



KATHLEEN KUFFNER

What About a Coach?

BY KATHLEEN KUFFNER, R.N.

Remember all those executives to whom you reported and how amazing they were as leaders? Unfortunately, it seems each of us can think of only a few in our careers, if at all. So it certainly begs the question of why there are not a greater number of exceptional leaders. Most of us would agree that effective leadership requires significant effort, and is an on-going process of personal development. In Carson Dye's and Andrew Garman's book, *Exceptional Leadership: 16 Critical Competencies for Healthcare Executives*, they advise that "the art of leadership, like any art, requires the discipline of practice and commitment to continued personal growth."

Working with leaders in their personal development through coaching engagements, I realize that one of the most challenging assignments for them is to identify their gifts, realize their level of Emotional Intelligence, and

identify their areas in need of development. How self aware are they of how they are perceived in the workplace? Because of operational pressures, daily crises, financial issues, etc., they say they have little time to worry about what others are thinking of them. Herein lays the problem.

It is by utilizing various assessment tools (such as a 360 degree feedback, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator for Communication or Emotional Intelligence) that provide insight for identifying the gap, that the leader can see the need for development and begin to build the competencies required to make changes in their perspective, attitude, behavior and actions. The goal is to move towards effective and exceptional leadership.

Developing human potential is what coaching is all about, and all of us could benefit from the opportunity to engage in such a process. To step back and evaluate our effectiveness, be more aware of the impact we have on others

and raise our bar as a leader, is a gift. When you are offered such a gift, embrace it and run with it. The benefit is positive change, personal and professional growth, and hopefully the development of the following 16 competencies, so well articulated by Dye and Garman:

- Living by personal conviction
- Developing teams
- Possessing Emotional Intelligence
- Energizing staff
- Being visionary
- Generating informal power
- Earning loyalty and trust
- Building consensus
- Listening like you mean it
- Making decisions
- Giving feedback
- Driving results
- Mentoring others
- Stimulating creativity
- Communication vision
- Cultivating adaptability

"It is through the prism of qualities such as living by personal conviction,

communicating vision, mentoring others, and stimulating creativity that the true nature and character of a leader can evolve", according to Dye and Garman. If a coach can be the mechanism to develop our leadership character, we have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

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