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Culture Change in Practice

Time to Reflect



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Posted by Steph Kilen

"Culture Change in Practice" is our own weblog where people can become involved in a conversation about Culture Change as it is practiced by professionals in real nursing homes. Feel free to join the conversation, or post a comment about something you have learned on your journey.

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I saw a quote in a recent Newsweek article* about election strategy that had me thinking about why it is so hard to change and learn new things. Here it is:

"When FDR was making radio addresses, 'people had the time needed for reflection, to mix emotion with facts and reason,' says [Antonio] Damasio. 'But now, with 24-hour cable news and the Web, you have a climate in which you don't have time to reflect. The amount and speed of information, combined with less time to analyze every new development, pushes us toward the emotion-based decision pathway."

"...a climate in which you don't have time to reflect..." Any of you familiar with that feeling? So, we cling to "the way we've always done things" because we know it is, if not the best way to do things, at least a safe bet. It's worked this far, right? We put a wall up to protect ourselves and the institution because we don't have time to look at alternatives and learn new things. We barely have time to get everybody to the dining room, for Pete's sake.

But we must find time, or at least slow down a little, if we are ever to realize that there is a better way to care for

our elders and to work together as a team. We need to value individuals and effectiveness as much as efficiency and task.

I have previously posted blogs and handouts on the spiral of learning and debriefing - practices that can help us process exactly what's going on besides our gut reactions. In time, these pre- and post-action tools can become the new "way things are done."

Anyone have any good ideas for carving out time for learning?

**** "Heard Any Good Stories Lately?" By Sharon Begley, Newsweek, Sept. 22, 2008***