



Developing Resident Leadership Skills: Implementation of a Formal Leadership Training Curriculum

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What is the purpose of leadership training during a five-year intensive process dedicated to training doctors in orthopaedic surgical expertise? We would argue that it is to improve the lives of patients, peers, and other healthcare professionals beyond our interactions in the clinic and operating room.

If one wishes to leave the planet better and implement true and lasting positive change, leadership skills are *essential*. The best intentions can languish if not coupled with a skillset which will bring worthy goals to fruition.

Some argue: 'leaders are born, not made.' This is not true. Indeed, some individuals possess innate talents that predispose to influencing others positively. However, a great body of research demonstrates that leadership skills can be taught, learned, and developed.¹

Leadership skills are not only for the few. In fact, *everyone* can benefit from training in the principles, methods, and skills necessary to lead.

Effective leaders can turn a vision to reality, create positive cultures, and guide others to the realization of their full potential. These skills are necessary to become effective at work, at home and in the community. Take a moment and consider areas of dysfunction in your daily lives, whether it is a poorly run restaurant or an inefficient surgical suite, while there may be many contributing factors, there is undoubtedly some failure of leadership. Conversely, thriving offices, companies, and homes uniformly are the result of effective and principle-based LEADERSHIP. Leadership is not management. Managers do things right. Leaders do the right thing and can help others morph from 'good to great'.²

Whether providing direction to one's family, place of worship or community, leadership skills will permeate into all aspects of our lives.

The University of Pennsylvania Department of Orthopedic Surgery has a rich tradition of training future leaders in both academic and community practice settings. In order to ensure that our graduates were equipped to handle the challenges that the contemporary practice of orthopedic surgery entails, a 'Leadership Strategy Team' was assembled in 2017, consisting of Drs. Levin, Donegan, Kelly and DeMaio. We fully recognized that the University of Pennsylvania had access to the renowned Wharton McNulty Leadership Program, led by Mike Useem and Jeff Klein. Both Mike and Jeff immediately demonstrated their exceptional generosity and benevolence to help create the Michael P. Kelly Sr. Penn Orthopedic Leadership Academy.

Orthopedic Surgeons are Leaders Inherently

Orthopedic surgeons are leaders of the musculoskeletal care team in the clinic, operating room and research arena. Clinically, they are called to direct patient care as many treatment decisions are dependent on the surgeon's judgment. Surgeons must recognize that they are called to lead health care teams toward the singular goal of quality musculoskeletal care. Surgeons are not 'heroes'; they are 'healers' whom the health care team will look to for direction and guidance.

In surgery, Orthopedists are indeed the 'Captain of the Ship' when executing a surgical procedure. The Surgeon Leader will dictate the 'culture' of the entire operating room. The surgeon leader who treats staff with kindness and dignity and communicates effectively while not losing sense of purpose, will be rewarded with a sense of teamwork and cooperativity which will translate to excellent outcomes. Leaders create safe and secure environments where workers can let their God-given talents flourish. Fairness and honesty are the order of the day, and every worker knows that they will be treated justly and compassionately.

In the research realm, orthopedists are often called to lead clinical investigations to ensure relevance to patients. For example, if research is conducted on the biomechanics of an implant which is technically difficult to employ, it behooves the surgeon leader to inform the research team that the study of other more 'user friendly' implants would be more meaningful. By keeping the research collaborators in line with the clinically relevant aspects of the particular study, the surgeon may ultimately lead the way to the solution of an important clinical problem.

Life Skills

Noted leadership guru, Steven Covey³ emphasizes that self-mastery must precede the ability to truly influence others. In truth, Covey has noted that one cannot effectively lead others until mastery over one's life is attained. If a life true to timeless principles such as honesty, integrity and humility is attained, one can proceed effectively to influence others. For instance, imagine someone with an extreme egoic need for approval. Such a person will be prompted innately to promote the 'popular' decision rather than execute the 'right' decision.

Covey elaborates on the 'habits' of proactivity, adherence to a mission statement (begin with the end in mind) and adoption of executing around priorities (putting first things

first) to gain true self-mastery. Then, and only then, is the ability to lead truly unleashed.

More importantly, self-mastery will greatly lessen the incidence of burnout, an all-too-common plague of our beloved vocation.

Indeed, the same virtues necessary for strong leadership are also essential for a peaceful, powerful, and integrated life. Psychologists for many years have noted that the most joyful and self-actualized human beings are also the most kind, compassionate and moral. Leadership skills are synonymous with 'life skills.'

The study and incorporation of effective leadership skills and traits will allow each of us to pursue lasting and meaningful self-growth.

Penn Orthopedic Leadership Academy

The Michael P. Kelly Sr. Penn Orthopedic Leadership Academy was conceived in the hope to teach tried and true principles of real leadership to residents, students, junior faculty and all interested members of the health care team.

A consortium of leaders from the Wharton School of Business, the Penn Perelman School of Medicine, industry, and sports convey to attendees' key principles necessary to lead others to a common good. Chief elements of the curriculum are lessons in integrity, selflessness, decisiveness, organization, benevolence, vision, ingenuity and innovation—skills which all exemplary leaders share.⁴The Academy is predicated on four unique and synergistic programs:

1. Leadership Retreat

Every spring, residents are treated to a day long program administered by professors from the Wharton School. A rotating curriculum has been devised covering diverse aspects of leadership development including consensus and team building, negotiation, integrity emphasis and resilience training.

2. Individual Coaching

PGY-4 residents are assigned a personal Wharton professional coach, who meets with the assigned resident regularly. The resident and his/her mentor

discuss life management, decision making and advice on career building.

3. Leadership Fellowship

Each year four Penn Ortho Leadership Academy Fellows are chosen by committee and enjoy a lifelong curriculum of coaching, didactic training from an assigned mentor, and advice on a yearlong project. Projects are directed at improving the culture of the program and improving the quality of life of current residents. This year's projects include a dedicated course on mindfulness training, a treatise on the value of a clinical database, an examination of communication deficiencies during surgery, and an evaluation of the self-awareness of residents.

4. Leadership Curriculum

Dedicated time has been apportioned to lectures devoted to leadership development as well as a leadership directed journal club. Articles and books ranging from self-help to the establishment of a healthy culture at work are discussed in detail.

The responsible practice of orthopedic surgery as well as effective living demands leadership acumen. It will become a fruitful exercise to study what makes great leaders great and implement these skills in daily practice.

In conclusion, the Michael P. Kelly Sr. Penn Orthopedic Leadership Academy is dedicated to developing the most effective and peaceful next generation of leaders. Armed with superlative orthopedic training, coupled with priceless leadership skills, University of Pennsylvania Orthopedic Graduates are poised to effect positive quantum change and effectively lead others in our most beloved vocation.

References

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3. Covey, S. The seven habits of highly successful people. *Fireside/Simon & Schuster* (1989).
4. Lowney, C. Heroic leadership: Best practices from a 450-year-old company that changed the world. *Loyola Press* (2010).