

OCTOBER 7/CHCC PRESENTATION

LEADERSHIP FROM THE HEART: FOLLOWING YOUR PASSION

During a recent lunch, Monica Lozano, the owner of La Opinion (and a past presenter at CHCCLI) shared the advice that she gave her two children, who couldn't understand why they were required to take certain college classes. She told them that "when you are young, you don't always understand how things fit in your life, but if you follow your passion, the dots WILL connect." And I realized the same was true for me. Hopefully this evening, you will find something useful from my personal snapshot of how I "connected the dots."

As Peter Drucker, the long-time management guru says: There is not one mold for effective leaders. They come in all kinds of packages – extroverts, shy, eccentric, conformists, charming or no personality at all. There isn't a 'perfect' or well-rounded person for the job. We must be true to ourselves and build on our strengths. I think he says it well when he says, "There is far too little strength around for us to waste it."

I have great deal of respect for the work of Peter Drucker, who was still teaching during the time that I completed my masters degree at the Claremont Graduate School. As you may know, he had a particular interest in hospitals, so I always tried to get to his classes early enough to sit in the front row and ask him questions.

Over the next 15 minutes or so, I would like to share some of the people and experiences that have helped to define who I am and what I believe as a leader.

Because I am what you might call a "pragmatic optimist," The optimist in me sees these influencers as gifts. The pragmatist in

me understands that I need to work hard to get the most out of each opportunity that presents itself.

Of the “gifts” that I have received over my career, there are four that I would like to share with you. I am not unique – I believe that most of you will recognize these in your own life as well.

GIFT #1: MY PARENTS.

For many of us in the room, our parents have played a key role in creating who we are today, and what our values are.

Last week I was reminded of this as I sat in an audience at KCET Studios to recognize the 2009 Local Heroes Awards which are announced as part of Hispanic Heritage Month. Raul and Maria Salinas were among those recognized and when they came up to receive their award, their comments centered around the commitment to service that their parents had instilled in them and in turn their responsibility to transfer this to the next generation through their two sets of 2nd and 5th grade twins.

Like Raul and Maria’s parents, my parents were simple, hardworking people who have committed their lives to serving others. Early in their marriage, as relatively new converts to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, they decided to leave their home in North Carolina to serve our Adventist hospitals overseas. My father was an elementary school principal and teacher. He always made sure that my brother and I had a good school wherever we went. My mother was a nurse and hospital administrator.

We lived outside of the U.S. until I started college. In fact, as some of you know, my family was living in Kenya, East Africa, at the time I needed to go to high school and ended up attending a boarding school in Singapore where I met this red haired gym rat that I would later marry.

Last month, Jim and I celebrated our 30th wedding anniversary. Which I find unbelievable! One of the best things that we have to show for all of these years together is our 13-year-old daughter whose passion is riding horses, her two dogs – Lilly and Ella Rose, and protecting the earth. She is a self proclaimed vegetarian – which makes Whole Foods love us!

But, back to my parents. Today, back in their North Carolina mountains where they are enjoying retirement, they live full and busy lives dedicated to volunteering in their community and supporting their church.

As parents, they instilled in me a commitment to service, an appreciation of diversity, and a strong faith in God.

My job, like Raul and Maria Salinas, is to foster that same commitment to service in my daughter.

Gift #2: MEANINGFUL WORK.

Several years ago, I participated in an exercise where participants were asked to sit back and picture ourselves in the perfect work setting. I closed my eyes and imagined all kinds of professions, but in the end, I couldn't imagine a more interesting or satisfying profession than the one I have.

I believe that we do our best work when we combine our passion with our strengths. Doing this allows us to fully commit to doing our best, with no apologies or the need to constantly look for something better. Additionally, doing so brings so much energy and fun into our work life.

I can tell you, there is no more interesting and meaningful place to work than a hospital! It's like being the mayor of a small city.

GIFT #3: THE INCREDIBLE PEOPLE I'VE WORKED WITH

I believe that the person who you work for can be the strongest determinant of success – particular in your earlier years.

Throughout my career, I have the opportunity to work for some very talented and skilled individuals. Each has taught me something important about leadership. None of them, however, have been perfect.

I'll just give you a couple of examples of these people – you will likely have similar people in your life.

First is DeLona Bell, a college classmate who now owns her own successful business. I worked for her during college, and her strength or magic is an unrelenting commitment to the highest standards – regardless of how much work it takes. She will not quit until she is satisfied that everything is right.

Just before his high school graduation, she told her son, a gifted, driven boy who wants to go into government and public policy, that, in order to develop the greatness in himself, he needs to see the greatness in others. Or, in other words, to always find and focus on the gifts of others and learn from these.

Another important person to me was a past president of White Memorial, Harvey Rudisaile, who was a strong, steady leader who was never dismayed by challenge. He saw the hospital through some very difficult times.

He worked through his people to get work done and would describe his leadership style by referring to a handful of stones on the shelf behind his desk. He would say in his Southern way, “My job, Beth, is to help my people get their work done by taking rocks out of their way...”

Third, is Tammie Brailsford, a senior executive for the Memorial Health Systems in Orange County – also a good girlfriend. Her magic is the ability to create teams and make work meaningful and fun. Tammie creates a sense of excitement in her work. She believes that a strong team is much more important than a collection of strong individuals going in their own direction. She works hard to make sure that each team member knows their role in achieving organizational success.

And lastly, a very dear person to me, Frank Dupper, the President Emeritus of Adventist Health. His leadership hallmark is the unique ability to express his care for each of his employees and their families. He believes that loyalty creates loyalty. He believes that there are no perfect people, that you work through mistakes and help people grow, always making sure that they are put in a place where they can shine.

Currently, there are many others whom I give credit for teaching me about leadership everyday – the many physician leaders at White Memorial, my executive team, and the people they lead, and the community leaders who love my hospital as much as I do.

Each of these people in some way puts into practice what Albert Schweitzer intended when he said, “The true worth of a man is not to be found in the man himself, but in the colors and texture that come alive in others.”

GIFT #4: GOOD FORTUNE or LUCK.

I generally believe that we make our own luck – as George Ramirez said in his presentation. However, not 100 percent. Sometimes opportunity presents itself without any work or preparation. When it does this, it is usually in one of two forms: Timing or People.

TIMING. You can't put "opportunity" on a schedule. It happens when it happens. You just have to be watchful and open to good things, grab them when you have the opportunity, and work very hard to make the most of each opportunity that presents itself.

Years ago, I read a story about Barbara Walters who said that early on, as a woman in television, she had very little opportunity. However, when she would get an assignment, she would picture it as a little rock and see herself shining it, through hard work – into a gem.

I like how Senator Martha Escutia puts it: "Luck is the intersection where preparation meets opportunity."

PEOPLE. Another thing that you can't schedule is when great people come into your life. The people that I have worked for have at times seen something in me that I didn't see in myself – perhaps that little rock that needed to be shined.

One such opportunity was in 1988, when I was given the chance to participate in a one-year assignment at White Memorial. At the time, I was living and working in Sacramento at the Adventist Health corporate office.

I signed on, and for the next 12 months, commuted between Sacramento and Los Angeles. During this time, I learned a great deal from the hospital CEO, various consultants and the others who served on the project team. At the end of the year, I had so connected with the hospital and its potential that I asked to be relocated to White Memorial – and that was 20 years ago!

I feel so fortunate to have had that one opportunity that has had such a significant impact on my life.

In closing, I would like to share some of my thoughts on the privilege and responsibility of leadership in these uncertain and unpredictable times.

As leaders, each of us face our own set of circumstances – whether it be in the healthcare, banking, hospitality, education or other industries. The only constant that we share is change. As leaders during these times, I believe that we must:

- Set a course for our organizations through unfamiliar territory
- Inspire and create hope in the face of uncertainty
- Strive to move our organization forward with purpose and passion.

Achieving this takes long-term commitment. I believe so strongly that nothing of substance occurs over the short run. Significant sustained success occurs over the long-haul.

Because of this, I look at work like a marathon, not a sprint. I always remember that:

- It is difficult to maintain a constant, vibrant state of personal leadership. There will be good times and bad times...as well as times when you feel like you've stalled.
- There are many times when the demands of work leave your personal resources low. I don't think we're being honest if we don't acknowledge this.
- Successfully managing the inherent stress of leadership over time, helps us to grow our strengths and shore up our weaknesses when things get difficult. It will give us confidence to move forward. (What is it that they say? "What doesn't kill you, makes you stronger.")

A couple years ago, one of my physicians shared the book *Resonant Leadership* by Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee. I'd like to share a quote:

“Great leaders are awake, aware and attuned to themselves, to others and to the world around them. They commit to their beliefs and stand strong in their values and live full, passionate lives. Great leaders are emotionally intelligent and they are mindful: They seek to live in full consciousness of self, others, nature and society. Great leaders face the uncertainty of today's world with hope.”

“They inspire through clarity of vision, optimism, and a profound belief in their and their people's abilities to turn dreams into reality.”

If I distill the essence of this paragraph into practical steps that we can all take to sustain ourselves personally and professionally as leaders, I find four:

1. Be authentic – be true to yourself and your values. You can't fake it over the long-term. Remember that each person can be successful in his or her own way. Be comfortable in your own skin...we shouldn't try to be someone else.
2. Be in touch with the world and people around you – it is easy for leaders to create their own world and terms of success. We can't live in an imaginary world. We can't stay in our office and lose touch with the place in which we work. (When I feel low on energy or enthusiasm, I stand up from my desk, and go straight to the hospital floors – and have a conversation with a nurse or physician or watch an interaction with a patient. This reminds me of what is important and reenergizes me for the work that I need to do.)

3. Be hopeful. As leaders, we must create an overall positive direction for our organizations. This is one of our most important jobs – to see a better future and lead our organizations to it. If we can't see a better future, we shouldn't be in leadership. Because leadership is about taking people to a better place.
4. Be compassionate – genuinely concerned for people. Act on this concern. There is so much renewal in compassion and compassionate acts.

So in closing, I go back to Monica Lozano's advice to her children. Hopefully each of us will find and follow our passion. As we do this, we will "connect the dots" in our chosen field of work and in doing so, will find joy, fulfillment and success.

Thank you, Liz, for the invitation to join you this evening and thank you to CHCC for the contribution that you have made to the White Memorial – especially for the Christmas gifts that you give to our little patients and the children in our community.