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Leadership Meets Ethics

Ethics is one of the first concepts that comes to mind when one evokes leadership.

This session demystifies the notion of ethics and proves that ethics contributes to good governance but also to economic success.

Furthermore, ethical leaders are the ones who can truly motivate their staff.

CON-GORAL GUIDANCE On congruency of goals and morals for successful leadership on healthcare

Dr. Gregor Hans-Erhard Becker, Associate Professor for Bioethics and Philosophy of Science and Technology, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland

Dr Becker gave a very informative and entertaining presentation on CON-GORAL guidance. While exploring the topic of leadership in ethics he used multimedia clips to illustrate his ideas. Who would have thought Shakespeare and Star Trek had links to ethics in healthcare management!

Dr Becker believes that goals in healthcare can only be accomplished by leadership that is adjusted in a particular way; congruency of goals and morals is essential. Contrary to popular belief, morals have a strong practical background. Morals define the course of action to take among people and have their roots in superior needs, beliefs and goals.

Taking the example of the first humans on earth Dr Becker explained how moral codices are formed. Their basic need and goal was survival and they learned by experience that this is achieved by living in groups. The human group needed practical rules to organise the goal-oriented coexistence of individuals and the moral codex was born. Basic moral attitudes of groups are often adjusted in order to ensure they cover all necessary actions to accomplish the goal. This can be seen in cases of using violence to fight for the freedom of your country or treating patients without insurance to fulfil your Christian goal of a charitable hospital.

To enforce and achieve these goals adequate leadership structures are essential. The character of leadership and the character of leaders have to show a congruency of goals and morals to be successful. Incongruence of goals and morals will not only decrease the productivity of coworkers involved, but the goals themselves will be corrupted. The goal defines the leader and how the group should be led and the longevity of an organisation is not dependent on ethics and morals but on the suitability of the leader.

Economic goals of a place of compassion like a hospital can cause moral conflicts. Dr Becker concludes however, with good morals, goals and good leaders there will always be success. He used the example of the present economic goals in many hospitals and how they are focused not on profit but in treating people equally and ensuring beds for everyone, therefore fulfilling their moral goal.

The Secrets of Successful Leadership

Prof. Ddr. Michael Lehofer, medical director of the Sigmund Freud Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital Graz, Austria

Prof. Lehofer began his presentation with the question "what makes people allow themselves to be guided?" He believes that people will allow themselves to be led if their needs are being satisfied. Although everyone has varying

needs and likes and dislikes we do have common basic needs and they play a prominent role in allowing to be led. The needs of desire, bonding, control and self-esteem are inherent in everyone and fulfilling these basic needs is a proof of good leadership and a tremendous incentive for professional motivation.

He defined the basic need for desire as a fundamental need for signalling when other needs and basic needs have been satisfied. If someone is

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well bonded his need for desire will lead to the fulfilment of secure bonding. Similarly the need for self-esteem can be regarded as a result of the satisfaction of all other basic needs.

Prof. Lehofer illustrated man's inherent need for bonding using the comparison with other mammals: human beings stay attached to their mothers considerably longer than any other species. Bonding remains important even during adult independence.

Control is also important. In a psychological sense, control means a person's ability to influence his/her environment in his/her own way. When his/her need for control is satisfied, a feeling of self-efficacy sets in. So we are self-efficacious when we experience ourselves as being autonomous. The feeling of autonomy is strongly connected to our identity as individuals. We are happy when we are bound and at the same time enjoy full autonomy over our lives. But what do these needs have to do with management?

A good leader must convey all four of these ideas. Prof. Lehofer believes that the art of leadership is the secret of enabling people to commit themselves while at the same time allowing for sufficient creative scope for independent action.

It must be conveyed to employees that they have been seen, that their managers notice and appreciate the work that they do. Receiving praise raises self-esteem, which in turn increases productivity.

He concluded his presentation on the secrets of successful leadership emphasising the importance of the strategic side of leadership but also the need for adaptability, since leaders should not follow a goal too vehemently and be prepared to sway from it. (LC)

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