



## LEADERSHIP

### Realizing Potential

Max DePree's new book, *Leading Without Power: Finding Hope in Serving Community*, has a goal "to offer some ideas and observations about our efforts to design places of realized potential" (1997, p. 6-7). This goal is certainly a commendable one; a commitment to potential in all communities of practice—organization, institution, work site, neighborhood, family—would create more satisfying lives as well as productivity. Commitment to potential undoubtedly means more than self-fulfillment; an implied meaning is that "others," as well as self, are valued. Thus the sense of stewardship is implicit.

DePree (1997) describes the organization that becomes a place of realized potential:

- Opens itself to change, to contrary opinion, to the mystery of potential, to involvement, to unsettling ideas (p. 11).
- Offers people the

opportunity to learn and to grow (p. 12).

- Offers the gift of challenging work (p. 14).
- Sheds its obsolete baggage (p. 15).
- Encourages people to decide what to be measured and then helps them do the work (p. 15).
- Heals people with trust and caring and with forgetfulness (p. 16).
- Knows that organizations are social environments (p. 18).
- Celebrates (p. 18).

A "spirit-lifting leadership" (DePree, 1997, p. 25), competence in relationships and technical skills, creativity, commitment to substance over bureaucracy, civility, and disciplined routines in the midst of freedom are some of the fundamental requirements for the above outcomes. On the other hand, deterioration appears when trade-offs are made, comfort is preferred to ambiguity, control rather than challenge is valued, and job assignments rather than individual gifts are respected. Also negative are lack of common stories and sense of history and direction, domination of rules, value for common sense rather than innovation, replacement of expectations with job descriptions, dilution of risky choices, promotion of bureaucracy, value for completion rather than excellence, and lack of accountability.

The context for stewardship

includes the concept of transition. Transition means that change is in progress, but its more than that: "Transition is a matter and a process of becoming. . . . It's a growing and a maturing and an understanding and wisdom-gaining process" (DePree, 1997, p. 35). The context also includes educational systems in the midst of struggle, the family at risk, changing attitude toward assimilation, rapid pace of change in the world of work, and ambiguous values. These various elements of context affect all communities of practice.

How do we know when we've created a place for realized potential? In other words, what measurements do we use to identify success in reaching potential? The following questions offer some measures of input:

- How well do we discuss who we are and who we intend to be?

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- How is the vision stated? How is it translated into mission?
- Does the mission define the mega-end, the difference our organization will make?
- Is the mission sub-divided into specific ends to meet human needs?
- What is expected in the way of work?
- Is the planning for projects clear and relevant?
- Does the annual plan provide a clear map for the work of the group?
- How are questions and contrary opinions dealt with?

The following questions offer some measures of output:

- How does our performance compare to our plan?
- How does our performance compare to our potential?
- Does our work accomplish the significant and essential things associated with mission?
- How does the impact compare to expectations (quality, timing)?
- What is the quality of relationships (trust, equity)?
- What is the quality of communications (information, behavior)?
- What is the context of the organization (respect, commitment, civility, good manners, sensitivity, forgiveness)?

One thing to keep in mind with measurement is that lack of failure may not be a measure of success of input or output. Instead it could be that expectations were too low or the wrong things were measured.

Realized potential also needs a leader who can bring people together as a mature community. Group members become a

community through understanding what's going on in the organization, accepting what the group has agreed to, and behaving as advocates. Thus, the group needs to know the mission; understand the supporting data regarding the mission and the compelling need to change; accept the direction of the organization; show willingness to change and assume a share of the responsibilities; and bring competence, contributions, and commitment to the work. Individuals become authentic team members by knowing the expectations and the things they bring to the "game." Authenticity grows from knowing "what's really going on." A mature community requires competence in technical skills, in relationships, and in affecting the context for the better. An obsession for lifetime learning is essential in order to continually deal with the present and prepare for the future.

Perhaps it can be summed up this way: vital communities of practice that realize potential will have the following attributes: truth, access, discipline, accountability, nourishment of persons, authenticity, justice, respect, hope, workable unity, tolerance, simplicity, beauty and taste, and fidelity to a mission (DePree, 1997).

### Reference

DePree, M. (1997). *Leading without power: Finding hope in serving community*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

## Diversity

### *Mining the Gold in People and Cultures*

by Rick Griggs

How do you make the most of the value different people have to offer? Can you mine this talent as if you were mining for gold? Why would a corporation spend millions to acquire a smaller company and then treat its people badly? What is the reason a team will recruit heavily for someone with urgently needed competitive skills only to have members of the team shun that person?

These are the precise issues that routinely arise during my "Diversity-Growing Together Successfully" sessions with public- and private-sector clients. Let's explore some of the changes shaping our world and see how they affect teams, acquisitions and the people that make things happen.

### *Big Changes*

The world around us keeps changing whether or not we like or even notice it. Groups of all kinds continue to evolve and adapt to societal changes. Consider these recent developments:

- For the first time in the United States, the number of births to Hispanics has surpassed the number of births to blacks. Hispanics will surpass blacks to become one of America's largest racial and ethnic groups in 2005.

- The overall number of births in the United States is projected to decline slowly until 2000, as women born during the baby boom leave their childbearing years.
- By the year 2030, minorities will make up the majority of births in the United States, according to Census Bureau projections.
- Thirty-four percent of births in 1994 were to women aged 30 and older. These mothers are more likely to be college educated and employed, making them a sought-after consumer target. The birth rate for women aged 40-44 rose 5% between 1993 and 1994, and the number of babies born to these women increased 8%.

### ***“My Dad’s a Bigot”***

It becomes serious business when diversity affects people personally. Reactions vary widely. But

managers can help resolve conflicts that might arise.

There are two methods of pulling groups closer together: an open airing of opinions, attitudes and feelings and a balanced approach strategy.

People make progress when they express their opinions. One man gave one of my diversity sessions a boost when he openly said, “My dad’s a bigot, and that’s how he raised us kids. I know it’s wrong and I’m caught between loving my parents and doing what’s right on the job.” The discussion that followed was very productive because it facilitated an open discussion of ideas and experiences among the group.

The balanced approach strategy is an equally useful tool. Since no one emotional story or threat of punishment will motivate all

employees or change everyone’s behavior, leaders, managers and diversity consultants must use a variety of methods to get results. Many employees just want the demographic and census facts—they will then make up their own minds about diversity issues. Other workers need exercises and simulations to get a feel for the concepts of multiculturalism and stereotypes. Still others, unfortunately, need coercion and strict measures to get them to behave properly. It’s like a vegetable garden where many elements combine to make a successful harvest—seeds, soil, water, fertilizer, pruning, sunshine and pesticides. The best gardeners select and then balance the top-priority items. Leaders can do it too!

To get over the fear that invariably comes with change, managers—





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## **Topic: Legacies for the Future**

**Dr. Sharon Y. Nickols, Guest  
Editor**

**Objectives** - This theme will

1. Record the accomplishments of leaders in family and consumer sciences and all of its specializations, including the following:
  - a) Leaders from various racial and ethnic groups;
  - b) Leaders in the fields of education at all levels, business and industry, and public service agencies, thus emphasizing the venues for applying the knowledge and practicing the philosophy of family and consumer sciences;
2. Draw implications about the legacy of past leaders for the future of the family and consumer sciences profession with emphasis on conditions and policy-shaping research, instruction, and service.
3. Inspire professionals to make contributions to the field.

**Overview** - Legacies for the Future focuses on the history of family and consumer sciences (domestic science and home economics) by "telling the stories" of leaders who responded to societal needs and intellectual challenges and who helped to shape the programs of study, the research, the policy initiatives, and the practice of their times. In other words, this theme hopes to

## **Call for Papers**

capture the legacies of leaders in domestic science and those who shaped the field as it evolved in the United States through 1985. Without a written record of the contributions of past leaders, the history of a profession will be lost. Because the past often points the way for the future, the thinking and actions of past leaders can provide insights to those currently in the field of family and consumer sciences. Understanding the context of events is more readily achieved when the work of leaders is documents with reference to the challenges they faced.

**Information and Deadline** - Kappa Omicron FORUM is a refereed publication outlet for both members and nonmembers. Manuscripts are due August 31, 1998.

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and their staffs—should consider the following ways to incorporate diversity into their workplace:

### **12 Diversity Tips**

1. Recognize that each person has a different background, set of values and unique view of the world.
2. Talk to people from other cultures about their backgrounds, values and principles. Get to know them! Any fears you may experience when new people enter the group will subside as you get to know them.
3. Recognize your own attitudes, biases and stereotypes. Sometimes they come from parents or family, other times from limited experience, but in any case, they exist and all people have them. Admit the situation and deal with it.
4. Think back to a situation where you were different than others in a group and recall any negative emotions or confusion you felt. These emotional memories will remind you of what others experience when feeling isolated or different at work.
5. Separate your expectations of each person from your stereotypes of his or her group. Now is the time to dissect those old attitudes and replace them with more balanced, productive assessments of individual behavior and performance.
6. Provide support and resources based on job-related and individual development needs—not on personal/group traits. Avoid assuming that all people from a group have the same talents or drawbacks.
7. Set standards for job-related requirements. Be clear that your

organization's standards of performance are directly related only to the job at hand.

8. Attribute success to effort and ability; what matters is getting the job done.
9. Attribute failure to lack of training, insufficient effort or poor resources but not to low innate ability. Never let poor performers use racism or discrimination as a smoke screen to hide their inability or unwillingness to do the job. Good performers cringe with embarrassment when badly performing people make the excuse of victimization where none exists.
10. Never make, repeat or accept jokes or comments demeaning to people based on their unchangeable traits or characteristics. If you stay in the audience, you are a part of the joke or debasing situation. Either say something to put an end to the situation or leave.
11. Find opportunities to celebrate the complex backgrounds of your work group. People thrive when they share their ethnic backgrounds and experiences.
12. Remember that a diverse workforce is today's reality and how we manage it will determine our success.

### ***Protecting Yourself***

Some people accuse the armies of consultants and lawyers (and some of us writers) of creating a nation of paranoid and politically correct robots who can no longer show any human emotion or discuss anything personal. Perhaps that is why employees often avoid acquisition transfers or new team members—they're

afraid of saying something wrong or getting sued. It's much more productive when you know the rules and then allow yourself to be human. Here are a few ideas for protecting yourself from accusations or charges:

- Understand and review company policies and guidelines.
- Listen to and show respect for all employees.
- Document instances and issues that may be questioned.
- Base feedback, praise, etc., on job-related issues.
- Base criticism and reprimands on job-related issues.
- Don't say or do anything you wouldn't in front of a spouse, prosecutor or judge.
- It's still okay to be human and to show human concern and emotion.

Today's definition of diversity is broad. Among other things, it includes women, minorities, ideas and acquisition transfers. Diversity issues involve more than ethnicity. Women's issues relate to more than gender. Acquisitions involve more than products and money. Any effort to build functioning teams works better with a balanced attack on the top five priorities. As with a gardener or gold miner, single-focused attention to one area alone rarely nets tasty vegetables, gold nuggets or lasting results. People who are smart enough to work on the side issues and on the weak links in the chain produce startling results that last.

As in life, the balanced approach takes more time, but yields higher profits.

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Rick Griggs, author/coauthor of Professional Balance, Quality Angles and The Road to Optimism, writes and teaches about corporate achievement and maintaining employee humanity and balance.

## ***Congratulations***

***The Board of Directors announces with pleasure***

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### ***Call for Papers***

Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal will be publishing a special collection of papers on the topic of "The Use of Qualitative Methods in Family and Consumer Sciences."

This special issue will include articles that address the use of qualitative methods in all areas of family and consumer sciences and related disciplines concerned with the general well-being of families and individuals, including such areas as child and family studies; family economics and management; clothing and textiles; food and nutrition; housing, equipment and design; and family and consumer sciences education.

Appropriate topics include, but are not limited to, the history of the use of qualitative methods, the conceptual issues underlying the application of qualitative methods, studies or meta analyses of studies using qualitative methods, discussions of potential expansions of qualitative methods, and methodological considerations and challenges when using qualitative methods.

The submission deadline is April 1, 1998. Please submit four copies of the manuscript, including a nonrefundable \$25 processing fee, to:

Donna Hendrickson Christensen, Guest  
Editor for Special Issue on  
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## Activity 2

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### ***Purpose: This activity will***

Explore information as the primary organizing force in any organization.

### ***Materials Needed:***

Information transparency and blank transparencies  
Overhead projector  
Flip chart and markers

### ***Detailed Procedural Steps:***

#### ***Introduction***

From the video, *Leadership and the New Science* (Wheatley, 1993), we learned that information is a key organizing principle in the universe. (Show transparency: Information is the creative energy of the universe—the substance, the invisible workings of creation.) This activity will examine the application of this scientific principle to leadership.

#### ***Experiencing and Processing***

1. Conduct a Gripe and Glee Discussion. Assign the discussion to dyads: half of the dyads describing situations where information has been used negatively, the other half where it has been used positively.
2. Share in the large group.
3. Discuss in dyads: From your memory, give examples of an organizational situation when someone had information that, if the group had had access to it, would really have helped the work of the organization. Describe other situations where information was restricted. What part could you have played in enhancing information or its flow in the organization?
4. Dialogue in dyads: Develop some guidelines for using information in organizations. Share a few on the flip chart.
5. In the large group, combine and reorganize ideas into a list of guidelines for using information. Record on transparencies.

#### ***Synergizing***

A second core organizing principle is share information. A new insight is that information is one of the primary organizational forces in the universe. Instead of creating information, information is creating life.

Information is a resource that moves through the system, disturbs the peace, nourishes new life, engenders creativity, and encourages innovation. Closely guarded information, as the source of power of the old leadership model, is counterproductive to this new understanding. In other words, information is not an entity to condense, package, and pass along in memos. Rather it must be treated as a dynamic quality that nourishes change and creative ideas. Information, freely generated and exchanged, becomes the basic ingredient of the universe.

This activity was meant to help you (a) recognize that information isn't simply something we organize but that it has the power to organize people and tasks and (b) understand the importance of constantly receiving, interpreting, and using information to adapt to the ever-evolving environment.

#### ***Reference:***

*Leadership and the new science* (video). (1993). Carlsbad, CA: CRM Films.



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## *Message from Janelle Walter*

*Chair, Board of Directors*

How on earth can a year pass so quickly. I'll give you the secret. Volunteer: a word filled with great expectations. Volunteer! Your skills, desires, and dreams become instant wishes.



You'll be praised, loved, and admired. Your time will be gobbled up. You'll get to work with others in ways you never imagined. My year as Chair has been everything I could have hoped. Conclave was such great fun. I trust everyone remembers the songs for the Lone Star State and the clowns on Saturday night. I

frequently think about the leadership model and especially the new insights about chaos. There are such fine people who volunteer to work for and with Kappa Omicron Nu. I am blessed to have shared their intelligence, kindness, and nurturing. Our volunteers function with great thoroughness. Thanks everybody.

I want to thank Anne Weiner for her counseling as I stepped into her shoes. Our Student Representatives,

Elizabeth and Scott, were superb. Thanks also to the hard working Board members and to Dorothy Mitstifer and her assistant Dee for always being there.

My children and husband say thanks that they won't experience another January meeting—I went off and left them last year with no electricity, no heat, no food. That was a great way to really be missed.

Here's a little poem from a book my Mum gave me. (I remember seeing the card on Princess Diana's casket which said "Mum.")

A horse can't pull while kicking,  
 This fact I merely mention,  
 And he can't kick while pulling,  
 Which is my chief contention.

Let's imitate the good ole horse  
 And lead a life that's fitting;  
 Just pull an honest load, and then  
 There'll be no time for kicking.