must constantly ask ourselves what we stand for. Both Greenleaf and Maguire cause us to reflect on the importance of being true to one’s self and following one’s own belief system in times of crisis.



Frick, D.M. & Spears, L. C. (1996). *The Private Writings of Robert K. Greenleaf: On Becoming Servant Leader* (pp.35-39) San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Video Clip: The Things We Say

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VH64hzWqnFk>



LEADS SELF (Byte 2)

Email Question: Are we balancing the wrong things?



An individual's work-life balance is as unique as their finger print. The ability to adjust to the ebb and flow of life's challenges and to find your own healthy "set point" requires time, guidance, reflection and experimentation. Douglas LaBier, psychotherapist and business psychologist, heads the Centre for Adult Development in Washington and writes about the struggles of balancing one's life. He thinks we may have it all wrong and suggests that we reframe the way we look at our lives. LaBier suggests that, instead of focusing on balancing the spheres of work and life, that we shift the focus to balancing our inner (private) and outer (public) lives. He says, "A lot of stress I hear about derives from struggling with the pressures of work and home. The problem seems

nearly universal, whether two-worker, single-parent or childless households. The reason it's so common? My experience suggests that it's because people are framing the problem incorrectly." LaBier's (2007) article was published by the Washington Post and includes some practical suggestions to help one learn about the relationship between their inner and outer lives.

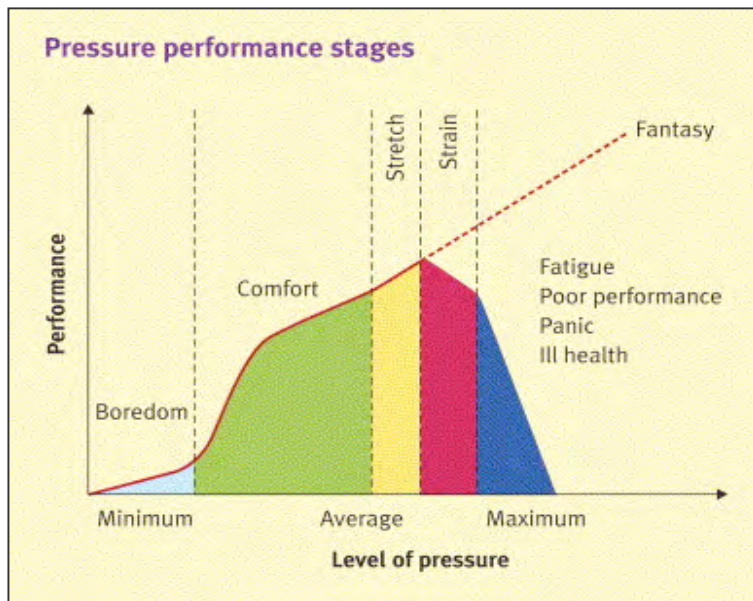
Illustration by Randy Mays for the Washington Post

Appendix I: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/13/AR2006021301533.html>

LEAD SELF (Byte 3)

E-mail Question: Can you change a losing game?

Stress can be a powerful cause of illness. An individual's ability to recognize when stress can be debilitating (when one's ability, efficiency, competence and attitudes are being compromised), is paramount. Humans perform at their best under the right amount of pressure; however when the pressure becomes too much, performance suffers. Optimizing performance at both the individual and organizational level is the goal. David Posen (1994) in his book *Always Change a Losing Game* outlines a



simple plan which works well with health practitioners and their clients/patients. Posen, M.D. describes a host of stress causes and symptoms, uses the Human Function Curve to differentiate between good and bad stress, and then prescribes how to change. Teasdale (2006) in his article, "Workplace Stress", outlines actions that effectively promote well-being and lead to a healthier and more energized work environment and increased effectiveness. Teasdale reminds us that stress is a normal part of life. The challenge is to manage the pressures so that life is productive and enjoyable. Both the individual and the organization can change a losing game.

Posen, David. (1994). *Always Change a Losing Game*. Toronto, Ontario: Key Porter Books Ltd..
<http://www.davidposen.com/>

Teasdale, E. L. (2006). Workplace stress. *Psychiatry*, Volume 5, Issue 7. 251-254.
Appendix II: http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B82Y7-4K5STH0-2&_user=10&_rdoc=1&_fmt=&_orig=search&_sort=d&_view=c&_acct=C000050221&_version=1&_urlVersion=0&_userid=10&md5=74945e679a6a0e7182693df6d28ed1d3

LEADS SELF (Byte 4)

E-mail Question: Can compassion and competence coexist?



Demonstrating character involves more than an established pattern of behaviour or habit of acting. It involves what Aristotle called practical wisdom or knowing what the situation calls for. According to Aristotle the right and good thing to do involves the right person, to the right extent, at the right time, with the right motive, and in the right way. Surgeons struggle with existential issues of life and death daily and it is imperative for them act in a right and good way towards patients, relatives and colleagues. The selected paper examines the ethical challenges of surgery through the experiences of five male and five female surgeons. The surgeons relate stories about their ethical dilemmas express the way they are living their principles and values and explain the kinds of decisions they routinely make in surgery. The paper points out the important role that colleagues play as they listen, reassure and provide comfort when something goes wrong. Their

candid dialogue provides insight into themselves and their patients' desires, fears, uncertainty, fallibility, humility, confidence and responsibility. The surgeons emphasize the importance of being personally involved with the patients by focusing on patients as persons and considering their quality of life as much as their medical treatment. They contend that personal involvement in a situation is necessary in order to know which fundamental values are threatened in both patients' and surgeons' lives. The ten surgeons, as professionals, were able to find the middle path between involvement and professional distance-between compassion and competent practice.

Torjuul, K., Nordam, A., & Sorlie, V. (2005, February 28)
Ethical challenges in surgery as narrated by practicing surgeons.
BMC Medical Ethics.
<http://www.biomedcentral.com/content/pdf/1472-6939-6-2.pdf>

BMC Medical Ethics 

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Ethical challenges in surgery as narrated by practicing surgeons
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Abstract

Background: The aim of this study was to explore the ethical challenges in surgery from the surgeons' point of view and their experience of being in ethically difficult situations.

Methods: Five male and five female surgeons at a university hospital in Norway were interviewed as part of a comprehensive investigation into the narratives of nurses and physicians about being in such situations. The interviewed interview texts were subjected to a phenomenological hermeneutic interpretation.

Results: No differences in ethical reasoning were seen male and female surgeons were found. They reported in both action and relational ethical perspectives. Surgeons focused on their relationships with patients and colleagues and their moral self in descriptions of the ethical challenges in their work. Challenges and personal involvement were responses in their relationships with patients. The surgeons emphasized the importance of open dialogue, professional recognition, and an inclusive and accepting involvement between colleagues.

Conclusion: The surgeons are personally challenged by the essential realities of human life in their relationships with patients. They related that ethical challenges are an inherent part of performing surgery and of life and that they have to learn to "live with" these challenges in a way that is centered both morally and by their near moral self. This means accepting their personal and professional limitations, being uncertain, being humble, and being humble. Living with the ethical challenge of surgery seems to contribute to the surgeons' confidence and vulnerability in their professional identity.

Background

It is important for surgeons to be able to act in a right and good way towards patients, relatives, and colleagues. Surgeons have always, however, faced ethical dilemmas and doubts about the best and correct actions to take for the patients in specific situations [1-3]. This question is not only a medical one, but can be understood in both action ethics and relational ethics perspectives. An action ethics perspective concerns questions as to what ought to be done in ethically difficult situations and why. In this perspective, ethical dilemmas concern difficult ethical dilemmas and decision-making. Ethical dilemmas occur when physicians have to choose between actions that have equally difficult courses of actions. Because neither of the alternatives have positive outcomes, they have to choose between two evils [4]. Ethical dilemmas can also be understood as conflicts between different values or perspectives concerning questions as to what ought to be

Page 1 of 10
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