

Action Pact, Inc.

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Notes on Creating a Learning Climate

By *LaVrene Norton*

...nurture the learning climate around them... water the soil, pull the weed barriers, cover them on cold nights and use the proper nutrients. Most importantly ... be patient as I wait for the time, weather, soil, water to work together with the seed and grow the plant.

We have always thought about how we had to be in control of everything - we had to guarantee a safe place for the residents and a regulations compliant environment, good clinical care, and satisfy the families -- as well as try to make the residents happy.

That's such an enormous task that the only way we've known how to do it is to constantly scramble to control everybody in the nursing home. Watching for everything, writing procedures for everything, teaching everyone about everything -- and still we're not always successful.

But nobody wants to work in a world that is constantly controlled in every way and where their contribution is appreciated only if they do exactly what the bosses say. So after awhile you either leave or fall into the drudgery of doing what you're told every day, every minute.

And nobody wants to live in such a world! Do you?

The answer is to control the climate instead. You can do that by creating a learning climate. It's a phenomenally freeing experience. The leader looks at all

the details that need to be in place to nurture critical thinking, great relationships, attention to care and happy people - staff, residents and their families.

As this happens, it changes everything. Historically, information has been handed from the top down in departmental silos and controlled by reports only from charge to charge. New methods of communication can be reframed by the team to include everyone with a need to know in a warm and friendly team communication style that meets their needs (not always written).

I like to use the example of planting carrots. I don't go out to the garden twice a day, point my finger at the carrots while reading from a procedure that clearly details my expectation and say, "Carrots, grow!"

Instead I nurture the learning climate around them. I water the soil, pull the weed barriers, cover them on cold nights and use the proper nutrients. Most importantly I must be patient as I wait for the time, weather, soil, water to work together with the seed and grow the plant.

Have You Read?

House As A Mirror of Self: Exploring the Deeper Meaning of Home

By
Clare Cooper Marcus

If You Want to Build a Ship

by *Bev Cowdrick*

Bev Cowdrick, Administrator at Huntersville Oaks Nursing Home in Huntersville, NC shares her experiences with growing a learning organization.

I've had this quote on my desk for years:

How to Build Ships

If you want to build a ship, don't herd people together to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea.

-- Antoine de Saint-Exupery (1900-1944)

That's it in a nutshell, isn't it? Such a beautiful concept. But not something

they teach you about in nursing school or management school or on the job much.

I became Administrator of the 289-person SNFs in 2003. When the physical infrastructure started to fail in our very old building, we decided in 2004 to build a replacement facility and embrace resident-directed care. The culture in our building was one of deep caring already. Many of our residents and staff had been born, worked, lived, and seen their relatives die in our building. We already had a critical mass of residents, staff and senior administrators who were

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Ship, continued

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committed to creating a state-of-the-art environment into which the community could move.

By 2004, the pioneers in culture change had learned a lot and spread the word far and wide. As my organization began to design our new facility, we took four managers to the Pioneer Network conference in Kansas in 2004, and began to understand that deep culture change requires engaging and empowering everyone who lives, works or spends time in the building.

We picked up a copy of Action Pact's Champions for Care workbook and brought it back home. It gave us a guide for starting to open up discussion by using learning circles to talk about how to design our new building and what kind of community we wanted to have.

We also brought back Action Pact's A Way Back Home video about culture change. It helped us to "warm the soil" by naming what we do in the typical nursing home for what it really is...inhumane. We showed it all over the building to lots of groups of staff members, residents and family members. The part where Steve Shields talks about all the "slumpers" around the nursing station really got to people. And the part where he gets passionate about how we dunk people into tubs of water was deeply moving for people. The CNA vignette called "These Hands" opened the hearts of our CNAs to feeling like we were beginning to be open to respecting and listening to them.

Then in February of this year I went to Action Pact's Choreography of Change intensive. We all got copies of Peter Senge's book *The Dance of Change*. I couldn't put it down. He lays out a theory of the learning organization and what that means. LaVrene and others have translated Senge's theories into practical and easy steps, the simplest of which is the learning circle.

Reading *The Dance of Change*, I had my big aha moment: the only way to create lasting and meaningful change is to

create an organization where everybody is continually and collectively learning from their experiences and has the authority and skills to effectively work together to incorporate that learning into the work at hand.

I heard a CNA who is a leader in her neighborhood say that when she's not there, things sort of fall apart. And they do. They count on her to lead the way and keep things going, and they don't pick it up as well on her days off. She is starting to understand that her role now is to help her team learn how to take ownership and leadership themselves. That's her new learning and she is sharing it and building on it. Wow. That's the beginnings of a real learning organization.

Once you get people in your community speaking truths to each other and going from there, you can let go of trying to manage it all.

I realize that the more we become a learning organization, the more I am willing to give up control and "management". The accountability still falls to me as Administrator, so I want to know that we as an organization are delivering on what I'm ultimately responsible for. Once the skills of the learning organization are hardwired into everyone, better and more timely decisions get made than I could ever make on my own or with a small group of managers. There's more creativity and liveliness. Good ideas spread like wildfire. Then it's just a matter of standing back and observing, offering advice and coaching as a mentor when I have insights and experience to share.

We have started referring to the learning organization as often as possible. I take every opportunity to point out actions that reflect how we're learning from each other and adjusting what we do. And I say, "That's a learning organization." People are starting to get it.

All administrative and service staff members have been invited to join a neighborhood as an "extended family member" and they're being asked to spend at least 15 minutes a day in the neighborhood enjoying a daily pleasure with some resident -- going to the garden, working a puzzle, whatever. Many are spending much more time than

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Ship, continued

“Leadership is helping others do the right thing; they will not follow you. You must somehow stir in them what has been stirred in you, and then ask them to join you in working together for change.”

– LaVrene Norton and Steve Shields in *In Pursuit of the Sunbeam*.

that. We are having learning circles in the neighborhood teams and all sorts of creativity and initiatives are coming from them. The CNAs are asking for more decision-making power about things like which room a resident is recommended to move to. They know the social order of the 'hood better than anybody. So we change and things get better.

People are so ready to take more leadership. We have assigned a coach to each neighborhood and we're slowly working our way through Champions for Care to build group process, leadership and conflict resolution skills.

We're also incorporating residents into our design teams for our new building. They've got great ideas and experience. It's a joy to see them sitting around a table working on a hard finish design project with staff. We'll have a much better building for it. I wish we had started earlier. I guess that's part of my learning. We're all in it together.

Choreography of Culture Change

Prepare yourself to take a major facilitating role in shaping the future of long-term care.

– a weeklong intensive grounding in culture change principles and practices by Action Pact, the consulting group that has introduced culture change to hundreds of facilities around the US, Canada and Australia.

- Are you a NURSING HOME ADMINISTRATOR intent on redesigning your environment to bring about resident-centered care?
- Are you a CONSULTANT wishing to enter the exciting new market of culture change in long term care?
- Are you a QUALITY IMPROVEMENT specialist focusing on culture change in nursing homes?

Seven Days of Education - Learn, practice, discuss, critique, grow---You'll learn about the stages of culture change, self and organizational assessment, adult learning theory, group dynamics, facilitation skills, leadership models, teaching leadership, assessment skills and much more.

Doing What's Right

by Lorna Gartzke

Lorna Gartzke is a living embodiment of the above left quote. Here she explains how "doing what's right" is at the heart of the learning culture at Lutheran Homes of Oconomowoc in Oconomowoc, WI where they are in their first year of living the Household Model.

“You grow by experience. The old adage comes to mind---You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink. After years of telling staff what to do (to follow the massive numbers of state and federal rules) you could see that the ones following the rules were doing so not because they were told to, but rather because their heart was in the right place and because they could see how it benefited the resident. So, I finally realized “pulling at the heart strings” was the answer. From that point on I worked

with this premise--If you were in a nursing home what would you want? How would you want to be treated? When staff came to the understanding that it could be them in this nursing home they looked at things a whole different way. It stems from our mission which in simple terms equates to the golden rule -----Treat others as you wish to be treated.

Now, staff comply positively because they see it as the "right thing" to do. They can now remind co-workers of the "right thing" if they need a reminder. When you have co-workers monitoring each other and each staff person relies on his or her own internal ethical monitoring of what is right those who in the old model had supervisory

Action Pact Training Calendar

**Sept 24-30:
Choreography of
Culture Change
(Milwaukee, WI)**

Registering is easy.

Call Action Pact at (414)258-3649, or download the registration form at <http://www.culturechangenow.com/choreography.html>

Print it out and fax it to us at (414)476-8799.

\$2600 tuition

The fee of \$2600 includes tuition, materials, videotaping, written recommendations, lunch each day and dinner on two evenings.

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What's Right, cont'd

August, 2006

New Book: **In Pursuit of the Sunbeam**

By
Steve Shields and LaVrene Norton

The sunbeam -- the right to home, has eluded the frail elders of this country for too long. It is time for a change. *In Pursuit of the Sunbeam* is a guide for individuals and organizations looking to embrace the true home of the resident-directed Household Model. Based on James O. Prochaska's stages of change, the Norton and Shields *Change Matrix* plots the transformational journey from beginning awareness of the need for change on a personal level through physical and organizational reconstruction into households licensed as skilled nursing facilities.

The authors share their experiences with nursing home transformation in the form of organizational strategies, change theory, practical development practices, leadership behaviors and inspirational storytelling. This book is the quintessential "How-To" of the Household Model - the future of long-term care. For more information or to purchase the book, visit <http://www.culturechangenow.com/book-ipots.html>

responsibilities instead now can take on the guiding role of mentor. I rarely hear this anymore: "Well, Lorna said we have to....." They do it because they *know* what is right for the resident.

Household Toolkit: **Household Matters, A Good Life 'Round the Clock**

In Pursuit of the Sunbeam by Steve Shields and LaVrene Norton and the new toolkit for Households - Household Matters, A Good Life 'Round the Clock were developed by Meadowlark Hills and Action Pact, funded by a grant from the Commonwealth Fund, the Sunflower Foundation and the Kansas Department on Aging. The Toolkit includes over 2000 pages: Policies and Procedures for Households; an Integrated Human Resource system including performance tools and job descriptions for household functions; a QI process for self-led teams in households; 7 video clips for training on 3 DVDs; a Training Guide for Self-led Teams; as well as one copy of the book In Pursuit of the Sunbeam. You may purchase the toolkit from the Pioneer Network, the Aging Research Institute or the Kansas Health Care Association.

Our First Week At Home

A letter to my Choreography buddies

by Susie Klierer

Hello, all!

Well, July 24 was our big moving day!! We have all but one of the 24 residents in our two new Park Homes, and already things are quiet and relaxed. Some of the residents miss the hubbub of the "big house" but most appreciate the

atmosphere. We have lots of learning yet to do, as far as systems go, but overall we are pleased and enjoying the transition. The higher the level of staff (management, administration, etc) the bigger the hassles, but frontline workers and residents seem to be settling in. One resident with a history of roaming all over the facility in her wheel chair spent over 4 hours working on a jigsaw puzzle with staff ... and then she asked for seconds at supper. No Ensure for her that evening! It really is remarkable.

As you all work toward changes, be encouraged to know that it is possible, and it is worth it.

Blessings to you all on your journey. Be safe.
Susie

Susie Klierer is an RN at Parkside Homes, a CCRC located in Hillsboro, Kansas. They have recently moved into two new households and are renovating hallways into three more households of 13 residents each. Their long range plans are to build three more Park Homes and then renovate the present nursing home into a Main Street, new kitchen, and AL. They are not yet receiving guests in their new home, as they have just moved in, but they will let us know in a few months if the residents are interested in visits from other organizations, and the process for scheduling a visit.

Lu Janzen, CEO, shared additional delights. She stated that "After two weeks in the Park Homes, nurses tell me that we are using less PRN meds and less food supplements. One resident who has not walked since admission about a year ago walked from her room to the dining room one morning and didn't fall. Staff did not even know that she could walk!"

