

Preface

This book is about doctors and administrators who wanted to strengthen trust and alignment in their organizations and applied the idea of “compact” to their own circumstances.

“Compact” is shorthand for reciprocal expectations that are typically unarticulated and assumed. Jack Silversin and I help organizations transform unstated and likely out-of-date expectations into an explicit pact—one that identifies what doctors are entitled to expect of their organization, and what the organization will expect from physician members. Doing this entails hard work and a lot of time in dialogue with organizations’ stakeholders; it means *together* shaping and committing to a philosophy to guide everyone’s future actions. For most organizations the process involves new insights for leaders, the acknowledgment of some loss for physicians, and—by the end—a deeper partnership between the two groups. For these reasons, “journey” is an apt metaphor for what the people and their organizations have gone through. All were changed by the activities. Their metamorphoses took time—in some cases, more than a year. And although these new compacts are now written, the new culture and the new relationships that they symbolize continue to evolve.

The act of creating this book was itself a journey—for me—and a deeply personal one. Jack and I introduced the compact as a tool for doctors and administrators to clarify mutual expectations, and in some instances to unpack and process perceptions that had become toxic. He and I have worked in tandem on these projects for more than three decades. I’ve studied, written about, and been fascinated by the theory and practice of leadership and change since we first began. While both of us work directly with clients, we have divided up the work: Jack most often is the motivational speaker and workshop facilitator, and I usually prepare the background work, design the presentations, and generally support our clients’ ongoing efforts.

In almost every instance of compact development and implementation you’ll be reading about, Jack was on-site to facilitate a retreat or conduct a series of interviews, then meetings. He has been on the road with clients for three decades, logging hundreds of thousands of miles over the years. He has worked with more than a hundred clients and has exceeded the ten thousand hours of practice Malcolm Gladwell popularized as necessary to achieve mastery! Jack has probably run into every possible variation on the theme of “we can’t get our doctors to engage with us.” He’s especially known for his penetrating insights into issues blocking healthy relationships and his ability to get warring factions to sit down face-to-face. Between us, he has done the lion’s share of facilitating compact discussions.

When we decided it was important to publish some accounts of successful compact change, it was clear this was going to be my project. Stepping foot into organizations I had not previously visited but knew very well through Jack’s descriptions deepened my own appreciation for the tasks leaders undertook when they committed to compact work. These visits were inspiring and illuminating. I heard poignant stories of pivotal exchanges between meeting participants—some had taken place years earlier but were so salient and resonant that they were recounted as if they had just happened. My visits to these six organizations were not just trips back in time but journeys of deeper understanding about the real usefulness of the construct and the value of what we have spent so many years doing.

The first-person voice when it appears in the narratives is mine. “We” refers to Jack and me. But the thinking and planning behind the compact work as well as the “doing”—advising leaders and facilitating conversations—has been our joint work. The ideas and guidance offered in this book represent us both.

Mary Jane Kornacki