



Role

Thoughts on leadership
by Karl Pister



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I have the marvelous opportunity to work with some very senior leaders. Persons who have many people working for them and are responsible for a lot of finances, results, strategy, and a myriad of other issues.

Most all of them grew into their roles. They are humble people. They consider themselves just part of the team.

They show up, work hard, and don't spend any bandwidth on their title or position. And there is nothing wrong with that...overall. It can, however, lead to problems.

On my writing entitled 'Anger', I used the phrase "*Anger occurs when reality doesn't meet expectations*". Let's change the wording to...."*disappointment (or just about any other negative adjective) occurs when reality doesn't meet expectations*".





Let me elaborate with an example: You are humble, unassuming, hardworking, and expect others to do the same. You do not put on your ID badge in the morning, look at 'CNO' after your name and say "IMPRESSIVE!!!!" Those words will never leave your mouth. It would never occur to you.

The problem is this:

For the sake of the story, assume the following: Karl is a front line nurse. I am a couple of years out from my BSN and I am still excited about being a nurse. I have never met you. But I am told by my nurse manager that you, my CNO, are going to be rounding on my unit.

Expectations start to build. I want to hear great things from you. I have an idea of what a leader is supposed to be, supposed to sound like, supposed to deliver. That may not be fair to you, but that is reality. I, like most, want to be inspired by those who are above me in my work. I may not wake up consciously thinking that, but it is there.

So in you come. Pressured by reams of projects, meetings, time-frames, and deliverables, both locally and from the system level.



And, since you have this "doer" mentality, that is what you speak to...

There are quality issues, HR issues, system issues that need to be addressed. So you address them. Heads nod, eyes glaze, and Karl goes back to the nursing station a bit bewildered. Not what I expected...

Multiply that by multiple meetings and you can see the opportunities lost. NOT because you are an inadequate leader. Just that you are focusing on what you can do instead of who you can lift and inspire.

That may sound fluffy "lift and inspire" but that is what people are looking for.

I recently worked with a healthcare executive who took his division from nearly the worst in the company to the top three in employee engagement. How many times did I show up for meeting, stick my head into his office, and not find him there? Just about every time. In fact, in the two years I worked with his organization, I can only remember once that he was in his office. So where was he? Out in cubicle land, talking, chatting, connecting.



People looked to him for leadership, and he delivered it superbly well. Also one of the most "ego-less" persons I have worked with. Also one of the most "ego-less" persons I have worked with.

And for those that might be rolling their eyes...he also improved financials to a staggering degree. A focus on connection does not preclude results.

Lifting, inspiring and blisteringly good results are not mutually exclusive. In fact, they are cause and effect. You are, yes, just a part of a team...in theory. In reality, you lead it, and that requires certain actions, words, thinking, and behaviors.

So, with all the humility I know you have, since I work with you, consider who needs your lift and inspiration today.





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