

The Leader: Caring

by **Frederick E Roach**

In 1930, Baylor published a book called "Inside Facts About Baylor Hospital." One of the first points made in that book was the importance of customer service.

"Baylor Hospital exists for the service of its patients," the authors wrote. In an example, they continued: "The student nurses are those young ladies in the hall wearing white aprons, white caps and blue striped dresses. They are subject to your call at all times.

" Baylor is a health care institution. We have thousands of "care givers." We are considered a very "caring" institution that provides an exceptionally high quality of care.

More Is Better

In recent issues of Leadership Brief, we focused on customer service. Let's continue that focus, with some thoughts on the whole idea of caring. Most of us would agree we work in a caring environment. This caring not only extends to our patients, but also to our fellow employees. It's a demonstrated fact that the more we care about each other, the better care we give our patients.

Working Together

Our customer service training emphasizes caring about our associates and working with them to build an even stronger caring institution. It's human nature to want to be "cared about."

People generally know if we care about them. We communicate it to each other in so many different ways. Experts say the words we use represent only 7 percent of the message we're trying to communicate. On the other hand, our tone, or the emphasis we give to the words, is 38 percent of our communication. This means that more than half, or 55 percent, of our communication with patients and associates is nonverbal, reflected through our body language.

I love to see really caring people who openly communicate their care for others. You see it in their animation, their personal gestures and that special glint in their eyes. It becomes obvious whether their care is real or superficial. If real, it's followed up with meaningful action. The lack of real caring becomes just as obvious.

Our Stewardship Role

If world-class customer service is critical to our successful future, and we believe it is, this means a fantastic personal and institutional responsibility. We must continue as stewards in building strong interpersonal relationships. We must form service teams exceeding the expectations of those we serve.

To "care for" has the implication of protecting a tangible or intangible asset. It's not an extra we provide, but a specific responsibility. We see this reflected in Baylor's values of stewardship and servanthood.

Characteristics of Caring

If we're to maximize our service, and that's obviously our goal, when we need to remind ourselves about several characteristics of those who care. First, it's hard to care adequately about someone else unless we feel good about ourselves. I heard it said this



past week that our emotional intelligence is more important than our intellectual capacity in delivering effective customer services.

Also, caring people reach out to others. That's just part of good patient and hospital care. And caring people in health care care about other caregivers. The author, William Simms, said more than a century ago: "Our cares are the mothers not only of our charities and virtues, but of our best joys, and most cheering and enduring pleasures." Real caring brings its own reward!

Caring Requires Action

In 1968, William Redfield wrote in the New York Times: "To try may be to die, but not to care is never to be born." A very dramatic statement, and one I see exercised regularly at Baylor.

Caring should be active! World-class customer service doesn't just happen. It requires us to be proactive. "Care and diligence bring luck," wrote Thomas Fuller, M.D., in 1732. That kind of luck is not an accident; it's the result of effective planning and aggressive action.

It seems to me that--to attain our goals, to accomplish our mission, to fulfill our vision - will require significant effort and a concentrated focus on how we can be among the best health care providers in the world.

We have to have a strong desire! To care! To plan! To make the commitment! Finally, to act!