

Foreword

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ONE MIGHT WONDER why such a successfully published and widely read book (one that has become a must read for all those entering the profession of healthcare administration) would need to be refreshed. Why would the author add a new emphasis on values—those principles that underlie basic concepts of leadership learned in school, or from mentors, or developed in one's experience in the field?

The answer is quite simple. Our world—our healthcare environment—has evolved to a point that the challenges, opportunities, and stresses we face every day are markedly testing our traditionally held beliefs and values. In fact, we are currently being tested in ways that we never anticipated even five or ten years ago.

The personal situations and work environments that we find ourselves immersed in are causing us to reflect on and evaluate the decisions we make, the people we bring together in team settings to help us make those decisions, and how we best achieve our missions in a matrix environment. Our interactions with others—physicians, staff, boards, vendors, peers, and competitors (who may not have even been trained or employed in the healthcare field) are causing us to look at ourselves and our profession differently.

This book, with its expanded material, case studies, and questions, gives us the opportunity to pause and assess our status in this new world. What kind of role models have we become or would like to

be for others? How well are we interacting with the team leaders we serve? What have we learned about ourselves, and what we can do to help others grow?

As you read through the chapters, I hope that you take time to reflect on your career and your leadership. Think of this book by Carson F. Dye as a gift, for it will allow you to assess your feelings, your beliefs, your strengths, and your weaknesses in a safe and yet meaningful way. It will give you the chance to reinforce and affirm those values that you hold to be most vital to you. Just as important, it will help you consider changes in behaviors, attitudes, and actions that will make you a better leader—one who is more prepared for the complex future you will face.

Remember, values-based leaders develop teams and individuals that can successfully make structure out of ambiguity. They can handle change and stress during difficult times and learn from those experiences; they recognize the strengths of group interaction and foster environments in which individual contributions are noted and appreciated. They also develop a level of confidence in their own ability to effect positive and lasting change in their organizations.

We are in the business of intimacy. Do not let anyone tell you otherwise. It is complicated and demanding *all* of the time. People have entrusted their lives and well-being to you! How do you ensure that this sacred bond is never broken? By constantly testing and reinforcing your values and beliefs to ensure that you stay on the right path.

This third edition of *Leadership in Healthcare* will continue to propel you along the self-improvement journey as a true leader in our twenty-first century healthcare field.

Enjoy the read . . .

Academic Foreword

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I WRITE THIS foreword during a critical period in the evolution of both healthcare and higher education in the United States. Our country's "eds" and "meds" both deliver critically important services, but both have also grown up on business models that are rapidly outstripping our society's ability to sustain them. While both still enjoy considerable support, we are beginning to recognize that the runaway costs of healthcare and tuition are contributing to levels of economic inequality not seen in this country in more than 80 years.

And yet there is also reason for optimism.

In cities across the country, health systems and universities are recognizing their important status—and responsibilities—as anchor institutions in their local economies. Health systems are recognizing phenomena such as socioeconomic status and income security as social determinants of health and identifying ways to use both their expertise and their purchasing power to foster stronger local economies. Universities are recognizing the importance of ensuring the debt burdens they create in their graduates prove to be sound long-term investments and are working with employers to strengthen these returns. Some forward-thinking health systems such as Cleveland Clinic, Northwell, and Kaiser Permanente have begun vertically integrating with university programs to further improve the value proposition for students and employers alike.

But at this time, most of these activities remain outliers. In other cases, they are only experiments: specially funded pilot tests existing tenuously atop a culture of inequity, where long-term health isn't visible above the tyranny of immediate needs. When progress is vulnerable to discretionary budget cuts, the long-term patterns are quick to return.

What will our future look like? Which path will we take? Those questions will be answered by the values we as leaders subscribe to, by how willing we are to take the bold actions needed.

This is where *Leadership in Healthcare* comes in. There are lots of good books out there on the *what* and the *how* of leadership, including *Exceptional Leadership: 16 Critical Competencies for Healthcare Executives*, which Carson and I coauthored. But there are far fewer books on the *why*. Carson's book was written to address the *why* of leadership. After seventeen years and three editions, its longevity is testament to the importance of its contents.

If you are reading this book as part of a graduate class, you will soon be called upon to lead. If you picked this book up as a practitioner, you may be a leader already. In either case, you probably selected your career path based on deeply held values that you hoped to embody throughout your working life.

I encourage you to plan on reading this important book at least twice during your career. On your first read, take special note of the passages that speak to your personal values or articulate things you know in your heart but find difficult to convey to others in words. Bookmark these for later.

Down the road, you will undoubtedly find yourself at your own crossroads in the choices you need to make. These could be times when what you think is right also seems most risky. Or times when doing what's best for your community requires considerable sacrifice by the organization that employs you to look after its success. When you find yourself in this space, take Carson's book out again, and flip to the pages you bookmarked on your first read. I suspect you will find that reflecting on these passages a second time will help you firm up your convictions while making difficult decisions.

Your values are there for a very important reason: to guide your actions when things get difficult. Now more than ever, we need value-driven leaders.

Like yourself.