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THE INTUITIVE MANAGER AND INNOVATION IN HEALTH CARE

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Introduction

Few would argue that our health care system is in need of change, but change comes very slowly and has to overcome many resistances. Intuition can facilitate changes that are healing to all levels of our health care system.

Intuition and change

Intuition gives birth to innovation. Innovation results in social and organizational change. Highly intuitive managers promote change by sensing "what could be." By contrast, managers with little intuition resist change by reinforcing "what is." In an absolute sense, "what is" is no more real than "what could be." Either reality is equally available at all times to all healthcare organizations.

"What is" always benefits the empowered group in the institution. They will struggle to maintain it. For this reason, the intuitive manager always meets substantial community and organizational resistance when s/he discusses "what could be." S/he must be a powerful visionary to convince people they should trade in their current reality for an imagined [envisioned?] reality. This holds true even if the current reality is unpleasant.

Many healthcare professionals believe it is better to endure hard times than to face the unknown and a possible loss of their current estate. Anyone engaged in physician education has experienced this attitude many times. Doctors are uncomfortable with their current reality and yet hesitate to explore alternatives for fear of losing what they already possess. Boards of county hospitals may complain about their statutory limitations but be fearful of a reconfiguration and change of ownership. The CEO of a failing hospital may let it fail rather than accept the unknown reality of a merger or alliance with a stronger institution. Why is this so? A major reason is that we do not teach our healthcare professionals to manage uncertainty or view ambiguity as a desirable precondition of creativity. Their security is vested in the status quo and the "old ways," not in themselves or their vision. Identification with the present or the past is acceptable in a slowly changing society. It is not suitable for our new millennium.

Our focus should always be upon "what could be" (possibility) and "what should be" (value). We are the architects of our future healthcare system. We are the creators of new realities. Intuition is our major design tool. The intuitive manager uses her vision to create new realities for her organization and community. The non-intuitive manager does not possess a

reconstructive vision and therefore must manage within the existing reality constraints of her organization and community.

The intuitive manager is a world changer. The nonintuitive manager is a world stabilizer. Both have an important role to play in the healthcare field. One creates organizational change; the other maintains organizational stability.

For the intuitive manager, management is design and reality is infinitely substitutable. By contrast, for the nonintuitive manager, management is adaptation and current reality represents the only way things could be. Intuitive managers and non-intuitive managers, therefore, have different worldviews, different management styles and experience different consequences in their administration of hospitals and healthcare organizations.

Interestingly enough, both types of managers experience reality as confirming their views, since reality always reflects the prevailing mindset of the viewer. This makes it difficult for any manager to learn from his experience. His experience always confirms his expectations. A constructive avenue for change is to demonstrate to the manager that if he changes his expectations, his experience will change. This is the inner game of management. In the inner game, a change of consciousness brings about a change in external circumstance.

How do you bring about a change in consciousness? Ironically, the best way is to teach a non-intuitive manager to become intuitive. By learning to listen to his inner voice, the manager escapes cultural hypnosis and begins to see through the glamour of current reality. The inner game is the key to changing the outer game. Without an inner change, all the manager can do is rearrange the outer pieces. Most healthcare management is a rearrangement of "what is" and not a creation of "what could be."

Every healthcare manager has both an analytical mind and an intuitive mind. The analytical mind can improve upon anything that exists. The intuitive mind must be used to bring new things into existence. Creation is right hemisphere. Methods improvement is left hemisphere. A healthcare manager with an integrated consciousness uses her intuitive powers to give birth to new realities and her analytical powers to further develop these realities.

For the intuitive manager, the universe is an invitation to join in the dance of creation. The intuitive manager romances reality and thereby creates new pathways and possibilities. Intuition is the light of mind that guides him in his embrace of infinite possibility. Intuition suggests new connections and potential relationships that escape the [beacon][cage? Confines]] of analytical consciousness. Intuition dwells in the shadow of the conscious mind and generates a faint glow barely discernable in the bright light of the ego. Intuition is seeing with the eyes shut. Intuition is a still, small voice that is barely audible amidst the din of daily activities. Intuition is hearing with the ears closed. Intuition is an extension of the mind as it reaches out and perceives what is beyond mind. Intuition is feeling without hands. Intuition is inner knowing. It is immediate apprehension. Intuition goes beyond reason or intellect. Intuition becomes innovation when it sees what could be and then implements the vision.

Are you an intuitive manager? Do you have a vision of the future?

Everyone is intuitive to some degree. Intuition is a natural gift that can be further developed with intention and practice. Intuition is not a stand-alone faculty. It should complement the rational powers of the mind. Intuition is a higher harmonic of instinct and will become a more important management skill as we move into the future.

The future is not logical. It is an intuited construction, not a prediction or a simple extension of the present.

Intuitives live in a different world than non-intuitives. Intuition requires a different paradigm or worldview. For the intuitive manager the universe is one fabric – an interconnected whole. All parts are joined with subtle ties. All parts are affected by the destiny of each part. The manager manages a system, which is always more than the sum of its parts. Each system is contained within a larger system. All systems reflect each other. No problems exist in isolation nor can they be solved in isolation. Systems are related to each other via resonance, i.e., common properties that are in harmony. All human problems are systems problems and all solutions may be addressed productively as systems solutions. Intuition [occurs][comes in?] when the manager perceives a higher order of system connectedness.

Intuition apprehends a pattern where before the perception was one of dissociated elements. Intuition knows that when any system does badly, all systems suffer accordingly. Violation of this premise is currently evident in some multi-institutional healthcare systems that are trying to profit at the expense of their members and are more control oriented than nurturing in their relationships.

The intuitive manager views actuality and reality differently. Actuality is what is, and is essentially unknowable. It is too big to bend the mind around. Reality is what you think is, and the perception varies with each person. We all share one actuality, but live in various realities. We can think of these various realities as tunnels through the Void. Imagine the Void as a mountain with various tunnels running through it. You live in one of these tunnels. Around you are other tunnels running through the same mountain but going to different destinations. You are unaware of their existence and will remain so until you confront the Void (see the face of the mountain). Each tunnel dweller assumes his tunnel is the only reality there is and that everyone lives within it. Such is not the case. Some of your acquaintances live in different tunnels and experience different realities. Can you change tunnels? Yes, the light of intuition will reveal the face of the mountain and you will see new tunnels with additional resources and different destinations. This metaphor of the mountain is a powerful consciousness raising technique and will loosen your reality anchors. Meditate upon it!

Intuitive managers change the destiny of their organizations by perceiving pathways not visible to others. I was once explaining an alternative reality to one of my health administration students. He said, "I don't see it." I replied, "I know you don't see it, but don't assume because you don't see it, it is not here – most of reality is not within your range of your vision." My conversation with the student highlights an important insight. Everything is always here. The question is how much do you see?

Insight is inner sight. You can starve to death in a full pantry if your line of vision is level with the floor. Abundance means looking up.

Systems that are tuned to one another can transfer energy from the system of higher potential to the system of lower potential. Intuition is a way of linking with high potential suprasystems. The intuitive manager comes into conscious harmony with transcendent energy systems, i.e., larger patterns of order, and thereby becomes the recipient of a down-flow of energy and images of possibility. Since all conscious systems in the universe are evolving to higher stages of order or completion, their pattern of becoming can often be intuited. When you imagine your hospital in its ideal form, you are attempting to come into resonance with its larger order or pattern of being. If you are successful in your linking, you will become a conscious agent of evolution in the American healthcare system. Considering the current state of health policy in the United States, conscious agents of evolution are certainly needed to

create a vision for our new century. Healthcare policymaking is now on the floor of the pantry – a shuffling of the outer pieces. What is needed are players who know the inner game.

The world of the intuitive manager is filled with rings of consciousness. Everything is viewed as surrounded by a circle of awareness. This is a limiting factor for both the healthcare organization and its people. Intuition expands the ring by sensing what lies outside it. Once the outside is clearly perceived, it comes inside and the ring expands to contain it. The challenge of the intuitive manager is to expand the ring of consciousness of her organization, thereby changing its destiny.

For the intuitive manager the mind is viewed as the ultimate management instrument. The body/mind vehicle is all the manager has to make her way in the world. Limitations exist not in the world but in her vehicle. The focus on the inner game will stimulate healthcare managers to develop new consciousness skills.

How can you increase your powers of intuition?

You must first open your self to this type of experience. Like lucid dreams, intuition comes to those who seek the experience. Resolve to develop this capacity and it will begin to appear. If you think you can't, you can't. If you think you can, you can. Pay attention to your hunches. Record all flashes of insight. Celebrate your intuitive breakthroughs and they will appear with greater frequency.

Learn to enter the silence. Meditation, reflection and a quiet mind allow subliminal impulses to rise to the surface of consciousness. Since intuition is beyond thinking, thinking tends to block it. Don't think too much about your problems. Fix them in consciousness and then put them out of mind. The answer will find you.

Be passionate about what you want to know or find. Half-hearted attempts will not trigger intuition. There must be a strong displacement of energies for the balance factor of intuition to appear. Intuition is the surprise guest that visits us on our passionate quest. What do you really care about? That is the most likely arena for the appearance of intuition. For Jonas Salk it was the discovery of a vaccine for polio. What is it for you?

Get rid of your little hang-ups and prejudices. Intuition requires an open mind and a willingness to rethink all values, opinions and beliefs. The defective ego will distort any intuitive message to make it conform to existing emotional blockages. Intuition requires a clear channel from the superconscious through the unconscious to the conscious levels of mind. An intuitive insight will pick up any existing garbage on its pathway of descent. Commit to the pursuit of truth wherever that leads you and intuition will be your constant companion.

Practice wide-angle vision. Intuition is an apprehension of a larger pattern of order. If you are too narrow in your problem definition, you may rule out an intuitive solution. Always seek first the largest frame of reference for problem solution and then use a funnel technique to narrow down your alternative interventions.

Challenge your limiting assumptions. Nothing has to be the way it is. Reality is infinitely substitutable. Many people make assumptions that prevent a whole range of solutions lying outside those assumptions. Intuition works best when you seek to "find the way" with no preconditions or limitations on the answer. By definition, intuition is something you would never think of.

Disidentify from your current situation. If you are too invested, fearful or protective of your current situation, you are not open to messages of change. The intuitive person has a "light hold" on everything. You must relax your grip to have something new placed in your hand. Let go of the old and embrace the new is the motto of the innovator.

Look for hidden patterns and interdependencies. Nothing is as simple or obvious as it seems. Keep asking "what is behind that and what is behind that and what is behind that?" Finally your understanding of what you see will be at such a subtle level that only an intuitive insight will suffice. This is a method of exhausting the ego and forcing it to become dependent upon a more subtle level of consciousness. If instead you are satisfied with surface explanations, that is where your awareness will remain.

Get in the mood by reading books and articles on intuition and innovation. You need the right mindset to become intuitive. Much of healthcare management is too left hemisphere and the mind is in a logic mode rather than an intuitive mode. Appropriate reading tunes the mind and increases its receptivity.

Be patient. Like any other human capacity, intuition takes time to fully flower. Remember you are not giving up anything when you become intuitive. You are adding a new facet to your being. Make haste slowly.

How can you nurture intuitive development in your organization?

Intuition is the preferred cognitive style of people we call "intuitives." Who are the intuitives in your organization? Who perceives patterns in the making and possibility waiting to happen? Every hospital should go through a process of discovery and attempt to identify its intuitive members. Intuitives may appear in the most unlikely places. They are not hard to locate, however. Simply announce that you are interested in everyone's visions of the best possible future for your institution. Encourage people to either write up their visions or dictate them into a tape recorder and submit them to you. You may be surprised at the yield. The most intuitive member in your organization may be working in the laundry or the maintenance department. Ordinarily, you would not consider placing such a person on your strategic planning committee. In this case, you should do just that. Remember, intuition is not a respecter of persons or necessarily a companion of high status individuals. The job of management is to capture the wisdom of the organization wherever it is found. Do you have an intuitive board member? Do you have a few intuitive physicians? Who on your management team is an intuitive? If you are not pleased with the answer to these questions, at least you know the type of people you need to recruit.

In summary

For the innovator intuition is the golden key that unlocks new corridors of the mind, new realities and unimaginable possibilities. Become a conscious agent of evolution in the American healthcare system. Learn to play the inner game and stop simply rearranging the outer pieces. This is the final installment of the six-part series on innovation. Thank you for allowing me to be part of your consciousness. I will meet you in a new tunnel.

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