

Ten Essential Guidelines for Hospital Administrators

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Always have a positive presumption about People! [I]

Always presume that people working with or under you are basically good. They have a lot of potential in them. All that you have to do is help them to channel their talents and energies. Douglas McGregor called this YTheory. Never be a X Theory person, who presumes that people are basically lazy and have to be watched carefully to do the correct thing! Your Y or X attitude toward others can make a big difference to your ability to get things done through them. The more 'Y' oriented you are, the more opportunities you provide those working with you and under you to GROW, and the more grateful they will be to you for giving them a chance to grow!

Respect Everyone! [II]

Remember that every individual is precious in the eyes of God, whose masterpiece every individual in fact is. God does not create thrash. Our inability to respect others is indicative of our inability to respect God, and of making ourselves little Gods of our own! Look at your own feelings: Spend some time in quiet and come to the realization that you too quietly demand that people respect you as somebody, as a person. Don't you? This feeling is global. Everyone wishes to be respected for what he or she is, and this perception of theirs is correct, because everyone of us is respectable! Once your colleagues and your subordinates realize that you are a person who respect others, their whole attitude toward you changes for the better! They too will begin to respect you and not only you, but your ideas and plans too!

Be open to be influenced by your subordinates! [III]

One of the difficult things for a Hospital Administrator is to give weightage to the ideas of his/her colleagues and subordinates. Research findings indicate that the more a Leader shows his/her ability to be open to the suggestions and ideas of those whom he/she leads, the more acceptable and respected the Leader turns out in their sight! This is so, because all of us have an innate feeling that we can have good and worth-while ideas. Such feelings are best respected, because an attitude such as this strengthens the hands of the Administrator in several ways.

When angry, upset or tense, do not take any decision! [IV]

When one is angry, upset or tense, one is temporarily insane. This is so because sanity is the ability to use your mental faculties normally. Research has clearly indicated that when a person is angry, upset or tense that person is unable to use his/her mental faculties normally!

A Hospital Administrator has to keep this principle in mind all the time. As his/her administration involves a multifaceted interests, and concerns personnel who are trained in different areas of health care, the danger of not doing things in the way the Administrator wants them to be done is always present, thus causing a sort of irritation and even anger at the 'impossible' person he/she has to handle. CAUTION! When you are angry or upset, NEVER take a decision. NEVER utter a word! Be quiet. Withdraw yourself for a while. Time is a great healer, remember. The Hospital is not going to be closed by what has just been done wrongly, nor is the world going to come to an end because of that particular happening! Relax! Postpone your decision for the next day or for the next week! You will be amazed how things change, and how your mind functions totally or partially differently from the way it would have acted otherwise!

Self-knowledge is the most essential leadership quality! [V]

It is only when I know myself well, with all my strengths and weakness, qualities and lack of them, that I am able to understand the strengths and weakness, capabilities and incapacities of others placed under my care! One of the workers in the Hospital may lie on a particular matter. You will immediately get into a rage, as you have excellent proofs to show that he/se has lied, so you make quick decisions which may be right or wrong. Now look at it this way: When your subordinate or colleague has lied, do a quick review of yourself. Haven't you lied sometime? How would you have liked your superior or your colleague to handle the situation if your lie came to light? You are then bound to handle the situation differently. You will then treat the defaulter humanely with consideration and kindness, and build up that person into becoming a better person, rather than a person who becomes more and more revolting, arrogant and incorrigible!

Be positive in your thinking: Beat your handicaps! [VI]

Read the life histories of people who have turned a negative into a positive, adversity into advantage, stumbling blocks into stepping stones. They refused to let disappointment and failures pull them down. Some of the best music was composed by Beethoven. What was his handicap? He was deaf! Some of the best poetry on nature was written by Milton. What was his handicap? He was blind! One of the greatest world leaders was U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt. What was his handicap? He served from a wheelchair!

Know that no one is perfect. Perfection is to be sought after continuously. It is never achieved totally, as once an objective is achieved there is further room for improvement and betterment. So, even if you are convinced that you have a handicap, look ahead: there is so much you can achieve in spite of your handicap in some particular area. There are so many other areas in which you have been blessed with talents which you need to discover. Do so! Don't be disheartened by a particular failure or by a particular weakness. In fact, have the ability to turn such failures and weaknesses into strengths by realizing that you have been blessed with potential that has not yet been tapped fully!

Be disciplined! [VII]

What do I mean? I just mean what I say: Be DISCIPLINED! You are Supposed to be at your office at 8.00 a.m. Be there a few minutes before 8.00 a.m., preferably 5 to 10 minutes earlier, so that you are able to get yourself ready to attend to the person waiting for you at 8.00 a.m. sending signals that you are a disciplined person and that your expecting discipline from all those who work in the hospital is not a myth! When you have to do a particular job, attend to it at the earliest opportunity. Do not wait for the last minute to get the job done. Remember the famous adage, "If you want to get things done urgently, go to a busy person. The others have no time!" Someone calls you over the phone and seeks from you over the phone for a particular document. You ask that person to come and collect the document the next day at 10.00 in the morning. Don't wait to get that document on your table early in the morning of the next day. A disciplined person gets that document on his/her table immediately after the phone call! This way, you avoid giving a wrong impression about yourself to people. All those who are in contact with you in the Hospital will then know that once you are decided on a particular issue, you will attend to it without delay. They will all begin to trust you and will begin to appreciate your competence and sense of discipline!

Keep a smile on your face when dealing with people! [VIII]

It does not cost you a *paysa*! You haven't even to use all your facial muscles! Haven't you had an experience of meeting a person known to you, but who by-passes you without a smile or an acknowledgement? Your first reaction is to ask yourself: 'What wrong have I done to this person, for him/her to pass me by without a sign of joy at having met me?' A smile is a

physical indication of the inner 'all-is-well' feeling. It may seem difficult to greet every one working under you in your Hospital with a smile and a 'good-morning - everything fine at home?' But find a way of doing this, and see the results! If you have heard about a happy or sad experience of a particular worker, when you first meet that person after such an experience, a word of good wishes or sympathy will take you a long way in the confidence building with that particular worker! Yes indeed, a 'smile' is a curve that can set many things straight!

Be a good listener! [IX]

Every person working in the Hospital must be CONVINCED that you are a person who listens! You know that listening is considered today as one of the most effective way of communication. Unfortunately, today by far the majority of administrators just do not listen, or even worse, they do not know how to listen to their superiors, their colleagues and to their subordinates! Unfortunately, knowledge in the art of listening is taken for granted by many Hospital Administrators. They are overburdened with problems, as they have to deal with different types of people, and different types of problems all through the day. But one important fact is often swept under the carpet: the fact that many of the 'problems' that worry a Hospital Administrator could have been totally avoided in the first place, if the Administrator knew the art of listening. There are various techniques in mastering the art of listening.

Perhaps the LADDER method is the easiest one to master. In this method, the "L" stands for 'Look': Look into the eyes of the person who has come to your office, and wants to speak with you: (You will then indicate to that person that your attention is focused on what he/she is saying to you); "A" stands for 'Ask': Ask questions formulated with words that are uttered by the person speaking with you: (e.g. The person tells you about his/her son's success/failure in school: Ask a question like 'Which school does he/she go?'); The two "Ds" stand for 'Don't change the topic', and 'Don't interrupt'; "E" stands for Checking one's own emotions and empathizing with the person speaking with you; and "R" stands for being Responsive: (Behaving in the way the person expects you to behave when he/she relates his/her problems or achievements to you). Let every one who approaches you go back from your office, convinced that you 'at least gave him/her an attentive ear!'

Be humble! [X]

Remember, HUMILITY is truth. However well you may be informed there is always room for you to know something more. There is always the possibility of the other knowing more than you on a particular subject! Humility is the foundation of all virtues and is a sign of greatness. Humility does not mean that you demean yourself, it means that you are truthful.

A rider once came across some soldiers who were trying to move a heavy log without success. The corporal was standing by as the men struggled. The rider asked the corporal why he wasn't helping. The corporal replied, "I am the corporal; I give orders." The rider dismounted, went up to the soldiers and helped them lift the log. With his help the log got moved. The rider quietly mounted his horse and went to the corporal and said, "The next time your men need help, send for the Commander-in-Chief!" After he left, the corporal and his men found out that the rider was none other than George Washington, President of the U.S.A. and Commander-in-Chief of the U.S.A. Armed Forces!

One of the most difficult things for any person to do is to acknowledge one's mistakes or failures. But the difficulty is really caused by the fact that the person does not realize the power and strength that such acknowledgement creates. The truth an Administrator of a hospital should be aware of is that the others working in the Hospital which he/she heads may be better than him/her before God in some respects! This realization will make the Administrator a humble person in the eyes of all those who come in contact with him/her, and facilitates him/her to acknowledge his/her own failures and mistakes, and further strengthen his/her ability to lead others in the achievement of the objectives of the Hospital.

