

VALUES — KEY TO EFFECTIVE LEADERS

REVIEW BY SR. CATHERINE O'CONNOR, CSB, Ph.D.

As we seek to navigate through the turbulent waters of health care, what North Star will guide us? Values, says Carson F. Dye, in his book, *Leadership in Healthcare: Essential Values and Skills*.

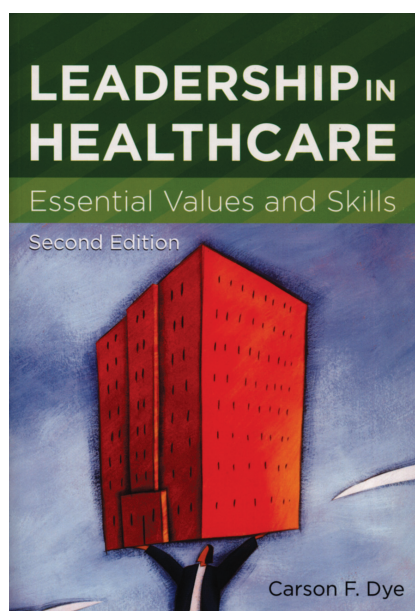
Senior vice president in the executive search firm Witt/Kieffer's Toledo, Ohio, office, Dye suggests there are skill sets and knowledge common to all leaders of health care institutions, but he believes values play a major role in defining the most effective.

In his book, a title in the American College of Healthcare Executives management series, Dye defines values as ingrained principles that guide behaviors and thoughts. Leaders who possess strong personal and professional values that are integrated and emanate from within are leaders who provide direction, inspire confidence and develop trust in a health care organization, he writes.

The book contains four sections. Each section elucidates a particular theme, and each chapter concludes by asking thought-provoking questions, providing vignettes for discussion and recommending current reading in the field.

In Part I, Dye describes realities in health care that have remained with us since his book's first edition in 2000. He outlines current obstacles and challenges and describes how health care leaders need to depend even more on personally espoused values to manage their leadership responsibilities.

Part II invites the leader to explore his or her own code of values and examines its influence on leadership styles. As leadership is about building and maintaining relationships, he emphasizes respect as an essential value.



**LEADERSHIP IN HEALTHCARE:
ESSENTIAL VALUES AND SKILLS**

BY CARSON F. DYE, FACHE

Health Administration Press, 2nd Edition, 2010
284 pages, \$76

He shows how respect is demonstrated through stewardship, ethics and integrity, connection, servant leadership, change management, commitment and emotional intelligence. Although the reader will be familiar with many of these concepts, this section provides perspective on how values can translate into developing an organizational vision in health care.

Part III examines the values that enhance cooperation and collaboration on teams. Acceptance of low performers, a proliferation of "group think" and a low tolerance for change are among the obstacles that can impede development of excellence and effective leadership, Dye says. He calls trust the basis of mission

fulfillment and defines it as a combination of integrity, competency, consistency, loyalty and openness. It is interesting to note that Dye names conflict management, rather than conflict resolution, as a creative and potentially beneficial resource in developing teams.

Part IV, which is about evaluation, addresses team values, team effectiveness and self-evaluation at early, mid- and later career stages. Any reader knows that team meetings can be frustrating and non-productive. Dye provides a checklist for evaluating team effectiveness by reviewing team structure, decision-making processes, meetings and team protocols. He suggests that resistance to meetings is often the by-product of poor planning and that values are the drivers of team practice and productivity.

Many of the concepts in this book are not new, but the author presents them in an organized and useful way, with questions and vignettes at the end of each chapter providing grist for the discussion mill. Although the text may be a review for more seasoned leaders, it can indeed serve as an examination of conscience on one's values and leadership style.

There are hundreds of books available on health care leadership, but I believe Dye's has a place among them. It is a very fine resource in how to develop effective leaders and deepen the mission through living our values. However, the book's useful insights come in an expensive package. The \$76 cover price is a major drawback.

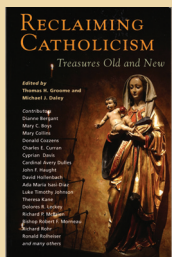
SR. CATHERINE O'CONNOR, CSB, is vice president for mission and sponsorship at Covenant Health Systems, Tewksbury, Mass.

BOOKS IN BRIEF

RECLAIMING CATHOLICISM: TREASURES OLD AND NEW

Thomas H. Groome and
Michael J. Daly, editors
Orbis Books, 2010
250 pages

Who, observing the Catholic Church in recent years, could have failed to notice, whether with



relief or lament, some slippage in the modernizations of liturgy and practice that followed Vatican II? Or failed to hear the murmurs, grow-

ing stronger of late, that too often the changes took effect without accompanying education, leaving the theological rationale that undergirded them poorly understood?

This volume is an effort to address that lack with 45 short essays on multiple dimensions of Catholic thought and culture (perspectives, personalities and practices), written by men and women who comprise a veritable “who’s who” of (mostly liberal) contemporary Catholic thinkers.

For anyone who would like to better understand the Catholic faith today and its relationship to the past, or to consider how some of the “old” practices (fasting, the Rosary, benediction, devotion to Mary) might be integrated with the new, there is much to learn from and reflect on here. A couple of essays have relevance for Catholic hospitals and nursing homes: “From Extreme Unction to the Sacrament of the Sick” and “The After Life.” Selections about forward-looking personalities, such as Fr. John Courtney Murray, SJ, and Monsignors George Higgins and John Ryan, provide another lens through which to view an evolving church.

Some readers will be frustrated by topics left out. (I, for example, would have liked more on the still-developing stance of Catholicism

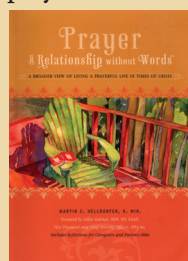
toward non-Abrahamic religions.) Others may be frustrated by the brevity of the selections (four-and-a-half pages, on average.). Still, as Sr. Christine Vladimiroff, OSB, writes in her essay on vowed religious life, “There is something to be learned about a journey back in time. It enables us to retrieve what was valuable and bring it forward in new ways.”

PRAYER: A RELATIONSHIP WITHOUT WORDS

Martin C. Helldorfer, D.Min.
Moss Communications, 2010
70 pages

There is no pressure in these pages to pray or even to believe. But for patients and caregivers, or anyone who has ever had a “sense of a caring presence,” and who might, especially in times of vulnerability, wish to become more intimate with that presence, Helldorfer can serve as a contemporary guide.

His first principle: understand that to pray is to be in relationship, a relation-



ship that, like others, changes and grows, involves shared joys and sorrows, possibly misunderstandings and difficulties. Relationships cannot be forced and do not flourish with stilted

expressions or postures. “The language of prayer is that of love,” Helldorfer writes. “We start with words ... and end with silence.” He offers reassurance for those who feel at times unable to pray: Stop trying; learn to wait; find a new path; pray by doing. And then, for those who persevere, a warning: be prepared for change. Though it may take years, those who pray will ultimately have to surrender to the fact that they are deeply loved and then follow where love leads, Helldorfer writes.

Helldorfer knows both prayer and health care. He is a former monk and psychologist, a husband, the author of *Healing with Heart: Inspirations for Healthcare Professionals*, and retired vice president of mission for Exempla Healthcare, a Colorado-based regional health care system. *Healing with Heart*, reviewed in the March-April, 2009, issue of *Health Progress*, won the American

Journal of Nursing’s Book of the Year Award in the leadership and management category.

IF WE MUST DANCE, THEN I WILL LEAD

Jane Rudden
iUniverse, Inc., 2010
160 pages

This poignant and well-told tale by Jane Rudden, subtitled “a memoir of breast cancer survival,” is worth reading by anyone who has ever had breast cancer, who could be at risk of developing breast cancer, who has ever been a caregiver for a cancer patient — professionally or otherwise — or who has known someone



with breast cancer. Which means: This book has something to offer just about all of us. With the possible exception of the unlucky women who have personally experienced this

dreadful disease, it would be hard to imagine that someone could read Rudden’s account without being in some way changed.

She writes frankly, and with flashes of humor, of her “dance with the beast,” giving an account of her experiences with medical providers, some far from positive; of her growing determination to advocate for herself; of her reactions to the shattering physical and psychological effects of her illness. She survived, but barely, when reconstructive surgery resulted in a massive infection that might have taken her life.

She writes, too, of support and love — from her 10 siblings, her friends, and a “significant other,” a man she invited more than once post-diagnosis to make his escape, but who shines here as a model of maturity and hope. Rudden is a professor of education whose career was stalled and ultimately limited by her disease, but who learned in her time of darkness to dance free of the beast and feed her soul.

— Pamela Schaeffer

JOURNAL OF THE CATHOLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES

www.chausa.org

HEALTH PROGRESS®

Reprinted from *Health Progress*, November-December 2010
Copyright © 2010 by The Catholic Health Association of the United States
