

## chapter 8

### Leadership Transformation

*"Some go first, and others come long afterward.  
God blesses both and all in the line,  
And replaces what has been consumed,  
And provides for those who work the soil of helpfulness."  
- Jelaluddin Rumi*

#### I INTRODUCE THE QUESTION TO OTHERS

Transformational change never starts with everybody at once. There is usually one person or small group who initially questions the status quo – who is first to begin informal conversations of unrest and/or excitement about a possible new way to do things.

As a new leader, your first act is to introduce the question to others. These new ideas are entrancing. Momentum builds until it becomes clear it is time to take the revolution to the next level.

Silence is no longer an option. Once an individual's awareness rises to this level, there is little choice but to begin disturbing the system. It is time to round up the cavalry – to look around and see who is willing and able to struggle through their own leadership transformation and lead this change with you.

Just as you have attended to your own self-awareness, it is now time to help others grow theirs. Begin by using the Spiral of Learning and ask these questions of your colleagues to lead them through the process.

- Observation – What do you see? Hear? Taste? Touch?
- Interpretation – What do you think about it? What does it mean? What do you think it means? What does it mean to you?
- Feelings – How do you feel about it?
- Intentions – What do you intend to do?
- Actions – How will you do it? What did you do?

You can help each other by periodically bringing up these questions in one-to-one conversations, or at group gatherings to increase everyone's *shared* understanding. The learning circle provides the perfect vehicle for group discussion.

#### Learning Circle

When people gather, they naturally do so in a circle. When someone new comes along, someone says, "Hey, pull up a chair!" and everyone moves a bit, creating a larger circle to make room for the new person. Not only is a circle the most conducive form for stimulating conversation within a group, but it is also a form within which no point has greater value than another.

In a learning circle, no person's voice holds more value than another. Everyone is heard as equals, which builds a sense of respect and team. Each participant is given the opportunity to speak without being interrupted or judged. The learning circle draws out shy people and encourages those who are more talkative to listen. Everyone has a chance to examine their own views and those of other circle members, leading to broadened perspectives and a wider base from which to build relationships and discover solutions.

Eight to fifteen participants sit in a circle without tables or other obstructions blocking their view of one another. One person is chosen as a facilitator to pose questions to members of the circle, give encouragement and keep the responses moving. After posing the question or issue, the facilitator asks for a volunteer to respond with his or her thoughts on the chosen topic. A person sitting beside the first respondent goes next, followed one-by-one around the circle until everyone has an opportunity to speak on the subject without interruption.

Cross talk is not allowed. (However, staff should help draw residents out with cues and acknowledgement.) One may choose to pass rather than speak when it's his or her turn. But after everyone else in the circle has had their turn, the facilitator goes back to those who passed and allows them another opportunity to respond. Only then is the floor open for general discussion.

Whether to solve hard-core problems or simply help people get to know one another socially, learning circles are effective for addressing a wide variety of topics – even among individuals with very limited cognitive abilities. Use learning circles as part of regularly scheduled meetings or as a handy tool for dealing with issues as they come up. In the circle, ask questions about observations, thoughts, feelings, intentions and actions. This helps everyone grow in self-awareness, group cohesion and critical thinking.

**Learning Circle Steps:**

- Facilitator poses question
- A volunteer goes first
- Work around the circle
- No cross talk
- Second chance for those who passed
- Open for general discussion

**You Can't Do It Without the Executive Leader**

The stirrings for change and the desire to change the way elders live may begin at any given place in the organization, or with any given person or group of people. The power of energy for change coming from within the organization can be a wonderful thing in terms of momentum and organizational drive. But, in the end, if the head of the organization is not part of that drive, or leading it, then the potential for deep change is substantially mitigated. The Household Model, with its complexities and requirements of profound transformation, cannot come to fruition and meet its full potential without the executive leader.

When the CEO leads the process from the beginning, doors open much more quickly for everyone in the organization. If the CEO isn't the initial driver, those who are stirring for change must invite him or her into the dialogue. If, at the beginning, the CEO isn't receptive or "doesn't get it," be persistent about bringing him or her to a point of understanding.

This isn't easy. Culturally we are accustomed to stopping after the first try when we are met with resistance from our bosses. But, don't give up. Remember your obligation to the elders and let that obligation help you overcome your hesitancy.

Had Annie Peace not been persistent with me at Meadowlark, we would not have been fortunate enough to find the right people to help us learn about (and eventually become a partner in deepening and refining) the Household Model. In 1997 Annie was my administrative assistant. Annie was invaluable to the organization and me as we struggled to articulate and plan for deep change in our organization. I knew we had to do something different, but I didn't have the language to truly help guide the organization in a new, clear direction. At that point, we were still struggling with our identity as an organization. We knew we wanted Meadowlark to be home, and we had decided to let go of institutional trappings, but we didn't know much else. The words "culture change" were not known then. Nothing had been written about it that we knew of. We were struggling, thinking we were alone.

Annie and a couple of others suggested that we go to PersonFirst™ training in Kansas City. We were in the middle of an expansion and I felt I was just too busy to go. (We CEO's tend to feel that way a lot.) So they went without me. When they came back I was "too busy" to ask her how it went. But she told me anyway.

She said, "Steve, you need to meet these people—Megan Hannan and LaVrene Norton. I think they have the answers to some of the questions we are struggling with."

I said, "Oh, that's good. I'm glad you went." I had never been so busy and I went about the day trying to keep up with the pace that I had been setting around the building.

A couple of days later Annie said, "I have the number for you to call LaVrene Norton."

"Who?"

"LaVrene Norton. I told you about her the other day. I think you need to call her."

"Yeah, okay. Set it on my desk."

Several days later Annie asked me, "Did you call LaVrene?"

"No, I haven't been able to get to it."

She got up, walked over to my desk and said, "Do you trust me?"

That stopped me. "Of course I trust you, Annie. Why would you ask me that?"

"Because you aren't listening to me. You need to call LaVrene Norton." She handed me the phone and looked me in the eye. I knew she wasn't leaving my desk until I made the call.

That call was a very important one to say the least. Had Annie not pushed me to move toward something (or someone) that I didn't think I really needed, then our story would have been a very different one. Elders at Meadowlark would not be living the life they are living today, tomorrow, or ten years from now. And LaVrene and I would not have even met, let alone written this book. (So if you don't like it, you can blame Annie.)

So please, don't give up.

We also see many instances where CEOs will designate a "Culture Change Coordinator" to make changes in the organization happen, but not change themselves in the process. They treat deep change like a program rather than a comprehensive and complete organizational transformation. The head of the organization must *become* the change desired rather than delegating the change to others. If not, everybody will bump up against a ceiling in their efforts to grow change.

If the head of the organization does not transparently model the change, including all of his or her personal struggles to do so, others in the organization will not have full license to transparently struggle themselves. In addition, the administrator or CEO is instrumental in orchestrating all of the support systems that must transform in order for the Household Model to reach its full potential. If this doesn't happen, at best it will be a limited but heartfelt effort on the part of only a segment of the organization.

We see this in its most glaring form when chains or multi-site systems pilot deep change in one site, rather than starting first with their core at the corporate office. The facility will earnestly create change to the degree that they are able, and regional managers will make their regular site sweeps using their traditional style of top-down management. One site administrator told us, "We work so hard between her visits, but after she leaves I have to spend two weeks getting everybody picked back up after she lets the air out of everybody's tires. I can't see being able to truly transform here if corporate methodologies and systems aren't consistent with what they expect from us. Its like they want a trophy out of this, but don't want to run the race themselves."

### **What Is Leadership?**

Leadership is about character, not position. In the past, leaders have seen their role as strong-faced decision makers. We all have believed that is what we need from a leader. He or she must stand up stalwartly and give direction to the rest, who then follow.

One of the authors knew a CEO who carried a small, dog-eared paperback published in the early 70s – his "Bible," he said confidentially. It said leaders are born, not made, and most people in the world are followers who are weak and confused. They don't want to be leaders, only to be led.

The born leader, elevated in adulthood to management, is obligated to do just that. He (we doubt there was a "she" in the book) must take up the pain and difficulties of leading and insist the followers do as he says. Where the leader goes, the followers gratefully (even while grumbling) follow.

The book's premise is laughable, but we all have residue of this attitude within us. We look to the leader for direction. Or worse, stand around and wait for him or her to fail. We watch and critique his or her fumbling, detached as if watching a TV drama unfold.

We, in turn, do our best to guide those who follow *us*. We worry ourselves sick over our decisions and pass on our expectations to subordinates. When we become aware that they, too, watch and critique *us*, we wonder why they don't appreciate all we do for them.

In contrast, the transformational leader is more of a guide than a king. This leader does not say, "Go forth and bring back that which I ask of you," but shares leadership, saying, "Please come down this path with me and let's see what we can discover together." This leader grows other leaders, who, in turn, grow others. Followers do not serve the leader. The leader serves the followers.

As you move from thinking of yourself as a manager to seeing yourself as a leader, you may feel some of the responsibility and accountability is taken off your shoulders by sharing leadership with others. In truth, everyone has *more* responsibility and accountability.

A leader cannot hide behind rules, regulations, institutional "Leadership is about culture character, not position." and the-way-things-are-done mindset when setting and enforcing expectations. As a leader, part of your service to the followers (those who follow you on the path to their own leadership) is being personally accountable for your leadership actions. You are responsible not only for the ends but also the means.

Shared leadership leaves no room for blame. The new leadership model distributes not only power, but also accountability. From now on you will all, *together*, enjoy the victories and confront the obstacles and setbacks.

### **Awareness Brings Light to the Path**

As a new leader your eyes and mind are open. You are aware. This does not mean that because your flashlight is on you won't run into tigers. No. It means now you'll be able to see the tiger. If you couldn't see it and didn't know it was there, you wouldn't be afraid. But it still could attack and you wouldn't know what hit you. Now that you see the tiger you must find the courage to address it and every other animal that crosses your path.

By being open and aware you can collect a very good cross-section of data. This new data does not reflect assumptions by which you previously operated. Now, you know new places – and ways – to look. You are no longer limited by the myopic vision of the traditional model. You strive to keep your vision clear and you listen more than you tell. Once you get the hang of this, the gift of foresight follows. You begin to anticipate a bit, while remaining open to *all* possibilities. You count on there being unknowns, but are prepared to deal with them.

Information and awareness of how to use it properly will help you look to the future. That is why we need leaders – not to take us where we've been or to keep us in place but to help us traverse the unknown.

If you plan to move from the traditional model of care to the social model, *everyone* in the facility must eventually make the journey. As the saying goes, "You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink." As a leader, you need to help others recognize their thirst so they will walk with you to the pond. Once they know where the water is, they can show others the way. Being a leader is not about demonstrating your power, it is about teaching others to realize their own power.

### **Who's In?**

So, who will join you? Who are you going to agitate?

Of course, invite those folks you heard whispering about culture change. Grab the person who really connects with the elders. Select somebody in administration and somebody who knows about organizational finance. There are others you might not think of right away, like the person who is always negative and complains about how things are. Ask her if she would like to see a change. She may be "negative" because she, like you, is angry about the way elders are treated and frustrated because she feels she can't do anything about it. Think how successful and vocal she is in relating her unhappiness or negative attitude. Imagine what she could do if she had a positive outlet for all that energy! Leadership must come from all levels and departments – even from people you didn't think of as "leaders."

Maybe your facility has a quiet person, a CNA, for example, who elders open up to, is very detail oriented or inspires cooperation among residents and staff. He may not be a formal leader, but he and others like him may have great, untapped leadership abilities. Find natural influencers in maintenance, dietary, bookkeeping and HR. Look beyond staff to residents, families and the community to give inspiration and to voice their special stakes in the organization. Assure all spheres of influence in the organization are reached. Get the fingers of change in every nook and cranny.

Just as you questioned yourself to heighten your awareness about the elders' lives and their need for home, you must also shake up the hornet's nest and create a buzz among those around you. Ask the question, "Should elders live like this just because they are frail?" You are not just making conversation by posing this question (though hopefully it will lead to many heated discussions). You are provoking folks into moving toward change. Follow up questions might include:

- What does "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" mean?
- To whom should it apply – only the young and able?
- Do we all have a right to home?
- What are the vital elements of home to you?
- Tell us about the first time you walked into a nursing home.
- What did you want to be when you grew up?
- How do you want to live when you retire?
- What do we do and see that is not home here?
- Do elders have a right to direct their own lives?

The answers you hear likely will vary a bit. I once met a woman who, when posed with the question, "Do elders have a right to direct their own lives?" replied, "Are you kidding?! Would you let your two-year-old run her own life?"

Questions like these will make people think, and their answers will clue you to the issues and beliefs that create and perpetuate the-waythings- are. Shining a light on the oppositions will help you better address them.

### **Awakening Others**

Posing questions is not the only way to shake things up and inspire action – there are hundreds of ways to provoke those around you. It's hard to know what makes the light go on for each individual, so try different approaches. Talk, watch videos, read, download from the Internet, drag folks to presentations, buy leadership books, pass along articles and do whatever you can think of.

Though we use the words "agitate" and "provoke" to convey the importance of being persistent and insistent, tread carefully. Remember the fear, resistance and anger you felt when first confronted with the sad reality and the need to change it. As you bring your cause to others, they may experience those emotions as well.

We couldn't say it better than do Heifetz and Linsky in their book, *Staying Alive*: "To lead people, we suggest you build structures of relationships to work the tough issues, stabling norms that make passionate disagreement permissible. But keep your hands on the temperature controls. Don't provoke people too much at any one time. Remember, your job is to orchestrate the conflict, not become it. You need to let

people do the work that only they can do."

Others must change their hearts and minds before we can change our collective professional and organizational behavior. A lesson learned on your own always sticks better than one given by someone else. Like you, folks will go through their personal transformation in their own way and at their own pace.

Remember your new self, your ability to be open and confident, and your dedication to the life, liberty and pursuit of happiness for elders. Let your determination and patience reign as others join you in transformation and purpose. Perhaps most difficult of all, refrain from action on your own (except to listen to, inspire and engage others in new ways) as you garner their interest in exploring possibilities. You will gain trusted allies in the quest that will lead to team action.

## **THE QUEST BEGINS**

You and your change companions may feel a little like Dorothy, Cowardly Lion, Scarecrow and Tin Man from *The Wizard of Oz* as you join together and are off on your journey. Both formal and informal leaders may feel clumsy and unsure, but you all know you must make your way to the Emerald City of "home." It all starts with the Steering Team.

### **Form the Steering Team**

The Steering Team should be comprised of formal and informal leaders. At the start, all department heads should be part of the Steering Team and, of course the Administrator and/or CEO, but as the process moves on some may step out to make room for informal leaders. The Steering Team will guide Action Teams that will be established to work through various parts of the transformation process.

Together you will grow as you shape and affirm your values and share leadership. For your first meeting, get the Steering Team together to craft a value statement to guide the team's work. (See *Living and Working in Harmony*.) This can be a review and renewal of an existing value statement, or you may start from scratch.

Values should, of course, include "the right of home and choice for elders," but should also extend to how care is given, resident/staff and staff/staff relations, high involvement in decision-making and pursuit of personal growth. Keep the statement handy and refer to it often. When making decisions, your values statement will be your guide.

This is also a time to plan how the Steering Team will progress, learn more about your facility, its people and their ideas, and investigate how other facilities have made the culture change journey. Start discussing how to gather the information.

By now, you recognize a hallmark of the process of the transformation to households: questions. Each new step, hurdle and conflict starts with questions. Questions bring clarity when we're confused, ideas when we're stuck and direction when we start something new.

### **It's All About Questions**

Ask questions like these in your first Steering Team meeting:

- What kind of study shall we pursue?
- How can we, and how have others...
  - (1) Change(d) workplace culture?
  - (2) Move(d) toward resident-centered or resident-directed care?
  - (3) Increase(d) choices about bathing and dining?
  - (4) Renovate(d) into home?
  - (5) Create(d) high involvement of staff, residents and families?
- How shall we involve others in this study?
- How shall we discuss the findings?

We cannot over-emphasize the importance of involving all stakeholders in as many ways as possible, and the sooner the better. Reach out to staff, residents and family members outside the Steering Team as you begin to study and shape what you hope to create. Bring a wide variety of perspectives into the process to gain deep understanding of the desires and needs represented at the facility.

Diversity will lead to a truly shared vision. The process and outcome will belong to everyone. You are working to create a home, which not only is a physical environment but also an atmosphere. It is a place that belongs to us and a place where we belong.

While we strongly advocate researching other organizations for ideas for your own culture change journey, remember that every organization and its residents are unique, just as we are in our own homes. The only right way is the one most agreeable to the residents who live where you serve. What you see and learn elsewhere is not prescription. It is inspiration.

Asking questions, examining your values, researching other organizations -- everything you do in the study phase must be deep and far-reaching and involve as many people as profoundly as possible. Thoughtful study may take a year to complete.

So, get all stakeholders on board and visit other Household Model organizations and culture change facilities. Create small groups to research different issues and bring back information to the whole group. Look also to the Internet, books, culture change organizations and seminars. Schedule yourselves to work on a unit to closely observe day-to-day procedures.

Evaluate the way things are. Look to quality control and human resources data, regulatory compliance, satisfaction surveys and financial indicators.

Then, again ask questions:

- What if we erased the organizational chart? How could we start over?
- How do we organize our lives at home?
- How do we feel about ourselves as a team?
- What are our strengths?
- What do we want that we don't have?
- What are we pleased about?
- What do we need that we don't have within ourselves?
- Do we need outside help?
- If we were in the residents' shoes, what would we want?

And most importantly, ask the residents what they want. Talk to residents and their families about their homes.

### **Sense of Team Emerges**

As you study, you will learn much about the Household Model, your own organization and the people who live and work there. And, you will find the prize in the Cracker Jack box: while you've been studying, you've become a team. Team building is a byproduct of work that is occurring. You all climb into a van, drive for hours, see something that blows your mind and then spend the return journey trapped in the van, unable it seems, to talk of anything but your dreams.

### **WE MUST...BUT HOW?**

The preparation stage of leadership transformation is all about devising a plan of attack. The Steering Team shapes itself, its current and future Action Teams, and assumes responsibility as guide for the journey. It designs the overall initiative within the context of the organization's mission and values. So, keep that values statement handy.

Using the Matrix as a guide, the Steering Team begins by mapping out each stage of the journey. This can't always be done in its entirety before beginning the journey; there are too many unknowns and too much opportunity to go in different directions within the chaos. You will need to re-route the process as it progresses.

While the specifics may change the one thing the Steering Team must do from the beginning and throughout is strive for 100 percent involvement of all stakeholders. You are striving for resident-directed decisions in every way possible. High involvement doesn't wait until move-in, it is the foundation on which every step in the journey is built. It is the most important tool in your pack.

You are encouraging leadership not only in staff, but also in residents. It is the elder leadership that will solidify and ensure deep change and rich life.

Ethel had come to the nursing home "to die." She had given away all her possessions since she did not expect to be around much longer to need them. When she moved into the facility they were living the Household Model in the original facility and soon after moved into a new building. Ethel was thrilled to have her own private room and bath. After six months her health had improved quite a bit, as did her attitude. One day, a nurse aid was in Ethel's room and saw a video cassette sitting on her table. The aid asked about the video and Ethel explained that it was her favorite movie and that she had given it away when she moved in but had recently asked for it back because, as she explained, "I'm going to live."

Ethel enjoyed crafting. She made centerpieces and scrapbooks and soon made a special bond with her next-door neighbor. Flora was not doing as well as Ethel was, so Ethel always took Flora "home" after meals in the household dining room. When it became apparent that Flora was dying, Ethel and some staff members took it upon themselves to take shifts sitting by Flora's side in her last hours. A neighbor commented, "Ethel always showed Flora the way home, now she is showing her to her final home." In the old model, an administrator observed, Ethel and the staff never would have thought to take Flora's care into their own hands like that. But now, it's just the way life is in the household."

**Preparation Checklist:** A general description of the process follows.

Use it as a template or checklist as you proceed.

- An individual is interested in creating home.
- Based on her position, she introduces the idea into the organization.
- Meanwhile, she becomes a role model, grows her own leadership skills, begins to lead in new ways, stimulates interest by others and helps them develop leadership skills. They, too, begin to lead.
- Formal and informal leaders collaborate and form a Steering Team to guide the organization's journey.
- The Steering Team:
  - (1) Defines and articulates the vision and excites others.
  - (2) Works to define the purpose, vision, goals and actions needed.
  - (3) Engages others in study.
  - (4) Forms Action Teams, each with a clearly defined mission and autonomy to perform within distinct parameters identified by the team's purpose, the overall vision for change and the potential legal ramifications.
- Each team struggles with their particular short and long-term obligations over the entire course of developing households.

#### **Action Teams Join In**

The Dining Action Team, for example, studies and discovers ways to give residents choice in dining experiences. The ultimate goal is to have decentralized dining in each household, and maybe offer five meals a day or have the kitchen open 24/7. This requires several months of grand restructuring of the organization and the physical environment. In the meantime, why not introduce a continental breakfast for early risers or keep a cabinet full of residents' favorite snacks to munch anytime, day or night?

While moving toward a long-term goal, strive to find things to implement along the way. It brings motivating gratification and builds confidence and momentum. Besides, now that you understand the need for home, how can you wait any longer?

Changes that can be made in the way-things-are-done without great preparation, renovation or compliance issues should be implemented as soon as possible.

### **We, The Organization**

We always think the "organization" controls the way we do things or the climate in which we live. Truth is, the organization is not some supernatural force. It is the people who comprise it. You and I are the organization. We often see this phenomenon in relation to government. We complain about "the government" and the way "they" do things. Yet, every fourth grader knows "We, the people" are supposed to say how the government operates.

Whether reclaiming our organizations or government, diligent study and persistent activism are required. Each and every one of us must develop our leadership skills and become highly involved to make things run the way we'd like. If you work somewhere long enough to change with personnel. We're not suggesting giving everyone the boot and replacing them with culture change advocates. But rather, as the *mindsets* of the people in the organization change, so does the organization. So, at this stage it is very important to grow the concept of team. These teams will become increasingly skilled and eager to create home.

The Steering Team, which always includes the organization's senior executive, determines the resources needed, seeks and allocates them and monitors their use. It addresses macro-resource issues such as assets and property. Is there money and room for renovation? How much? Is there underused space in the facility? Where do you most need or desire to use resources? (This is addressed in more detail in Chapter Ten)

Also take stock of your talent pool. You'll find many hidden skills among staff and residents. Sue in dietary has a way with wallpaper...John in housekeeping can bake a mean cherry pie...Mr. Grant plays piano...Mrs. Roberts loves to knit--all these talents can help create an atmosphere of home.

Don't overlook opportunities to involve family and community members. Embrace the concept of investing resources to the greatest extent possible. The greater the investment in learning the greater the development of learning capabilities that boost people's enthusiasm and their commitment to the new initiative.

### **Finding Time**

You must also consider the most critical resource – time. Beware and prepare. The further along you are in the journey, the more time the journey absorbs until move-in day. "But," you say, "everyone's usual job already takes up so much time. Where are we going to find time to meet, do research, ask questions, develop leadership skills and implement change?!"

True, long-term care is time-starved. Most of our jobs are task oriented and focus on fulfilling the expectations of management and regulations. It seems there is no time to even *think* about concepts like resident-directed service or modeling new behaviors for others. Many administrators and department heads welcome involvement by informal leaders and are delighted by how effectively direct-service staff participates in team efforts. Yet, knowing *how* to involve them remains problematic because of time and staffing issues. Be prepared for this to be your first and most important challenge in achieving high involvement and shared leadership. You cannot be successful if you do not work through this issue. At some point your new team approach stops being "added time" and becomes who you are. It becomes the way you spend your time.

Some direct-service staff may not show up for team meetings, and you might become frustrated with *them*. They knew the time of the meeting. They had agreed to do this. Surely they can get "off the floor" for a few minutes. You are tired of their excuses. Time to take the big leap!

The leap you need to take is to realize this is not a personal performance problem or a sign that they don't care. It is merely a reflection of the institutional nature of your organizational structure. Not the person, but the system! As leaders,

you must think through the problem and work toward systemic solutions.

Solutions to the issues of time and staff should include use of direct-service staff, but also *must* include people with check-writing authority. In other words, this problem can only be adequately resolved if you're willing to consider solutions that require an investment of staff hours from all service areas, including administrative. Consider having your Steering Team take on the resolution of the time/staff problem as its first goal. Find solutions that encourage informal leaders to participate.

Here are some solutions other teams have discovered:

- Household Model meetings are held at shift change on Tuesdays when an additional caregiver is scheduled to go from unit to unit to cover for staff attending meetings. Caregivers and dietary folks come early and/or stay over. Those who don't attend meetings but put in extra time to enable other workers to attend are compensated.
- Department heads and other formal leaders are trained as CNAs and feeding assistants so they may care for residents directly and fill in for caregivers attending meetings.
- A department head holds meetings or other activities with residents from a particular hallway to lighten the load for caregivers who are on duty while other workers attend team meetings.
- Meetings are held in the hall or near the wing where team member caregivers work, enabling them to be available if residents need them. Meanwhile, coworkers try to cover for caregivers attending team meetings.
- Direct-service staff members are encouraged to attend meetings on their days off and are compensated for the hours they attend. This type of incentive should be made known before attendees are recruited for various teams.

### **Learning As You Go**

You must make time aside from your job responsibilities to learn and grow, but ultimately you must also make learning part of the job. Robert Quinn hit the nail on the head in *Building the Bridge As You Walk On It*. He wrote, "What we know from past experience is an asset, but what leads to successful transformation is our capacity to learn in real-time."

And so, leaders must learn. Literature on leadership promotes "action learning," or learning on the job. The Household Model requires everyone to learn on the job. We can't stop serving elders while we all go to school to learn how to better serve them. Instead, we must learn together with our elders in our midst.

How do we learn? The same way we've always learned. The way we learned to do addition and subtraction in grade school or play the piano. We practice over and over. We practice talking to each other in ways we've never done before. We practice listening. We practice not making the decision but conferring with the new team first. If we are strongly opinionated, we practice keeping our mouths shut while inviting others to speak. If we are quiet, we practice speaking up and stating our point of view. We seek a new balance, and we get there by practicing day after day.

### **Leading vs. Managing**

Is it hard for a manager to model new leadership? How could it not be? Everything that made you the manager you are today is what we ask you to set aside. You're the manager because you are well spoken. We ask you, as a leader, to be quiet and let others speak and lead.

You're the manager because you look and see – analyze quickly and accurately. As a leader, you must ask others what they see.

You're the manager because you are able and willing to make tough decisions. We ask you, as a leader, to give decision-making power to the team whenever possible and foster its ability to make tough choices.

You're the manager because you always seem to know the answer while appearing confident in your knowledge (whether or not you really are). We ask you, as a leader,

to explore unfamiliar terrain where you don't know all the answers, and to do it publicly while maintaining your confidence that creating home for frail elders is the right thing to do.

### **Steering Team Becomes Initial Self-led Team**

Throughout all this, the Steering Team grows into the organization's first self-led team. It must define itself, its responsibilities and how it will relate to existing managerial, clinical and departmental teams.

As your organization's pioneering self-led team, the Steering Team decides how it will grow and demonstrate a new set of team skills that all teams are expected to eventually develop.

Let the six qualities of culture change leadership guide you:

- Grow awareness in self and others.
- Inspire and motivate through story.
- Shape a vision together.
- Involve elders, their families and staff.
- Build community and create team.
- Show the way by walking the talk.

(From Action Pact Leadership Training available to download in *Free Resources* at [www.actionpact.com](http://www.actionpact.com))

The process is not always pretty, and Steering Team members must be able to tolerate the chaos, confusion, resistance, fear and anxiety that will be byproducts of all this good work. Formal leaders will be tempted to micromanage the Action Teams. The Action Teams will not spin off wildly in disarray if the Steering Team focuses on:

- Identifying vital parameters in which Action Teams work (provide choice; limits of physical renovations; within budget and regulations; and decision-making as close to the resident as possible.)
- Providing autonomy within those parameters.
- Assuring Action Teams have resources and that all members, including hourly staff, are able to attend team meetings.
- Holding Action Teams accountable for identifying goals (within the purpose and parameters) and determining and implementing actions to achieve them.
- Freeing the Action Teams to be self-led. They will experience autonomy, satisfaction, team struggle and, ultimately, team growth. Your confidence in them will lead to more confidence in themselves.

## **WE COMMIT AND RESOLVE**

"Commit" and "resolve." There is strength in those words. You're putting your well-laid plans into action. Some or all of your team members may go through another bout of panic. The awakening leader's internal voice of vision and possibilities must kindly ask the voice of insecurity to stand at bay. The voice of insecurity has its purpose. It is our friend – a tool for self-monitoring our actions. But ultimately, your vision voice must send your insecure voice to the bleachers.

Think of your vision voice as your internal coach. Once insecurity is sent to the bleachers, Coach Vision calls your voice of courage to the playing field. Courage is nothing but controlled fear turned to action.

The Steering Team should use the following strategies to guide early work. They will build a strong foundation for confidence and progress.

### **Self-Led Team Strategy:**

Self-led teams have been breaking the traditional hierarchy of management in many industries for a while now. The team creates its own mission, and then plans and executes strategy to fulfill it. Team members rely on each other for support and to monitor progress and conflicts.

In other industries the word "team" is sometimes used to describe, for instance, a sales department. Such a team is a group of people who may share the same goal but does not necessarily work together to achieve it. Nor do they let their shared goal shape their vision and work. They may have team spirit, but the kind of team we are talking about is much more.

A self-led team makes decisions, plans, shapes and not only does the task, but gives birth to it. Burnout occurs when jobs are unexciting, not when they demand excessive effort. With little celebration, satisfaction or excitement about one's job, it is no wonder turnover rates are the norm. We rely on secret personal satisfactions--interacting with this resident or observing that moment of meaning--to keep our jobs interesting.

Self-led teams in long-term care are unique because they include the consumer. Elders are involved in their own care. They drive and direct the team. Much dissatisfaction by residents and workers comes from decisions handed down from above. They will be far more satisfied with and committed to the home and work they themselves create.

Work in long-term care is so very different than in most other services. Long-term care encompasses all the needs and desires that arise spontaneously in daily living. Obviously, this manifests itself in different ways for each individual. Household team members must make decisions about their actions and perform tasks on the spur of the moment depending on the situation, resident and day. For the most part, one-size-fits-all policies simply don't fit.

On the other hand, a fast food restaurant may serve many customers at the same time, but workers serve them all in the same way. The consumer comes to the establishment, orders from a menu (chosen by the restaurant), pays, takes the food and the transaction is complete. The time, conditions and personal investment under which the exchange occurs are restricted. The parameters are set by the management or ownership of the fast food restaurant. The customers expect no more than the quick delivery of cheap food.

In fast food, because the premise is relatively simple, every transaction is basically the same in every restaurant and company. In their corporations, it is reasonable for management to direct the operation from off-site, even from a different city than where the restaurant is located. In nursing homes, because staff serve the whole person day after day, service parameters are developed on the spot. The-way-things-are-done must be decided by the elders and those who directly serve them.

Self-led teams identify untapped or wasted energy and study how to convert it to usable energy for recapturing mission-based values. Organizational culture is defined by operative values, beliefs and habits. Attitude changes needed for transforming culture come by experiencing success. Our beliefs begin to change as we see the possibilities. It energizes us. We use the energy to perform our jobs in a manner consistent with our personal values ("I love old people," "Everyone deserves a good life," "They're just like me," "Home is central to the human community.") As the fruits of our labor manifest, attitudes gradually change even more. New energy is released and new habits take hold. Then, bolstered by reflection, dialogue and discussion, new personal and community beliefs form.

With strategies that include blended or versatile worker roles, maintenance and dietary staff can grow their involvement in the household by receiving CNA training. CNAs can train in food safety and maintenance regulations. As job responsibilities broaden (but not necessarily increase) there is more opportunity for personal satisfaction. As workers care for the "whole resident" in a variety of ways, they become more "whole" themselves...more like a person in a household than an individual at work. That is key for creating home.

### **High Involvement Strategy:**

Information and education alone are not enough to foster deep personal commitment and get staff to embrace culture change. You achieve far more with direct,

hands-on experience. You want engagement, involvement and universal participation. Only then can you experience a true and deep change in culture.

Those involved need to personally adopt the mission as their own. People see in the vision what they want to change. You must envision, individually and as a group, what will or could transpire five or ten years out. You must envision, individually, yourselves as the consumer. Discover the whys and why-nots of the way things are and how they could be.

W. Edwards Deming's well-known 14 points for management (see [www.deming.org](http://www.deming.org)) include:

- Create constancy of purpose.
- Remove barriers that rob hourly workers their right to pride of workmanship.
- Break down barriers between departments.
- Institute training.
- Replace quotas with leadership.
- Involve everyone.

Deming envisioned these strategies for the workplace, large or small, and for industries from manufacturing to service. Universal participation brings greater worker satisfaction and commitment, and ultimately creates a superior product or service.

Deming and other quality-improvement gurus helped American industries transform their cultures and gain dominance in the global market during the 1980s. If their strategies stimulate worker participation in widget factories and fast food restaurants, why not among compassionate caregivers committed to creating a home for their elders? Certainly, no industry more than long-term care requires each person's contribution to be successful.

We will say it again (and again and again...), for deep change to succeed you must involve elders as much as possible as soon as possible. Organizations are usually reluctant to involve elders at the beginning. But if you do, you get the deep learning needed to form the basis of all your work.

I consulted in a facility in Colorado during the early 90s. They were in danger of getting their license removed and asked us to come in and help turn the situation around. We said we would help only if they gave 100 percent participation in the solution. We began right off the bat using learning circles that included residents, staff, family and community members. It soon became apparent everyone thought they knew how other parties felt about them – and none of it was nice!

The CNAs were sure they knew how the nurses felt about them. The nurses were sure they knew how the CNAs felt. Staff was sure how family members felt as well. Everyone operated on assumptions and profiles compiled from little incidents and narrow viewpoints. People took what little they knew about a person and based their whole opinion and attitude on it.

At one of the circles there was a resident, an old smoker, who had had a stroke and talked out of the side of her mouth. She was constantly demanding a cigarette. They limited the number of cigarettes she could have to three a day (doctor's orders?) She got them from the nurses' desk and had to have somebody accompany her while she smoked. She would go to the desk and ask for one and they would say, "No. You already had your three for the day." Even if she had had only two, they tried to put her off because they didn't have time to go and sit with her while she smoked.

The resident became furious. Everybody became a "bitch" in her mind. People passing her in the hall would say hello and she would holler, "Bitch!"

Her husband came in everyday. He was such a sweet guy. All the staff felt sorry for him. "He is such a nice guy and she is so mean."

One day the resident and her husband came to the circle. We went around the circle and when it was her turn, she made a disparaging remark about the "stupid" group and she said she should be able to have a cigarette whenever she wanted. She thought it should be up to her. Then it was his turn.

He looked around and said, "You guys just don't get it. Three months ago she

had the stroke. Up until that day, if you wanted to buy a new home, you had to go to her and she would decide whether you got the loan or not."

Everyone just sat there with mouths open. Nobody had thought of her as a person before that moment...a person with a real life. She was a loan officer at a bank. What she said and did mattered – really mattered! And now she was nothing but a thorn in their side. She had become just the mean, old smoker.

Afterward, people referred to that as the turning point when they all began to "get it." They began to "get" being resident directed – to understand it was about acknowledging the person, and that people are still people and have a right to a real life, no matter how frail or where they live.

You can't get those lessons – you can't truly study – unless you have these kinds of experiences. If you put a circle of people together and include everyone, together you will have experiences that are meaningful, poignant and significant. There will be lessons all over the place.

You may wish to have a Strategic Change Event, a kick-off to this new way of life. Everybody in the facility should be invited – *all* staff, families, community members, regulators, local legislators and the press. Say it out loud, say it publicly: "From this moment on we are all about home."

### **Learning Company Strategy:**

The Steering Team works to create a sustainable and highly adaptive organization that is continually and consciously learning and transforming itself to be the desired context for its consumers. Besides changing it into a resident-centered (and ultimately, resident-*directed*) organization, you are changing it into a *changing* facility.

Resident care in the Household Model not only may be given differently than in a traditional facility, it also changes from resident to resident and from day to day. Look at how we do breakfast, for example.

#### **BUMP'S LAW**

- What does the resident want?
- How did the resident do it at home?
- How do you do it at home?
- How should we do it here?

We offer residents choices in what and when they eat. The choices Mrs. Roberts makes are different than Mr. Johnson's. And, Mrs. Roberts may like orange juice and a muffin every morning at 6:30 a.m. But, one day she may decide she doesn't like orange juice anymore and wants to sleep until 8.

To be resident directed, we must accommodate the human propensity to change one's mind. You are not changing from "A" to "B," you are changing from "A" to whatever darn letter the residents choose. Growing into the new way of being begins *now*. Since most of the learning is done on the job much of it will be about adjusting to change – the new way-things-are-done. Instead of using a med cart, you may design how to keep medication in residents' rooms. Whoever dispenses meds will have to learn a new way. Everyone will experience this to some degree.

Learning a new and preferred way requires a seamless, fluid flow of information. Staff should be open to feedback from other workers, residents and families. There should be lots and lots of easily accessible opportunities for that information to come back to those involved throughout the organization. Mostly, this means communication should be open and honest so feedback is constant – not just in satisfaction surveys. Naturally, feedback also should be solicited by asking questions. Adjustments are made as needed, not only during times of formal training. Within this process, critical thinking abounds and everyone is empowered to interplay with open flow.

Profound change necessitates and stimulates learning at every level of individual and group awareness. Individuals must shift their thinking from

unconscious, instant analysis of issues to thoughtful, collaborative inquiry that challenges long-held assumptions. We must acquire new abilities in tasks outside our usual job responsibilities; become more knowledgeable in the art of group dynamics, organizational development and adult learning; develop new skills in critical thinking and ways to motivate and engage people; and forever grow our individual humanity and organizational sense of self. There is more on learning in the chapter on organizational transformation.

**Community Building With Elders Strategy:**

As a society we are beginning to question the lack of autonomy and good quality of life for elders in long-term care. In the meantime, we providers must lead in shaping a responsive, small home that encourages frail elders to take charge to the degree they would if living in their previous home with all the support needed for a fulfilling life.

Discuss with elders the various community components that need to be brought together to accomplish this. Create opportunities for elders to solve their own problems the way other adults do. Help residents become acquainted with each other.

While waiting for a learning circle to begin, I overheard two female residents talking together. It turned out they had lived next to each other for six months and had never met. They decided it was time to meet regularly to chat, the way neighbors do.

Residents at Wesley Retirement Home in Des Moines, Iowa, told staff one thing they wanted out of the physical renovation of their home was a place to host – a place to have dinner and visit with family and friends, a place where they could offer a drink or some cookies, a place where they could share their home.

To build community, you must foster links to the outside world to give residents opportunities to give of themselves. Maybe you have a resident who until she entered the facility was giving piano lessons. See if you can arrange for students to continue their lessons at the facility. Partner with local charities elders can join as volunteers. There are as many possibilities as there are people in your community.

**WE ALIGN**

You have planned and packed for your journey. It is time to recap your efforts and go over your checklist. You have aligned the assets and resources of the organization around the development of the Household Model. You know what and how much is available in time, talent, skills and dollars.

One and all are aligned as a team. Self-led teams are the norm for study, planning, design and development. Existing operational units (departments, hall areas, etc.) have begun using teams to make real decisions. Halls where residents live have been subdivided into workable "neighborhoods" of less than 25 people. Each neighborhood has permanently assigned staff from nursing, dietary, activities and housekeeping. All other employees are assigned adjunct roles.

All staff is 100 percent engaged in learning to work as a team and in participating in team-skills training. Team members are conducting some aspects of training, like in-services to prepare for households and PersonFirst™ techniques. (See *Living and Working in Harmony*.) Each staff person works on a hall, neighborhood or Action Team that focuses on a specific element of organizational life related to a specific group of residents. Everyone participates as part of a team in self-assessment and

For every individual, personal values are coming to life. Little miracles are happening everywhere. Relationships are forming and personal stories are being shared. You are ready to redesign the organizational systems, environment and structure.