

# ACCP Academy Leadership and Management Newsletter

Volume 2  
Number 1  
April 9, 2009

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## Two Characteristics of Successful Leaders

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Jim Collins writes, in *Good to Great*, that the two distinguishing characteristics between leaders of great companies and those of good companies are humility and a strong desire to achieve results.<sup>1</sup> Both of these quality characteristics are leveraged by personal ego, which if managed properly is a tremendous asset. However, a mismanaged ego may lead to disaster.

Humility is not the opposite of arrogance, excessive pride, misplaced self-esteem, or an over-zealous ego. If it were, humility would be an extremely low sense of self esteem, which of course it is not. Great spiritual leaders, such as Christ, Gandhi or Mother Teresa, certainly did not have low self esteem, yet they demonstrated a great personal humility. The dictionary defines humility as a modest estimate of one's own importance. Sockman defines humility as, "intelligent self-respect which keeps us from thinking too highly or too meanly of ourselves. It makes us modest by reminding us of how far we have come short of what we can be."<sup>2</sup> Marcum and Smith describe humility through three characteristics. First is the concept of thinking in terms of we, then me. Most achievements are the result of a group effort and not the work of one individual. Leaders frequently use I, and the first person possessive pronoun my, to describe their associates, their budget, their staff, and their group's accomplishments. Whenever they do this they overestimate their importance and their ego is out of balance. Organizations or departments belong to everyone, not just to the leader. Second, humility suggests we should have a personal sense of duality in that we realize we may be bright, but there are other bright lights in the room. It is extremely valuable to have a strong sense of self-esteem, but it is also important to realize that others have very positive personal attributes as well as numerous accomplishments. Third, we should have a constructive discontent, the realization that there are always areas in

our lives where we can improve.<sup>3</sup> David Hunter includes humility in his definition of love as a verb. Patience, humility, kindness, selflessness, respect, honesty, and forgiveness are all components of the action word, love.<sup>4</sup> When one asks individuals how they would like to be treated by others, they will almost always provide descriptors like, "be patient with me," "care about me," "treat me with humility," "respect me," "be honest with me," "treat me fairly," and "forgive me when I make a mistake." Correlating the definition of love as a verb with how people respond when asked how they would like to be treated would suggest that individuals just want others to love them. While it may be too much of an extrapolation for the business world, we could perhaps say that a key to success as a leader is to love your associates. At least it appears one should be humble, but who would argue the importance of the other attributes.

Ego is also involved with the second attribute: striving diligently to achieve results. A strong ego is necessary to motivate us to strive for excellence in all we do. Therefore, combining loving your associates, in the sense that love equates to humility, honesty, patience, selflessness, respectfulness and forgiveness, with working hard to achieve results could be the key dyad necessary for accomplishing success as a leader. Both attributes require a proper alignment of personal ego.

### References:

1. Collins J. *Good to great*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers; 2001.
2. "True humility is intelligent self-respect": Ralph W. Sockman, quoted at [http://thinkexist.com/quotes/Ralph\\_W\\_Sockman/](http://thinkexist.com/quotes/Ralph_W_Sockman/)
3. Marcum D, Smith S. *Egonomics: what makes ego our greatest asset*. New York: Simon & Schuster; 2007.
4. Hunter JC. *The servant*. Rocklin (CA): Prima Publishing; 1998.

***"I suppose leadership at one time meant muscles; but today it means getting along with people."***

*Mohandas K. Gandhi*

### Online Portfolios

Visit the ACCP Web site [www.accp.com/academy](http://www.accp.com/academy) to access your Academy portfolio. Current assignments, mentor setup, and mentor assessment are available online. Questions? E-mail: [wsirna@accp.com](mailto:wsirna@accp.com).

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***“Leaders aren’t born they are made. And they are made just like anything else, through hard work. And that’s the price we’ll have to pay to achieve that goal, or any goal.”***

*Vince Lombardi*

## Discovering What’s RIGHT

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I currently have the privilege of serving as a Faculty Co-Chair of the Patient Safety and Clinical Pharmacy Services Collaborative (PSPC), an initiative facilitated by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). This role has provided me a vantage point from which can observe and participate in the process of leading a change through a national initiative focused on improving pharmacy services in safety net organizations. As I recently reflected on this



experience, I began to think about how we often consider leadership as an intangible element that generates from within the personality of individuals, and that in doing so, we frequently fail to consider the processes or systems that leaders create to facilitate change. It sometimes can be easy to associate success with “who” the leader is and not recognize “what” they do to achieve that success. While the PSPC is a national, multi-organization initiative, methods used to promote change through this initiative mirror several concepts that can be applied by leaders within individual organizations or departments.

The first step in getting the PSPC off the ground was HRSA’s recognition that several organizations were achieving great success in developing outstanding clinical pharmacy services despite the same limitations experienced by similar organizations (lack of funding, limitations in staff, inability to generate revenues from clinical services, etc). For many, the natural question to ask might be, “What is preventing the *low performers* from accomplishing what the *high performers* are able to do?” Unfortunately, this question may have you looking at the wrong side of the coin when it comes to exerting effective leadership. If you turn this question around, you would be more apt to ask, “What is it that the high

**Table 1** – Selected Assumptions of Appreciative Inquiry<sup>1</sup>

1. In every society, organization or group, something works.
2. What we focus on becomes our reality.
3. The act of asking questions of an organization or group influences the group in some way.
4. People have more confidence and comfort to journey to the future (the unknown) when they carry forward part of the past (known).
5. If we carry parts of the past forward, they should be what is best about the past.
6. The language we use creates our reality.

performers are doing right that is making them successful?” It is a subtle difference, but an important one that has been addressed in the leadership literature. For HRSA, PSPC started with formally studying the high performers and creating a *change package* based on the principles that were allowing these organizations to be successful. What might this look like if modeled in your organization or group?

**Appreciative Inquiry (AI)** is one tool that helps leaders focus on what is right with an organization, rather than what is wrong with it. A traditional approach to change is to look for a problem, analyze it, and seek to create a solution. Unfortunately, when you look for problems, you will always find them. And when you spend a lot of time finding problems, you are bound to spend even more time trying to fix them. An adverse outcome of this approach can be that you get caught up in the problems; you forget to recognize why it is *not* a problem and see what is already working. If you fail to pay attention to what is working in one area of your organization, it is unlikely you will use that experience to create success in other areas. Some of the assumptions that guide the application of AI are presented in Table 1. Once a group buys into the basic assumptions of AI, the power of its work is rooted in creating the right types of questions that identify what *is* working. An additional benefit is that when the AI process is applied to the work of a group, not only do you identify the “good stuff”, you are also likely to realize a boost in energy in the group stemming from the AI process. In order to create a wave of change in the adoption and delivery of clinical pharmacy services in safety net organizations, HRSA started by looking at what was already working in the safety net system and asked “how can we do more of this?” AI can give you a framework to achieve this same goal in your organization. If you are looking for a concise overview of AI and its application, check out *The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry*.<sup>1</sup>

Another concept very much related to the AI process, which can aid leaders in keeping their focus on what’s right in an organization, is creating and asking **Effective Questions (EQs)**. EQs get people to think and invite them to engage in discovery and creativity. Asking EQs supports development of a mindset, even a culture, that focuses on creating positive energy and limiting the opportunities for negative energy to overtake the outlook of a group. Creating EQs is based on several fundamentals (Table 2) that can be general or highly specific. Examples of two general questions that can be applied in almost any setting and used effectively over and over again are, “What is already working?” followed

by, “What makes it work?” If you are a leader who wants to incorporate more of these types of questions into your daily vocabulary, Oakley and Krug provide an excellent discussion of the development and application of EQs in their book *Enlightened Leadership: Getting to the Heart of Change*.<sup>2</sup>

**Table 2** – Selected Fundamentals of Effective Questions<sup>2</sup>

1. EQs are open ended.
2. EQs ask “what” or “how” instead of “why.”
3. EQs help people learn through the process of answering.
4. EQs show people that their leader is open and willing to hear their answers – whatever they may be.
5. EQs allow leaders to become effective listeners.

When HRSA set out to study what was working in the safety-net system, they studied organizations they referred to as *high performers*. Another term they could have used to describe these organizations, or the pharmacists who worked within them, is *positive deviants*. A very good resource describing the concept of positive deviance is a Harvard Business Review article entitled, “Your Company’s Secret Change Agents”.<sup>3</sup> Like the process of AI and asking EQs, positive deviance is rooted in the idea that leaders don’t necessarily have all of the answers that will allow an organization to flourish; however, they do have responsibility for identifying the answers and applying them to a change effort. Identifying the positive deviants that exist in your organization—those who are already doing things drastically better than others—is an important practice in creating the change necessary to achieve an organizational vision. In many cases, studying what is happening inside the organization through the work of positive deviants can be more relevant than seeking to model work from other organizations. Experiences from another organization may not be directly translatable due to variables that differ between settings, but positive deviants usually work under the same conditions as everyone else within the organization. If you can discover what makes the positive deviants successful, you may be more successful in replicating their accomplishments versus applying external approaches that achieved success under a unique set of conditions.

A common theme in all three concepts is that the leader’s role in leading change is to guide their organization in discovering what is already right, and cultivating a culture that allows this to occur consistently. Within the PSPC, a frequently stated phrase is “the answers are in the room,” a reminder that when we focus on who is already doing things right, we are more likely to find an approach, a style, or an answer that is relevant to the work of the whole group, resulting in powerful, sustainable change.

#### References

1. Hammond S. *The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry*. 2nd ed. Bend: Thin Book Publishing Co.; 1998.
2. Oakley E, Krug D. *Enlightened Leadership: Getting to the Heart of Change*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991.
3. Pascale PT, Sternin J. *Your Company’s Secret Change Agents*. Harvard Business Review. Available at [www.hbr.org](http://www.hbr.org).



## ACCP/ESCP International Congress on Clinical Pharmacy

**Late Registration Deadline: April 10, 2009**

April 24-28, 2009

Orlando, Florida

The following 2009 International Congress courses are available for credit towards the ACCP Academy Leadership and Management Certificate Program. For complete information on the 2009 International Congress, visit [www.accp.com/congress](http://www.accp.com/congress).

#### **Friday, April 24, 2009**

8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Leadership Primer

#### **Saturday, April 25, 2009**

2:15 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Getting the Right Results: Steps for Leading an Effective Team (elective course)

#### **Monday, April 27, 2009**

8:00 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.

Attributes of a Leader, Part I

#### **Tuesday, April 28, 2009**

8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

Attributes of a Leader, Part II

#### **COMING SOON!**

A second Spring elective course will be offered as a Webinar following the International Congress. Complete information (including date, time, and topic) will be posted online and forwarded to Academy participants in the coming months.

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*Browse top publications on leadership and management!*

Plan to shop on-site at the ACCP Bookstore during the International Congress. Browse sample copies of ACCP publications, place your order, and let ACCP ship the order for you. Orders are shipped free within the continental United States; orders to other addresses are shipped at a reduced rate. The free shipping offer does not apply to the purchase of the PSAP-VI full series. All full-meeting registrants (including non-members) receive the member price on the purchase of publications at the on-site bookstore.