

Leadership is the balance between positive influence and effective action. Words are the currency of positive influence. Say the right words often and they become part of your pathway to effective action. Say them rarely and they will always get in the way of your leadership effectiveness and your team's performance. These days of leadership crisis are a good time to revisit the wisdom of four ideas suggested to us in the world of healthcare.

### The Courage to be Vulnerable

The world of Hospice reminds us to speak four sets of words to our friends and loved ones when they are in their last days or when you are:

Thank you

I'm sorry

I love you

Good Bye

The human challenge is to learn to speak these words throughout life...not just at the end of our days. These words apply to everyone who leads. Senior leaders must step away from the results agenda of leadership's bottom line and step into the interpersonal side of workplace relationships where the bottom-line work is achieved. When leaders balance their attention to positive influence and effective action their leadership is sustainable for the long haul.

### A Culture of Gratitude

Saying Thank You has a profound impact on your team. This leadership assignment includes team members, customers, investors, and vendors. Find regular opportunities to catch people doing something right. Then say Thank you! Those eight letters express gratitude that drives commitment and productivity. Whom will you thank today? Do it in person. Say it now.

### A Culture of Humility

There is a difference between arrogance and confidence. Arrogance is the opposite of humility. Confidence is not. Arrogant leaders have a hard time saying, I'm Sorry. Confident leaders have the ability to realize their mistakes, the humility to say I'm Sorry, the willingness to learn from their misstep, and the intuition to share the lesson learned.

### A Culture of Esteem

Typically, leaders do not say I Love You to team members, but they do have the opportunity to demonstrate genuine love in valuing the uniqueness of each team member. Appreciation communicates that someone notices exceptional work and a positive attitude. Not only do leaders notice but they offer respect and affirmation. The esteem of a team leader reinforces the productivity, potential, and the personal drive of each employee.

### A Culture of Transitions

Leadership has its seasons. There may be an appropriate time to move on and say, Good Bye. Leaders may recognize the need for a seasonal transition before others do. They understand when it is best for the organization to get a fresh perspective in redefining its purpose and strategy for a new generation of impact. These leaders also appreciate the need to leave well and give the successor every prospect of a smooth transition.

### Leadership Debrief

Do you know how and when to say each of these four statements? Will you? Look for the occasions, find the right words, and speak personally and with empathy.

Learning and Leading with you,

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