

Introducing “The Coaching Forum”



As the worlds of health care, nursing, and leadership become more complex and demanding, what does it take to be a successful leader? What does it *really* take to achieve professional goals and personal effectiveness while living a balanced and authentic life? Is it even possible?

Yes! But there is also no doubt that the requirements of leadership have never been more rigorous. Are you up to the task? Can you do it with the knowledge, skills, and experience you have right now, today? Can you do it all on your own? Most likely the answer to all three questions is yes.

But the good news is that you don't have to do it alone. You are privileged to belong to a professional community in which there are many others from whom to learn and with whom to grow. In this column we intend to create a living venue for interactive dialogue about the art and practice of great leadership in the face of your real opportunities and challenges. This column is devoted to you, the readers of *Nurse Leader*, the leaders and aspiring leaders of nursing in the United States and elsewhere.

Starting with the next issue, The Coaching Forum will address your questions, dilemmas, and thoughtful consideration of great leadership. What is it? What is it for you? What conditions allow you to achieve it? What prevents you from attaining it? What does it take for your leadership to shine? When are you less successful? What are your greatest leadership challenges today? What would help you address those challenges? What would you like to hear from others who are dedicated to your learning and success?

This forum invites your voice, your ideas, your thoughts about the questions above and your other leadership dilemmas. It offers an opportunity to explore the nursing, health care, and leadership issues that are most salient for you.

The vehicle for this conversation is coaching, which here means that we will ask ques-

tions more often than we will tell you what to do. We will do our best to avoid simplistic answers that will do a disservice to the reader and to the issue. Instead, we will invite understanding, investigate context, ask provocative questions, identify blind spots, propose alternatives, and uncover additional opportunities for learning. We will discuss bad habits, too—those thoughts and actions that prevent leaders from achieving their goals effectively and with grace.

Through coaching, our focus will be on developing new leadership practices and strengthening the ones we already have. Our dialogue will be enriched by the viewpoints of Roxane Spitzer, PhD, RN, FAAN, the editor of *Nurse Leader*, as well as the other distinguished members of the editorial board. As your Coaching Forum columnist and resident executive coach, I will draw on years of coach training and over two decades of senior health care leadership experience. Most important, I will rely on more than 3000 hours of professional executive coaching engagements, with the majority of that coaching provided for nurse leaders and their teams throughout the United States.

All nurses who consider themselves leaders or aspiring leaders are encouraged to participate in this column. If you have been a manager for years, your voice will be appreciated for your knowledge and your willingness to still ask tough questions and to learn. We also extend a special welcome to those who are newer to leadership or are considering management roles for the first time.

This column is about you and for you. Please submit your leadership idea, dilemma, or question to The Coaching Forum, c/o d.drennan@elsevier.com. We will address your contributions individually or we will work with them collectively as themes emerge.

Thank you in advance. Your offerings will ensure the relevance of this column to your leadership life. Let's make no mistake.

We are in a time of great challenge and unprecedented opportunity for nurse leaders. It calls for sustained leadership, and sustainable leadership requires mastery. Mastery is neither a lofty ideal nor a static state. It is not a single destination, a place we reach through position or age. Rather, true mastery is about continual practice of our chosen craft and perpetual refinement of our talents. By definition, a master's skills are frequently stretched and repeatedly challenged. A true master's expertise evolves and deepens in every circumstance. Please join us on this journey.

Catherine Robinson-Walker has worked with nurse leaders for more than two decades. She is recognized as a master certified coach by the International Coach Federation, and she is President of The Leadership Studio®. Catherine can be reached at www.leadershipstudio.com or 510-531-6391.

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