

Preface

MORE THAN 20 years ago in a Budapest café, a senior Ministry of Health leader asked me, “Do you know the difference between hospital leaders in the former Soviet Union and yours in the United States? Yours are optimistic about the future and worry about their legacy. Ours are pessimistic about the future and don’t think about a legacy.” Though perhaps a bit cynical, that sentiment planted a seed of curiosity that grew into this text.

Over the past two decades, as we have aged, we have watched and listened to leaders in more than 30 countries, across industries, and from both for-profit and not-for-profit enterprises. We have explored questions about legacy, jobs that matter, and careers of impact. The following five recurring questions have guided these conversations:

1. Do healthcare leaders think about their legacy, and if so, how do they seek to build and leave behind a positive legacy?
2. How do they describe a career that has made a positive difference?
3. What legacy do they hope to leave with
 - their employers,
 - their community,
 - their industry, and
 - their family?
4. How can a healthcare leader be more intentional about building and nurturing a legacy?

5. Which practical strategies can a leader in the hospital and healthcare sector use to improve his or her chances for a career of impact?

This book explores answers to these questions and offers insights targeted not just to early careerists but also to mid- and late careerists refining their careers.

Twenty-one senior leaders from the US hospital and healthcare sector were interviewed regarding their career plans and progression in careers of impact. Scores of studies were examined about leadership and a leader's legacy. The result is a distillation of ideas that we hope will help you plot your legacy road map and ignite your and your colleagues' excitement about, and effectiveness in, shaping your journey to a legacy you are proud of for your organization, your community, our field, and your family.

James A. Rice, 2011

WHEN WE THINK of *legacy*, we think of leaving a legacy. And of course, we all want to be well remembered when we are gone and to have made a significant contribution while we were here. But rather than leaving a legacy, our challenge to you in this book is to *live a legacy*. You need to “live” leadership that makes a difference and that results in a career of impact. This kind of legacy is built day by day—not at the end of your career, or in the middle—but from the very beginning and throughout your professional journey.

Certain characteristics are requisite building blocks for creating a strong leadership foundation. These building blocks are the focus of Part II of this book.

But having this foundation in place is only the beginning. A career of impact must be sustainable and live on through the accomplishments and contributions of others who have benefited from the experiences and wisdom of the leader. This legacy of perpetuity only happens when certain leadership characteristics are so

ingrained within the leader that they become a consistent way of life. Not the least of these is an unselfish intellectual generosity—a sharing of knowledge and insights that is motivated by a genuine desire to help others achieve personal and organizational success and not intended to garner recognition or reward for the leader. Such are the contributions of the leaders interviewed here, whose comments are integrated throughout the chapters.

Leadership is a skill that can be consciously learned and developed. But we must be mindful of the essential leadership characteristics and how we embody them; this process is the path to personal and spiritual growth. Self-reflection brings self-realization and the recognition that there is more to life than what we are doing. It is what we are being. In a recent interview, Neil Donald Walsh, author of *Conversations with God*, says authentic leaders must detach themselves from the outcome. Furthermore, they must develop the idea of themselves as compassionate, kind, honest, just, trustworthy, innovative, or another positive descriptor and then seek the experience of that idea. It is our hope that our readers will develop or enhance that idea of themselves as leaders and live into it.

WHO BENEFITS?

Leaders in healthcare provider organizations at all stages of their careers are encouraged to keep this book at hand on their shelves and use it as a catalyst to be more intentional about building a career of impact. It can serve as a resource to further enhance leadership skills and provide a ready reference for guiding careers in ways that you and those who work with you garner more rewards. It can be used for one's personal and professional development, as a teaching tool for those one mentors, and as a guide for staff development throughout the organization.

Healthcare managers entering the field will find it useful in charting their path in the early stages of their careers. It will influence how they look for jobs and the leadership skills they seek to

develop, and it can make them more aware of the value of mentorship and more receptive to being mentored.

Mid-careerists will find it useful as a guide to assess the impact and value of their contributions at this stage of their careers. This assessment may motivate them to adjust their career path and focus on skill development and experiences that will achieve greater impact.

Executives in the pre-retirement and retirement years can use the text as a guide to evaluate their contributions and strategize ways to strengthen and enhance their legacy within the era of their encore performance.

At the end of each chapter, you will find three action steps to take now that will help mark the milestones along your journey to a career of impact. These are the kinds of actions that legacy leaders and those aspiring to high-performance leadership take as they live a leadership journey and create a legacy that matters.

Frankie Perry, 2011