

The Leadership Forum

a publication from the Association of Chiefs and Leaders in General Internal Medicine (ACLGIM)



April Fitzgerald

From the Editor

This edition of the *Leadership Forum* foreshadows ACLGIM events at next month's 2014 SGIM National Meeting in San Diego.

Our first article (Burness & Seaver) and second article (Kramer) are by speakers for the Leon Hess Management Training and Leadership Institute, ACLGIM's annual meeting that occurs one day prior to the SGIM

National Meeting. Our third article (Hart) and fourth article (Mendes) are by workshop speakers for the LEAD Program, a new ACLGIM program designed for junior- to mid-level faculty wishing to enhance their leadership skills.

ACLGIM would like to thank the presenters for both our Hess Institute and LEAD Program for graciously of-

fering their words of wisdom for publication. ACLGIM members and non-members are encouraged to register to attend the Hess Institute for a guaranteed valuable leadership learning experience.

As always, we both welcome and encourage your contributions to the *Leadership Forum*. Correspondence may be sent to afitzg10@jhmi.edu.



Advocating with Impact

Andy Burness and Nick Seaver. *Andy Burness is the founder and president of Burness Communications, whose mission is to empower people with information that can be used to improve the human condition and advance social change in the United States and around the world. Nick Seaver is a senior associate at Burness Communications. aburness@burnesscommunications.com; nseaver@burnesscommunications.com.*

There are thousands of good ideas put out into our public discourse each day. And with each new tool to communicate information or well-intentioned ideas, it gets progressively more challenging to actually bring together and motivate people to turn these ideas into meaningful change. Most of us can rattle off 10 or 20 issues that are important to us.

With all of the clutter out there, the obvious question is, What moves an audience from saying, "sure, that seems like a good idea" to "we must

act!"? Assuming you have facts on your side, it's the art of communication that makes the difference. It's about putting facts into context and doing so memorably. So, here are four important suggestions for moving your audience from politely nodding in agreement to lining up behind you.

1. Be yourself. There are more than 850,000 doctors in the United States, but there is only one of you. Bring some of yourself into your advocacy. No matter how

many years of experience we have in our professional lives, humans are fundamentally emotional. We need to tap into that and connect on a level deeper than shared professional interests. Why should your particular position on an issue matter to people? And, do you have one or more stories to bring that passion to life?

2. Be results-oriented. There are always several steps between the

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Andy Burness



Nick Seaver

Advocating with Impact

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first and the last. We often talk of the “ask” and the “hope,” with the former being the first (or next) step and the latter being the last step. What is less important is everything in between. We often want to focus on process, but nothing kills momentum quicker than detailing each subcommittee meeting, individual deadline and level of review in the larger plan—or a generic call for “more research.” When you engage others, give them a vision and a first step, and

tell them what nirvana will look like, what you see as the end game. Do this right up front, so the audience can become engaged with your vision and end goal.

- 3. Do some research on your audience in advance and know their interests.** It sounds crass to ask, “What’s in it for them?” But it’s not. Whenever advocating or communicating, we need to know what will motivate them to act—not our best guess as to why they should act. So, in the end, it doesn’t matter whether one supports U.S. investment in global health because “it’s the right thing to do” or because “it will redound to our nation’s economic interests” or because “it’s a religious calling.” We must always keep our eyes on the prize and speak to the interests of those we need to join us on the bandwagon. So, for our target audiences, we ask, How will this benefit them? As we consider strategies for making the case for general internal medicine, the case to be made must reflect the interests of the various people we are trying to influence—medical students,

deans, CMS officials, and other medical specialty societies.

- 4. Tell stories.** As long as humans have walked the earth, we’ve told stories; they are how we process the world around us and understand new information. If you can bring in a real example, do it. Not every story is a story of a victim or a tragedy—often the story of success will empower your audience faster than anything else.

And stories don’t need to be long, they can be several sentences. For example: “I had the most amazing experience last week when I ‘prescribed’ healthy food to a patient—and then walked down the hall to our nutritionist who began helping the obese patient on her long road to recovery.”

The bottom line is that we’re all advocates. Whether you’re a general internist advocating for better preventative care and more young doctors for the field, or a parent marketing broccoli to a picky kid, we’re all trying to change minds. And in the marketplace of ideas and advocates, being just a bit more memorable is how we can start to create change.

Creating and Sustaining Dynamic Teams

Gary Kramer, founder and artistic director of National Comedy Theatre, which is based in San Diego and New York City. SanDiego@nationalcomedy.com



Gary Kramer

We live in an increasingly impersonal world. Despite the fact that the advent of email and texting has made it easier to stay in touch with colleagues, families, patients, and customers, the very nature of that technology has made communication less clear. It is difficult to send a message with any sense of nuance via text and the possibilities for misunderstanding loom large.

Consider the following text message: “I would like to see you in my office.” Now, that ominous text might send chills down the spine of most people. However, “I want to

see you in my office :)” is much friendlier and “I want to see you in my office ;)” takes on a different tone altogether.

The bottom line is that the concept of communication has taken on a new form and it is critically important that people are able to communicate at work with each other in a way that goes beyond simple text/email.

The best way to keep any office or organization running smoothly is by creating an environment where the co-workers can see each other as

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people who have many dimensions, rather than just the individual that frustrates them in the next office or cubicle.

A team-building event that brings a group together is a dynamic and positive way to humanize your fellow colleagues. By creating a common experience, we can see each other in

a completely different light and have greater respect for the layered personalities that we all possess but somehow lose when we arrive at work.

The best team-building events are those that level the playing field, so that the whole group can succeed or even fail together, but do so in a positive and stress-free environment.

Imagine how differently you will work with someone if you have spent time rooting for them, applauding for them, and laughing with them, and having that returned in kind. It would create an environment where a simple text won't immediately be misunderstood (with or without emoticons) and a shared experience can be the basis for greater trust with one another.



E. Wayne Hart

Leading, an Action Overview

E. Wayne Hart, Ph.D., Senior Enterprise Associate at the Center for Creative Leadership in San Diego, CA. hart2@ccl.org

Leading focuses on change, but what is *leading*? Is it your position and the things you do? Or is it *how* you use your position and how you do things—your behavior or style? My mission is to develop better leaders, and in my view, leading consists of both what you do and how you do it.

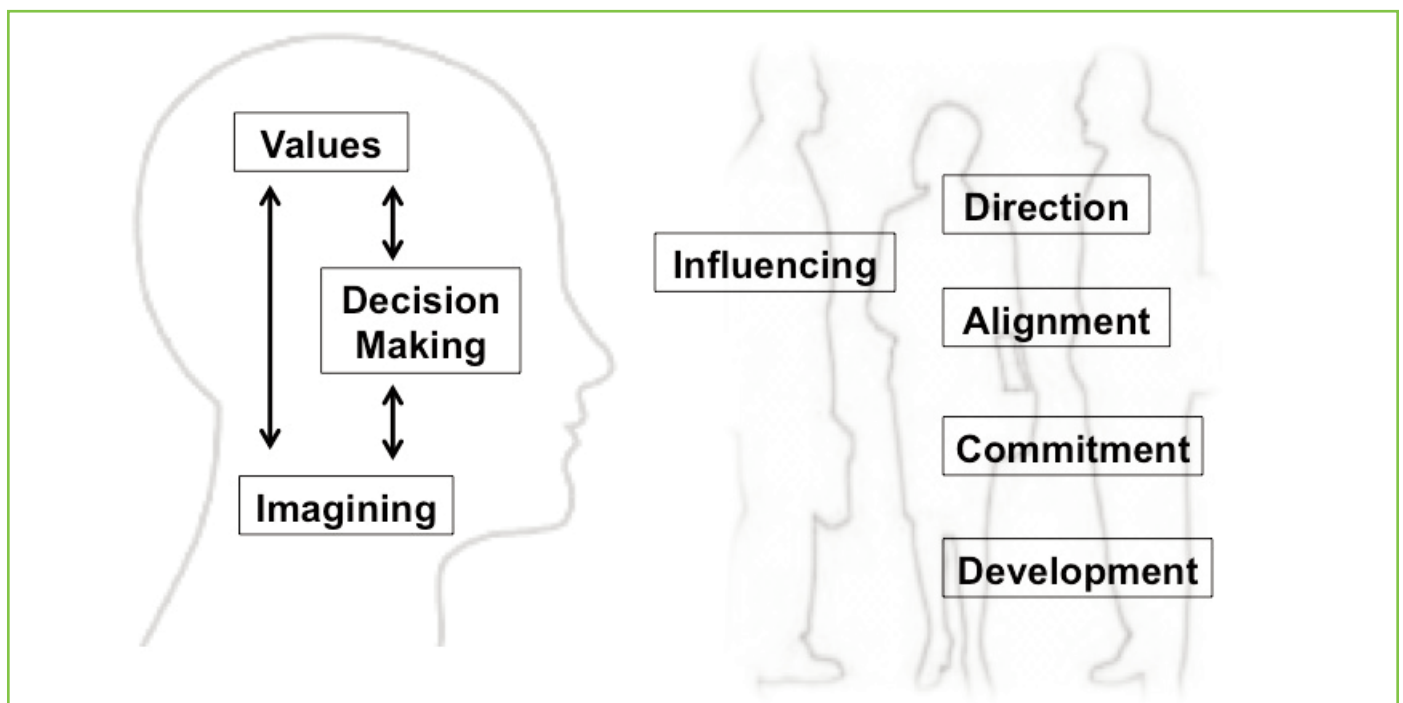
To lead and produce change requires two types of actions. *Inside actions* include the “what” of leading—imagining or envisioning change, clarifying values, and making decisions. *Outside actions* include the “how” of leading—those efforts that influence others and move them forward toward a goal.

Inside actions: “Imagining” is to visualize things being different, the formation of a mental picture of something not yet present. “Clarifying values” is the weighing of relative worth, utility, and importance of options to provide a moral compass to guide decision making. Making a decision is informed by combining the imagining of new possibilities with the assurance of value compatibility.

Outside actions: These actions include influencing others and the performance of important tasks to (1) determine and communicate direction; (2) align others towards a chosen outcome; (3) convince others

to commit to the cause; and (4) develop individuals and collectives so they are capable of forging the desired path.

The better you become at *both* the inside and outside actions, the better you will be at leading. Imagine a path to a new and better future, consult your values and weigh your options, optimize your decisions—and you’re on the road. Now communicate direction, align, convince to commit, and develop those around you—you’re on the road, and you have others to help make the new and better future a new and better reality of today.



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Ernie Mendes

Communicating in the Workplace

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The effectiveness of our communication can be discerned from the responses we receive from others—this is an operating principle I like to keep in mind.

If I am sending out important information and someone doesn't seem to "get it," then I might not have communicated effectively. If I realize this is happening, I take responsibility to adjust the conversation in a way that increases the likelihood that the other person will understand what I am trying to say.

I need to ask myself: **Did I use the preferred modality for communicating with that person?**

We all tend to have preferences for how best to receive information—visual, auditory, or kinesthetic. One method to discern someone's preference is to pay close attention to the predicates a person uses in their communication.

If they say, "It's clear to me," "I see what you mean," "I can picture that," "I'm fuzzy on your idea," they might prefer the *visual* modality.

If they say, "I hear you," "It sounds like...", "Clear as a bell," "You are saying...", then they might prefer the *auditory* modality.

If they say, "I get it," "I'm going by the seat of my pants," "Move on it," "Wait, where are we going with this?" they might prefer *kinesthetic* representations.

Listen, and then try to match your communication style to their preferences. With important information, I often check for understanding by asking the person a few questions about what I just said.

Another question I need to consider: **Is there emotional overload?**

When emotions such as anxiety, fear, worry, or anger are in play, they

can shut down cognitive processes that allow us to hold and interpret information in working memory for later storage in long-term memory. If I start to notice a pattern of unresponsiveness, I check in with the person to see what's up. Their cup might be mentally or emotionally full, and I might need to help empty some of the contents to make room for cognitive processing.

When I am on the receiving end of information, I like to ask clarifying questions to make sure I understood correctly. I end with a paraphrased summary of what I heard and then the question, "Did I get that right?" or "Did I understand that correctly?"

By listening closely to the responses of others, we can better understand and improve our own communication effectiveness.



Leon Hess Management Training and Leadership Institute

April 23, 2014 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM

San Diego, CA | Manchester Grand Hyatt

Session details available at

<http://www.sgim.org/aclgim-meetings/leadership-institute>