

Leading with Purr-fect Presence:

The Art of Attentive Leadership





Agenda

- Hallmarks & Consequences of Absent and Authoritative Leaders.
- Exploring Attentive Leadership.
 - Authentic Expression in Leadership.
 - Authentic Recognition.
 - Leading Other Leaders.
 - Implementing Intentional Change.
- VCA Northwest Veterinary Specialists: A Quick Study.
- Recap and Closing.



Hallmarks & Consequences of Inattentive Leaders

Lacking Floor Presence

How it Looks

- Circling the floor a couple of times and retreating to an office.
- Not communicating availability and hours clearly and often.
- Missing opportunities to bond with the team or connect on the little things.
- Avoiding certain areas of the hospital (or people!) that make you uncomfortable.
- Not prioritizing tasks appropriately (who gets your attention and why).

What it does

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- Creates the perception of incompetence, leading to lack of credibility.
 - Missed opportunities to inspire, influence, impact, and motivate your team.
 - Ineffective communication or lack of buy-in for new ideas.
 - Misinterpretation of team needs or operational inefficiencies.
 - Poor relationships and connectivity, leading to missed career advancement opportunities.
 - Note: This applies to you and your team.
 - Negative organizational reputation, leading to poor retention or attraction for new team members.

Lacking Availability

How it Looks

- Door frequently shut.
- Confusion about your hours.
- Frequently missing meetings.
 - Unavailability during meetings (phone, computer, etc.).
- Constantly talking about how busy you are.

What it does

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- Creates the perception you don't care about your team.
 - Natural bi-product: **the company** doesn't care.
 - Devalues the team's time and importance.
 - Erodes trust in you as a leader.
 - Creates a disconnect and divides the team.

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“Leaders who DON'T LISTEN will eventually be surrounded by people who have NOTHING TO SAY”

Andy Stanley

”

Lacking Industry or Hospital Knowledge

How it Looks

- Making decisions that impact your teams without understanding how.
 - Not spending time with your teams or learning what they do.
 - Failing to ask the experts, "How would you approach this?"
 - Failing to stay relevant on industry (or community) standards or changes.
 - Failing to understand and plan for the nuances of Vet Med.
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What it does

- Erodes trust in your ability as a leader.
- Creates a sense of "us" vs. "them" (i.e., team vs. management).
- Detracts from team buy-in when decisions are made.
- Contributes to low morale and increased turnover.

Autocratic Leadership

And why it is important enough to mention.

How it Looks

- Characterized by individual control over all decisions while seeking little input from team members, rarely accepting advice.
 - Rules in absolutes and often seen as dictator-like (or "bossy"). Rigid.
 - Clear separation between the leader and team members.
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What it does

- Creates the perception that you do not trust your team.
- Tends to create stressful and rigid work cultures (fear-based).
- Discourages creativity and out-of-the-box thinking.
- Creates **more work** for the leader! You can't do it all.

General Consequences of Inattentive Leaders

Deeper Dive of the Impact and Results: Why You Should Care

- **Disengaged Associates make poorer judgments.**
 - Decreased safety and more workplace incidents.
 - Increased Associate stress (attendance, leaves, etc.).
 - Frontline leaders disengage and become overwhelmed.
 - Legal risks increase as mismanagement grows.
 - Decline in patient care and quality of medicine.
- **Culture, morale, and retention declines.**
 - Revolving door impacts patient care.
 - Medical standards decrease.
 - Community reputation becomes negatively impacted.
- **Profitability decreases as reputation declines.**
 - Hiring becomes more challenging as word spreads.
 - Job security decreases and morale continues to decline.
 - Hospital leadership turns over and the cycle repeats.

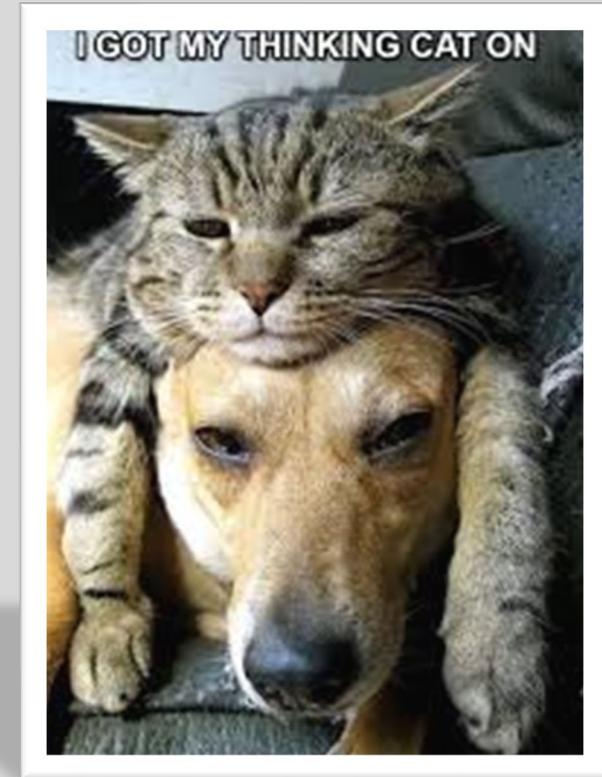


One More Thing About Inattentive Leaders

Reflect: Absent leaders drain the hospital of value without putting value in.

- Absent leaders take longer to address and are considered silent hospital killers.
- Research shows absentee leadership impacts Associates for up to two years post-exposure.
- Absentee leadership erodes the ability of Associates to depend on leaders and develops poor habits.
- On average, it takes 2-3 years to change a culture.

Takeaway: Absent leaders can be more detrimental to the long-term health of a hospital than overtly poor or volatile leaders.





Exploring Attentive Leadership

Turning the tides.

Quick Review: Seek to Understand

Listening with intent.

1. Make eye contact (put your phone and computer away).
2. Pay attention to body language and non-verbal cues.
3. Listen fully, without judgment or interrupting.
4. Ask follow-up questions to clarify misunderstandings.
5. Do not start planning what you are going to say next.



Addition:

Don't be afraid to change your mind.

Defining Intentional Leadership



V's Additional Cs: Courage, Curiosity, Character, Consistency, Challenger, Conspirator

Defining Intentional Leadership

MARS Five Principles

1. Quality

- Delivering our best to the people and pets we serve.

2. Responsibility

- Take responsibility without being asked.

3. Mutuality

- Consider the shared benefits.

4. Efficiency

- Being efficient with precious resources help us accomplish more and waste less.

5. Freedom

- Lets us shape our future and remain free.

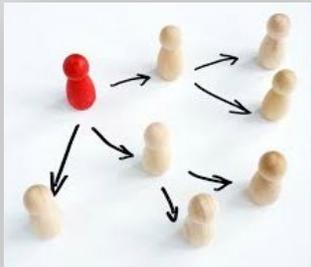


Defining Intentional Leadership

Leadership Styles

Servant Leadership:

- Predicated on leading to serve the team and highly focused on ethical decision-making.
- Puts the team's needs first and enables the team to reach their potential.
- Embodies and fosters a culture of listening, empathy, stewardship, and the development of others.



Delegative Leadership ("laissez-faire"):

- Focuses on delegating to team members (hands-off).
- Can be effective for a capable team but caution for team that needs more support.
- Can be challenging to know who is "in charge" (especially for newcomers).



Transformational Leadership:

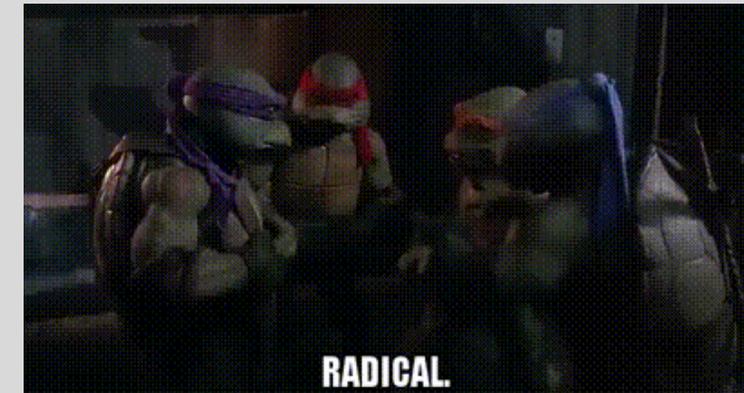
- Emphasizes a drive towards controlling change and transformation.
- Heavy emphasis on developing followers and creating comfortability with change.
- Transformational leaders tend to focus on individual strengths and abilities of those around them and leverage them.



Authentic Expression in Leadership

Understanding what kind of leader you are.

- Think candidly about your strengths (phone a friend to gain insight!).
- Be clear about your goals and what you want to achieve (individually and as a team).
- Try them on for size! Be **radically intentional**.
 - Practice skills from leadership styles you admire and try different approaches.
 - Practice conversations with or run ideas by a trusted colleague or panel.
- Seek a mentor or an accountability coach.
 - This can be in the organization or outside of it.
 - Don't be afraid to have more than one go-to person to lean on for advice.



Psst Kitty Says:

The best kind of leader you can be is **yourself**. Identify your strengths so you can leverage them. Work on your areas for growth so you can sharpen them.

Authentic Recognition

- Everyone receives and views recognition differently.
 - Ask yourself:
 - Is it meaningful?
 - Is it heartfelt?
 - Is it honest?
 - Does it align with the culture we want (or have)?
 - Do not be afraid to pivot and change your ideas! What works? What doesn't?
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Tips for Authenticity:

- Be consistent (embrace your inner Musketeer).
- Seek feedback and adjust as needed.
- Look for "off-brand" opportunities for recognition:
 - 1:1s (your time).
 - Lend a hand (your service).
 - Pause to throw a high-five (your affirming words).
 - Seek new ways to communicate (yes, this is recognition, too!).

The 5 Languages of Appreciation



Words of Affirmation

Words of affirmation are verbal or written expressions of praise, recognition, and encouragement.



Quality Time

Quality time means creating meaningful interactions by spending dedicated time together.



Acts of Service

Acts of service refer to helpful actions, thoughtful gestures, or practical assistance.



Gifts

Gifts refer to tangible tokens of appreciation, such as thoughtful presents or symbolic items.



Physical Touch

Physical touch refers to things like handshakes, high fives, claps on the shoulder, fist bumps, or brief hugs.

A Quick Study: Leading Leaders

- Remember your job is to develop leaders.
- Provide feedback often (and follow through).
- Emulate healthy leadership traits and expect the same from your team.
- Show humility.
- Keep an open door.
- Teach rather than correct.
- Empower them to make decisions (and mistakes).
 - Create a "Full Disclosure" safe space.
- Leverage their strengths to complement your own.
- Challenge them to develop their growth areas.
- Have their back but teach them when they slip.
 - "I'm sure their intention was/was not to...let me look into that and we will get back to you."

Psst Kitty Says:

"A leader takes people where they want to go. A great leader takes people where they don't necessarily want to go, but ought to be." – Rosalyn Carter



Recap: Top Skills for Leaders to Practice

- Integrity
- Decisiveness
- Flexibility
- Curiosity
- Creativity
- Positive Mental Attitude
- Communication
- Problem Solving
- Team Building
- Dependability
- Willingness (and ability) to mentor or teach.



FORTITUDE. This is hard (often thankless) work.



Quantifying Impact
VCA Northwest
Veterinary Specialists
& ER (NWVS)

One Hospital's Journey

VCA NWVS : Turning the Tides

- Poor reputation and difficulty finding new hires.
 - Associate referrals down and low morale.
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- Increased transparency and communication.
 - Daily/Weekly huddles for every team.
 - Increased leadership presence.
 - All Hospital meetings with invited dialogue.
 - Opened the door for new recognition.
 - More standardized team meetings.
 - Associate Committee: Paw-sitive Pals.
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- Improved reputation in the community.
 - New candidates reaching out from all over the country.
 - Engaged Associates who deeply care about their hospital.



Recap and Closing



“The Comfort Zone”



Leadership Simplified.

Sometimes it as simple as asking: **What do you need?**



REMEMBER....



Present leadership keeps
you from being a
Baaaaaad Leader.