Making Change

Leadership and Management in Medicine...some things I’ve learned along the way!

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Making Change

• Requires:

Leadership

“the exercise of influence to bring about the willing consent of others in the ethical pursuit of missions”

(it is NOT about the use of “power”...especially in Health)
Leadership

• Requires 2 things:

  • Strategic Vision
  • Moral Courage

Strategic Vision

• Requires 3 things:

  • (1) The ability to “see” a situation at multiple levels.
    – Being able to see the “big picture” as well as the “detail” of the issue...from satellite to submarine...having a “feel” for the currents and the undercurrents.
    – Leaders with strategic vision see things “in the moment”...they are present and available to those who are dealing with a specific problems or an evolving issue.
    – Good leaders are able to operate at each level simultaneously.
Strategic Vision

• Requires 3 things:

  • (2) The ability to employ empathy and use your “moral imagination”.
    – walk in others shoes, embrace supporters allies and foes alike, read yourself into their situation, engage, ask for help, build networks, learn to “sift”

  • (3) The ability to perceive (or create) “inflection points”.
    – “Inflection points” are events which result in significant change...how we operate, think and act. When you see one, jump on and ride it! The chance may not come again!
    – Inflection points create opportunities to redefine the conditions under which success might be achieved.
Moral Courage

• Requires 2 things:
  • (1) Challenge Patterns of unthinking custom and practice...be willing to question the “order of things”.
    - “We’ve always done it that way”
    - “it’s just the way we do things around here”
    - Ask “silly” questions...why do we do things the way we do? Why can’t we try another way?

Moral Courage

• Requires 2 things:
  • (2) Use “Constructive Subversion” to alter the shape of things...Build a new constituency based on “willing consent” and “ethical pursuit”
    - Must find the “good people” to join and lead the change process (the concept of willing consent)
    - Don’t be reckless (evidence is critical but not enough...it establishes the basis of “moral authority”)
    - Bring in external players to “hold up a mirror” to the “System”
    - Establish parallel structures as “constructive subversion”
    - Demonstrate commitment by your personal behaviour (MBWA, Trust, Respect, Collegiality, be “Worthy”) and your actions to work with each other on the basis of “ethical pursuit”. It starts with YOU!
    - Respect views and people NOT hierarchy and process...find the people who will tell you what you need to know NOT what you want to hear.
Some Final Lessons

• Science and evidence are essential, but not enough...without willing people, change will not occur.
• Find good people...it is the best investment of your time and will give the best “dividend” to achieve lasting change.
• Use influence, moral suasion and ethical behaviour NOT “power” to achieve change.
• Your behaviour and actions must demonstrate your commitment...as a minimum, practice MBWA (Management By Walking Around).
• Allow others to own the “success” of change.
• Be fearless, not foolish! Ask why and why not. Challenge unthinking customs, practice constructive subversion, look for the “inflection points”...Never waste a crisis!