

Medical Education Interest Group Newsletter

Flexing Leadership Styles for Education Excellence...Who do I need to be today?

March, 2020



Notes from Meeting



Thank you to all of those who came to our March Medical Education Interest Group meeting! This month we welcomed Professor Lesley Roberts, who spoke to us about leadership. She reminded us that no matter what your role is, the skill to lead well, and the skill to lead flexibly, are invaluable assets in your toolbox. "Fundamentally, everybody has their own way to lead, because leadership is very personal", Lesley said. These words of wisdom propelled our discussion to five core questions in leadership that we will all likely have to grapple with one day, namely:

1. How do we develop our credibility as a leader?
2. How do we become an effective role-model?
3. What is the best way to show flexibility in leadership styles?
4. How do we deal with difficulty and difficult people?
5. Is there a way to thrive while leading, not just survive?

When Lesley made the move from a researcher doing epidemiological work into the arena of medical education, one of her biggest challenges was how to gain trust and build up her credibility again in her new role. She reminded us that is important to allow yourself a period of transition in any role, and to give yourself time to once again build up trust in your collegiality, decision making and application of knowledge. It is also very important to remember that first impressions are hard to undo, so always take that extra moment to reflect on how you come across – knowing that while there may be negatives and things to improve in your role, there are likely many positives that should be highlighted as well.

Lesley continued by telling us that being a role-model whilst leading can be a rewarding pursuit, however, always striving to have a positive attitude, empathy, show encouragement, and inspire those around you can have a HUGE emotional cost associated with it. We need to be aware of this, and allow ourselves flexibility to fall short of perfection in all those things we are told a role-model 'should' be.

Our discussion then turned to leadership styles, with Lesley presenting evidence that leaders at different levels draw upon a repertoire of styles, and that many senior leaders show wide-ranging flexibility in their preferred leadership style. Top leaders don't just have one leadership style, they will draw upon multiple approaches depending on the situation they are in. Some of the leadership styles discussed were: autocratic, democratic, bureaucratic, charismatic, people oriented, laissez-faire, servant, task-oriented, transactional and transformational (details found [HERE](#)). While each of these styles has pros and cons, one needs to be mindful that the more hats you can wear, the better – as you will need to draw upon different styles in your career depending on the situation and those people around you.

Finally, Lesley reminded us that two of our biggest challenges when trying to lead will likely be: dealing with difficult people and learning how to thrive, not just survive. To which she suggested that we should always try to applaud people when they do something right, and that each one of us should find a strategy to be able to mentally 'shed' the baggage that difficult days and situations in leadership may bring. The session proved incredibly helpful, full of insight, and provide all in attendance with useful strategies and a renewed sense of how to be a better leader!

Upcoming Events

Next meeting:

Wednesday 22nd April, 2020

1300 – A039

Dr Debbi Marais

Topic: TBC

Quote of the Month:

"When encountering difficult people whilst trying to lead, remember that we are all children at heart... we are all a bit stubborn and all want to please."

-Lesley

Research Article Spotlight:

[Developing Academic Leadership and Innovative Practice.](#)

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