

# Leading and Managing in Unmanageable Times

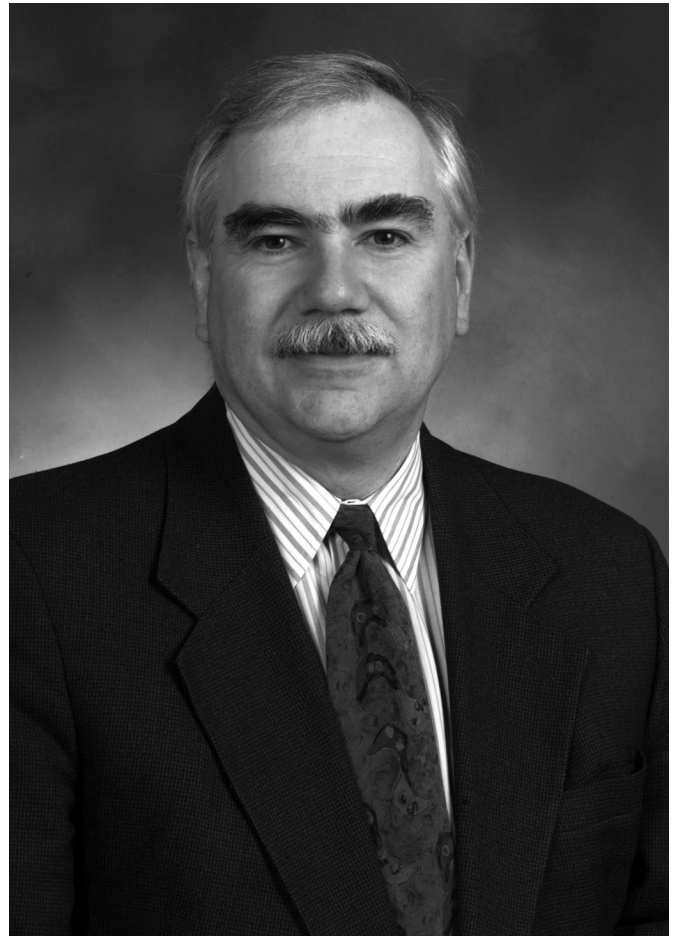
Philip S. Barie, MD, MBA

*J Trauma.* 2005;59:803–814.

**T**rauma surgery is in crisis. The reasons are known as well to you as they are to me: no operations; no reimbursement; no fellows; no partners; more elderly patients; relations with surgical specialists; babysitting for surgical specialists; night call; malpractice and lifestyle. Reimbursement is low, but liability risk is high. Our work is nocturnal and unpredictable, and much of it is non-operative unless emergency general surgery is part of our practice. We can find neither enough trained surgeons to hire, nor fellows to train, nor residents and students to follow in our footsteps. Many of our organizations, Eastern Association for the Surgery of Trauma (EAST) included, are working hard to make change, but incremental progress at a time when change is needed urgently frustrates many of us. At times, the outlook can seem rather bleak.

Surgeons are action-oriented, and often externally-oriented. We believe we must be, to be effective in our work, but surgical skills do not always equate with leadership skills. I shall share with you some principles of management and leadership to provide a set of tools to navigate this crisis personally, as well as to help you lead your teams.

Team, a central theme of this presentation, is a familiar concept to trauma surgeons. We lead a team every day in the trauma bay, in committee meetings and so on, but there are many ways to lead more effectively. Several hundred books are published each year on the subjects of leadership and management. It is impossible to be familiar with all that is written and espoused. Some of the material is Bravo Sierra (BS), quite frankly. There are more than 9,000 theories extant about how to lead and manage; I couldn't possibly distill it all, but there are some timeless principles. It is some of those principles that I would like to talk to you about today.



*Philip S. Barie, MD, MBA, President Eastern Association for the Surgery of Trauma.*

Being a manager and being a leader involves numerous competencies. Twenty of them are listed in Table 1.<sup>1</sup> The ones denoted by an asterisk are believed to be really important: Communication skills; having a compelling vision of the future that your team believes in and is willing to follow you toward; delegation of authority; the ability to manage conflict; the ability to manage time; the ability to manage one's personal stressors; and, of course, setting goals, but crucial is building and nurturing the team.

Figure 1 shows some of the important leadership attributes in a competing values framework.<sup>2,3</sup> On each end of the lines are opposing values, internal on the left, external on

Submitted for publication September 1, 2005.

Accepted for publication September 2, 2005.

Copyright © 2005 by Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, Inc.

From the Departments of Surgery and Public Health (P.S.B.), Weill Medical College of Cornell University New York, NY.

Given at the Eighteenth Annual Scientific Assembly of the Eastern Association for the Surgery of Trauma Fort Lauderdale, FL, January 15, 2005

Address for reprints: Philip S. Barie, MD, MBA, Department of Surgery, P713A, Weill Medical College of Cornell University, 525 East 68 Street, New York, NY 10021; email: pbarie@med.cornell.edu.

DOI: 10.1097/01.ta.0000187809.46099.83



**Fig 1.** Leadership skills are depicted in a competing values framework. Each line represents a continuum between opposing values, here between internal and external influences, flexibility and control, and change and the status quo. The leadership attributes are thus divided into four domains. In the upper right, the qualities of creativity, innovation, and vision promote flexibility, change, and external productivity. Adapted from Reference 1.

the right, maintaining the status quo on the left, productivity on the right, defining four domains. Some skills are necessary to maintain ourselves and our organizations, whereas there are other skills that point externally or toward the future.

For a leader, thinking about the future is very important.<sup>4,5</sup> Some tasks are best left to people who plan action (managers). Other tasks are best left to people who have the skills to look forward (leaders). I encourage all of you, in your personal practices and personal lives, to become futurists and to think strategically; think about what you want to accomplish and set your strategic goals. How you accomplish your goals follows naturally from deciding what the goals are. Consider the range of possibilities. Use your imagination. Your vision will create meaning for everyone in your organization.<sup>6</sup> The future becomes the present, creating a common identity and shared goals. Vision provides a worthwhile challenge, and provides a catalyst for change. If your

vision is compelling, your team will follow you enthusiastically.

Important insight into becoming an effective leader comes from the scion of the leadership literature, someone who is particularly expert in the management of nonprofit organizations. Peter Drucker remains active well into his nineties.<sup>7</sup> His books are on bookstands everywhere, even in airports; you might look for one on the way home from this meeting. Drucker is Professor of Social Policy and Management at Claremont Graduate University in California. To Drucker, the first secret of effectiveness as a leader is to understand the people you work with so that you can make use of their strengths.<sup>8</sup> Remember that, making use of strengths. It is an important concept, but perhaps counterintuitive to how we work as clinicians and educators.

Consider one example as to how great managers think and work.<sup>1</sup> Answer the question for yourselves as I pose it. You must choose between two managers, one of whom is effective and the other, mediocre. You have two positions to fill, one in a high-performance unit and one in a unit that is struggling. Neither unit has reached its maximum potential. Where would you put the excellent manager? Great leaders put the excellent manager with the high-performing unit. Use your best to get better. You can use change, as we will talk about, to bring in someone new, a turn-around specialist for example, to work with your struggling unit.

Great teachers use their best resources to bring all of their pupils to their maximum potential. Great leaders use their best resources to develop their best strategies. Skilled leaders know when to act and know when to hold back. Skilled leaders assuage doubt by improving information, but know that the data collection process can actually delay decision-making. I have had several colleagues and residents over the years who were brilliant strategists, but who would hesitate when action was called for, paralysis by analysis.

Great leaders achieve a balance of thinking, looking forward, collecting data, but knowing when to act, accepting that there will be uncertainty. The great battlefield commanders throughout history have understood this. We as trauma surgeons deal with uncertainty every day, so this is something we can understand. Great leaders not only accept uncertainty but also use it to their advantage, because they know that their opponent is going to have the same uncertainties. However, battlefield commanders often dispense with the formalities of contingency planning, which we cannot do because we know that we have a product (health care) to produce, customers to serve, and expectations of quality to meet through best processes and the reduction of error.

## Becoming an Effective Leader

How does an individual become an effective leader and manager? Start with yourself. Opportunities for leadership abound. We lead every day in the trauma bay even as the junior-most member of the attending staff. You may be asked to lead in a committee meeting, even on short notice. You can

**Table 1** Competencies of an Effective Leader

Broad perspective
Business practices and controls
*Communication
*Compelling vision
*Delegation
Establish plans
Inspiration
Manage change
*Manage conflict
Manage diversity
*Manage time
*Manage stress
*Motivate others
*Problem solving
Results orientation
Risk taking
*Self-knowledge
*Setting goals
Take charge
*Team building

\*Skill of particular value or importance, adapted from Reference 1.

**Table 2 Emotional Intelligence Domains and Associated Competencies**

Self-awareness	Emotional self-awareness
Accurate self-assessment	
Self-confidence	
Self-management	Emotional self-control
	Transparency
Adaptability	
Achievement	
Initiative	
Optimism	
Social awareness	Empathy
	Organizational awareness
Service	
Relationship management	Inspiration
	Influence
	Developing others
	Change catalyst
Conflict management	
Teamwork	

Adapted from Reference 4.

lead even by changing a manner of practice in your own institution.

It is important to be your own chief executive officer (CEO) and to manage your own career. Our Association is about mentoring our junior members. Certainly it is appropriate to bring other people along, but until surgeons become very senior in their own careers, it is unlikely that their sole focus will be on you as the beneficiary. You must manage yourself.<sup>9</sup> Develop a deep, honest, objective understanding of your strengths and weaknesses, how you learn, how you perform, and consider your own contingency plans. Understand that as objective and dispassionate we are expected to be, we are passionate about our lives and careers. Our emotions affect our actions, and understanding our emotions can help us lead<sup>4,10,11</sup> (Table 2).

It is human nature that we manage to our strengths. Performance is not built from weakness. It is easier to transform competence into greatness than to transform incompetence to mediocrity, but you must always keep your values in perspective. Do your commitments match your convictions?<sup>12</sup> What is valued in your practice and in your life need to be in alignment. What you value most may be personal or professional, or a combination. Just because you're good at taking out spleens doesn't necessarily mean that particular skill fits with your value system or the task at hand. It may well, but keep the possibility in mind.

Ask yourself a few more questions. What is your personality type? Are you an introvert or an extrovert? Are you intuitive, or do you rely upon data collected with your senses?

Are you more analytical, or do you act on your emotions? Do you thrive in big organizations or small? These are all things that must be considered as part of your own values and your own development as a leader. Taking your own personality inventory with a tool such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MTBI)<sup>13,14</sup> may give you insight, as it has for me. Based on the philosophy of Carl Jung, there are 16 MBTI personality types comprising eight preferences constructed from four domains and two sub-domains. I am an "ISTJ," which I share with President Harry Truman among other historical figures (Table 3). Through such an analysis, I have been able to inventory my strengths and identify areas where I need to focus my personal growth.

For academic trauma surgeons, our natural strengths are our technical skills and our teaching abilities. There is divergence between the natural skills, aptitudes, and strengths of trauma surgeons and those of business managers. Surgical skills are not necessarily adaptive leadership skills. Ask yourself several more questions. How do you perform? Are you a reader or a listener? Many surgeons are listeners, accustomed to assessing and reacting to fluid situations. Do you perform best under stress or with the predictability of a controlled environment?

Much can be learned about leadership from the pantheon of U.S. Presidents (Table 4).<sup>15</sup> Dwight Eisenhower was a reader; his press conferences in the European Theater of Operations were masterful because every question posed to him by the press was submitted in advance in writing, and he knew all the answers. He could not think as well on his feet. One of the reasons why he was perceived to be a mediocre president was that in his press conferences in the 1950s, he had to think on his feet and he wasn't good at it.

John F. Kennedy was also a reader, and had great speechwriters. One of his greatest skills was learning from his mistakes. His tragic successor, Lyndon Baines Johnson, possessed an encyclopedic knowledge of government and in particular the workings of Congress. He had marvelous timing, understanding when to move forward with new social programs that affect us to this day (e.g. Medicare). Johnson was most definitely a listener, but he kept JFK's speechwriters, and he didn't understand a word they wrote. He struggled in communicating the Vietnam War to the American people, which was a far different skill than orchestrating the passage of legislation. Part of the reason that many consider him to have been a powerful man, but a failed president, was this gargantuan mismatching of skills and tasks.

## Building a Power Base

The power and influence you possess as a leader are crucial in defining your effectiveness.<sup>2,16</sup> Power can be abused, so real effort must be made to harness and channel it for good-influencing people and accomplishing your goals. Powerful leaders can intercede favorably on behalf of another, get approval for expenditures, influence policy through access to other top decision makers, and generally "stay on

**Table 3** Characteristics of Myers-Briggs Type Indicator “ISTJ” (Introverted-Sensing-Thinking-Judgmental)

Attributes	
	Able to concentrate
	Calm
	Community-oriented
	Conserves resources
	Decisions made objectively
	Dependable
	Dislikes change
	Dislikes wasting time
	Helps others
	Loyal
	Natural leader
	Observant
	Offbeat sense of humor
	Opinionated
	Organizational skills
	Perseverance
	Practical
	Prefers working alone; works effectively with teams
	Procedural
	Profound respect for data and facts
	Quiet and reserved
	Reasonable
	Sees discrepancies, pitfalls, omissions
	Strong sense of duty
	Strong work ethic
	Systematic
	Thorough
	Traditional
Struggles with	
	Appreciation of impact of decisions on others
	Brainstorming
	Breaking the rules
	Downtime
	Emotions of others
	Expressing emotions
	Making changes
	Relinquishing control
	Saying “no”
	Spontaneity
	The “big picture”
Under stress	
	Critical and judgmental of others
	Focuses on the “negative”
	Less willing to delegate
	Loses calm, reasonable demeanor
	Self-critical

Adapted from Reference 14.

**Table 4** Lessons of Presidential Leadership

Knowing when to go forward
Timing is (almost) everything
Share the glory
Trust, once broken, is seldom restored
Build connections
Learn from mistakes
Confidence counts-not just in oneself
Devotion to partners
Renewal comes from many sources
Talent broker
Language-the most powerful tool

Adapted From Reference 15.

top of things.”<sup>2</sup> Power emanates from personal characteristics and from your position (Table 5). Accumulated power is translated into influence over others through the selection of proper strategies, assertive responses to inappropriate attempts by others to gain influence, and increasing one’s authority via upward influence. So in addition to managing yourself, you have to manage your boss.<sup>17</sup>

Bosses need from their subordinates cooperation, reliability, and honesty. Managers need access to resources, someone to set policy, and access to others so that they can grow their own personal network. The concept of managing your boss, or managing up, stands management top-down on his head. It’s not about getting ahead. It’s about getting along.

When the relationship between you and your boss becomes difficult, it is your responsibility, managing up, to manage your boss. Understand your boss as well as you understand yourself, including strengths, weaknesses, and work styles. Define and meet mutual expectations and critical needs. Your boss is flesh and blood as well, and has goals and objectives. He’s under pressure. She has strengths and weaknesses, certainly has blind spots, and may be under as much pressure as you are. Hopefully, the blind spot isn’t to all of the good work that you are doing. Among the many things that you must understand about yourself is how much you depend and rely upon authority. If you are a person who is best managed by being left alone to do your work, you and your boss need to understand that. Relationship maintenance is as important with your boss as it is with the other people with whom you deal. You have to meet mutual expectations, keep each other informed, and most importantly, use time and resources effectively.

**Table 5** Determinants of Power

	Characteristic	Description
Personal Power	Expertise	Relevant knowledge and experience
	Attractiveness	Friendly, likable
	Effort	Making the commitment of time
Position Power	Centrality	Access to information
	Flexibility	Discretion vested in the position
	Visibility	Degree to which performance is seen by influential people in organization
	Relevance	Alignment of tasks and priorities

Adapted from Reference 5



**Table 6** Player/Managers: The Rookie and the Veteran

	The Rookie	The Veteran
Strengths	Naïve Eager Expert Determined Indefatigable Gets results	Builds systems Hones execution Identifies goals Creates boundaries Instills effectiveness
Weaknesses	Task oriented Fails to delegate Feels too responsible Relies on expertise Doesn't seek feedback Prone to denial	Wedded to status quo Detached Not charismatic Demotivates free spirits Over-manages Under-leads

Adapted from Reference 18.

Not every boss is a benevolent and courteous leader. Here is what the management literature says about abusive bosses.<sup>18</sup> They are micromanagers and everything is a priority. They can be mercurial. They are obsessed with loyalty and obedience, when in fact the strong manager accepts diversity and actually builds upon it. They ridicule subordinates in public and they use power for personal gain. They are capricious, arbitrary, and hypocritical. One of the most powerful figures in history had perspective about power. We have all heard the aphorism that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. It was Abraham Lincoln who said, "Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power."

## Leadership Styles

There are many different styles of leadership—they are not mutually exclusive.<sup>4</sup> Gifted leaders may exert influence through a combination of these styles. Visionary leaders move people toward shared goals, and act when clear direction is needed, or change requires a new vision. Coaching leaders align their subordinates with organizational goals, and act to help employees improve performance. Affiliative leaders create cohesion within their group, and act to strengthen bonds, motivate during stressful times, or heal rifts. Democratic leaders obtain commitment through participation, and act to gather input or build consensus. Pacesetter leaders meet challenging goals and act to achieve high-quality results from competent, motivated teams. This style is difficult to execute. The commanding leader soothes fears in crisis situations by providing clear directions, acting in a crisis, a turn-around situation, or with problem employees. This style is often misused by abusive bosses.

## The Player/Manager

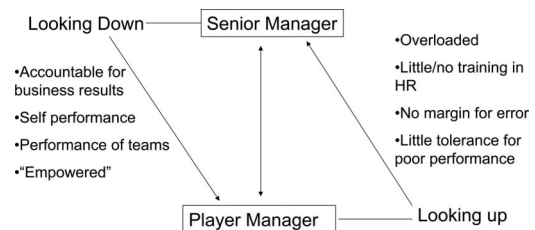
The concept of the player/manager is a valuable way to consider ourselves as practitioners, managers, and leaders.<sup>19</sup> This is a sports analogy, but it is apt for us because it

combines producing and managing. Teachers and academics, physicians and nurses are considered to be a sine qua non of the player/manager, of which there are many levels, depending on position and stature within the organization: Senior partners of law firms; investment bankers; accountants; management consultants; teachers and academics; physicians and nurses.<sup>18</sup>

Although there are many types of player/managers, I want to concentrate on the rookies (junior faculty), those young and new to trauma and to leadership, and the veterans (senior faculty, trauma directors), who have to manage while keeping their teams fresh and alive. The rookie is an expert, but may not have other well-developed management skills, so the rookie may rely too much on technical expertise (Table 6). Technical expertise can be a double-edged sword in a managerial system. Rookies do have expertise, such as better pattern recognition and the ability to see differently, but they may see problems stereotypically, miss subtle signs of trouble, or fall prey to the de minimus error, or explaining away the data. The de minimus error occurs when you collect a body of data but consider each datum (e.g., heart rate, hematocrit, urine output) individually. The de minimus error occurs when finding an alternative explanation for every piece of datum, to the point where the diagnosis is completely lost in the distracters and the differential diagnosis. The de minimus error, talking yourself out of something, is a very important source of error.

The veteran is someone who comes in and builds systems, hones execution, steps in when crucial, and instills effectiveness—the surgeon's surgeon (Table 6). But because veterans are player/managers who also must manage their own clinical practices, there is always the possibility that the veteran may over-manage and under-lead. The challenge for the veteran is finding the balance.

Every player/manager is aiming for a target, has a game plan in mind, and has performance benchmarks, but also is working with a team, even as he or she manages their own practice. It is the interface between managing, for example, as a director of trauma or chief of a clinical service and managing one's boss. The view from on high looking down can be very different from the view looking up. The player/



**Fig 2.** The player-manager has to look up to the senior manager as well as look down for the management of the team being directed. The view from on high can be very different that the perspective of the person looking up. Balancing these roles is challenging, but increasingly the norm. HR, human resources.

**Table 7** Recruiting and Retaining Top Talent: 12 Questions the Top Talent Asks

---

Do I know what is expected of me?
Do I have the resources I need?
Can I do my best every day?
Do I receive praise or recognition?
Does my boss care about me?
Is my development encouraged?
Do my opinions count?
Is my job important to the mission?
Are my coworkers committed to quality?
Do I have a best friend at work?
Do I receive a performance review?
Am I learning and growing?

---

The first six questions are the most crucial.  
Adapted From Reference 1.

manager has to manage “up” as well as “down.” The senior manager looks down and expects of his player/manager accountability for business results and the performance of the team (Fig. 2). The senior manager considers the player/manager to be empowered, to have the power to take action. On the other hand, the player/manager looking up may feel overloaded, may be responsible for human resource management with little or no training in the discipline, and perceive that there is little tolerance for poor performance. There is the potential for struggle.

## The High-Performance Team

Now that we have begun to understand ourselves, and that most crucial of interactions with our immediate superior, let us consider how to build and nurture and transform a team to achieve high performance. First, the leader must develop credibility and articulate a vision. Team members must be chosen on the basis of talent. Expectations must be set by choosing the correct objectives and the desired outcomes. The individual must be motivated by building on his or her strengths, and developed by ensuring that the person and the job are the proper fit.

It is crucial to build your team based on talent. The leader must define the correct outcomes, focus on strengths, find the right fit, and match skills to tasks. Building for talent is somewhat counterintuitive to our natural roles as teachers and mentors, but it is absolutely crucial for leadership success. No less a leader than John Wooden, who led the University of California at Los Angeles to seven consecutive NCAA Division I basketball titles, said “Although not every coach can win consistently with talent, no coach can win without it.”

Manage to recognize and maximize the strengths of your people. The micromanager has a management style that suppresses creativity. The academic instructor naturally focuses on the less talented. In an educational environment, that is absolutely appropriate, but the catalyst is the coach who inspires his team, leads her team, and makes the best better.

Remember also that people are difficult to change, unless they want to change. If you try to change people who are

unwilling, you won’t get very far. As the coach of your team, draw out what is there, and make it better. Of course, you must stay in touch with your people and what your people are asking of themselves and of you. A vibrant, vital, and highly effective workforce is defined by the answers to six key questions (Table 7).<sup>1</sup> Team members will ask themselves if they know what’s expected of them, and wonder whether you as leader care about them as team member. The leader, of course, has to provide that guidance. Do they have the resources they need and are they in a position to do their best work everyday? Praise and recognition for truly good work is absolutely essential.

High-performing teams have core competencies and a shared purpose.<sup>2</sup> High-performing teams have credibility and engender trust. Tasks are carried out efficiently with the participation of all members of the team. Roles are coordinated and distinctions are blurred. Desired outcomes are understood clearly. Results are of high quality, and there is accountability for performance. Performance and outcomes are constantly reviewed to achieve continuous improvement.

No one remembers Brigadier General Don Flickinger, but his is one of the greatest stories of team building of the twentieth century.<sup>20</sup> General Flickinger was tasked with putting together a team of seven people in the late 1950s. The job description was unusual: age <40 years, height <6 feet, excellent physical conditioning and endurance, great mental stability, high tolerance for pain, and 1,500 flight hours in experimental aircraft. These people became the seven men with the “right stuff”—the original seven Mercury astronauts. Alan Shepherd, Gus Grissom, John Glenn, Scott Carpenter, Wally Schirra, Gordon Cooper, and Deke Slayton were chosen. They had the best of everything—exhaustive training, and state-of-the-art technology. NASA provided excellence in project management, and ultimately there were six missions. Two of those six missions could be considered textbook operations: Alan Shepherd’s first sub-orbital flight and Wally Schirra’s flawless mission. My own small, personal connection to NASA is that my uncle Walter Davis led the crew that fueled Alan Shepherd’s Redstone rocket with liquid oxygen. Two of these people had heroic missions. John Glenn, of course, is a hero’s hero; I am certain that everyone in the room knows his story. Gordon Cooper was so composed and so confident of his ability to carry out his mission that he actually fell asleep in the capsule during the countdown.

Despite meticulous preparation, two people had mediocre missions. Gus Grissom, who later would die in an Apollo capsule fire, panicked. He blew the explosive bolts off his capsule hatch, flooding the capsule before it had righted itself and stabilized. Grissom nearly drowned. Scott Carpenter was having such a good time flying around that he depleted his fuel, with almost none remaining for reentry maneuvering. If he had been one degree more shallow on his reentry, he would have skipped off into space, and into eternity. Carpenter landed 250 miles from his recovery ship, but the Mercury

space program is considered one of the greatest successes of American technology. The message is that the strong team allowed highly trained, but under-performing individuals to complete their missions.

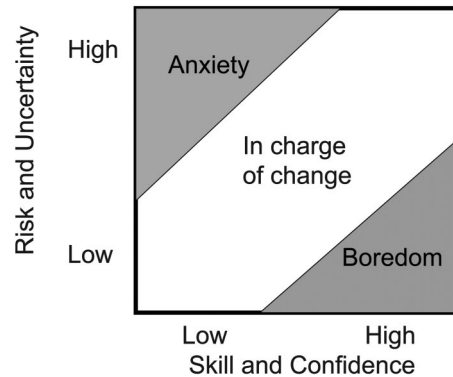
## The Dysfunctional Team

Forming an effective team is at the heart of what we do, but teams can become dysfunctional.<sup>21</sup> There is classical literature describing the five reasons why teams may become dysfunctional: Absence of trust, fear of conflict (getting along for its own sake rather than really getting to the issue), lack of commitment, avoidance of accountability, and inattention to results. Avoidance of accountability and avoiding interpersonal discomfort is not usually a problem for trauma surgeons. However, inattention to results and avoidance of accountability lead to low standards. A lack of commitment leads to ambiguity of the mission. Fear of conflict leads to artificial harmony, and absence of trust can lead to invulnerability, but it's a false sense of invulnerability.

What can the leader do about these five team dysfunctions?<sup>22</sup> The leader creates the environment, and by demonstrating vulnerability, he or she sends the message that it's okay, we're in this together, creating bonds, creating the right environment, and rebuilding trust. Fear of conflict is remedied by demanding debate, but be a supportive communicator by listening actively and focusing on the problem, not the personalities.<sup>2</sup> Demonstrating restraint is important; don't come in with guns blazing, but rather allow for the possibility that things will sort themselves out. A lack of commitment is resolved by decisiveness, insisting on clarity, and being comfortable and accountable for making the decision. Accumulation of unresolved issues is another sign of dysfunction; inattention to results is remedied by a focus on collective outcomes. Push for closure, even in committee meetings.

## Change Management

If your team is focusing inward rather than outward, if your team does not have clear-cut roles and responsibilities



**Fig 3.** A change-management paradigm. Balancing the forces of change. Adapted from Reference 5.

and accountability, or if your team becomes complacent, your team is in trouble. The classical patterns of dysfunctional teams need to be recognized and integrated into an action plan to get your team back on track. Albert Einstein said, "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result." The management of change is one of the biggest, most complex challenges a leader can face. When change is needed and there is change management to be done, there is always going to be resistance to change. To paraphrase an old bomber pilot aphorism from World War II, you know you're getting close to the target when you start picking up the heavy flak.

Resistance to change is inevitable, and it must be dealt with. Anxiety about change occurs when the risk or the uncertainty is high and the skill and confidence in dealing with change are low. It is the anxious people who will be resisters. On the other hand, boredom occurs when risk and uncertainty are low and skill and confidence is high, and it's important for the leader to keep the team refreshed (Fig. 3).<sup>5</sup>

Pilot projects, small victories, performance measurement, building on strengths, envisioning new ways to operate, being willing to change, and being willing to abandon old systems are all very important in leading change. Sometimes bringing in an outsider, a new member of the team, can be very helpful in stimulating an environment in which change can occur. Meaningful challenges are needed. The status quo needs to be questioned all the time. Probe your organization. Search for opportunities outside the box and get everyone involved in the search for those opportunities. However, as a leader you have to pick your fights. Stay alive—don't fall on your sword.<sup>22</sup> Don't argue if you can't win. Build resources, not obstacles to yourself. Stay optimistic.

Sometimes, though, the change is within us. Trauma surgery is a somewhat nomadic existence, particularly in academe, and it may be yourself who is moving and changing and going into a new leadership position. When you're in a new position, you need to act fast. The clock is running and there is not a finite amount of time—perhaps 90 days—to get your feet planted firmly.<sup>23</sup> Acquire the needed new knowledge quickly, establish new working relationships, bal-

**Table 8** Common Sources of Stress and Implications for the Workplace

Time stressors (most common)
Work overload
Lack of control
Encounter stressors (at the heart of most organizational dysfunction, common source of burn out)
Role conflicts
Issue conflicts
Action conflicts
Situational stressors
Working conditions
Rapid change
Anticipatory stressors (easiest to remedy)
Expectations
Fear

Adapted From Reference 2.

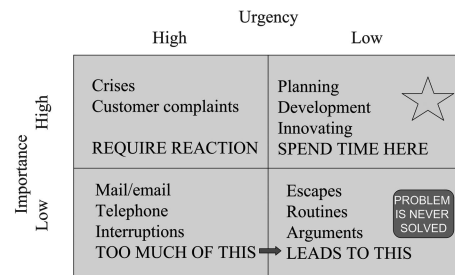
ance organizational and personal transitions, and maintain equilibrium. The danger in a new leadership position is in falling behind the learning curve, which can happen by focusing too much attention on detail rather than the big picture, becoming isolated, not building collaborations, not building a team, and by coming in with the answers and not considering all viewpoints. The hardest but one of the most important things to avoid is sticking with a dysfunctional existing team too long. Also, be cognizant of something called “successor syndrome.” When the old boss sticks around and you start changing things a little bit too much, there’s a possibility that the old leader may try to put the brakes on change.

When you move, you have two, perhaps three, years to make real progress.<sup>24</sup> Form hypotheses about your new organization and begin testing them immediately. Decide if the organizational structure must change. Build personal credibility and momentum with early wins or small wins. Earn the right to make change by building coalitions, and always shape your approach to your situation by balancing your skills with the tasks at hand.

## Stress Management

The most common reason that poor decisions are made is information that is unreliable because it is missing, incomplete, conflicting, or too complex to assimilate.<sup>25</sup> Poor decisions are also made when confirmation bias intrudes on the decision making process—we tend to believe and affirm that which we already “know.” The third major factor that leads to poor decision making is stressors that intrude on the ability to collect data and ponder the solution to the problem. Stressors may take several forms, each of which has discrete consequences (Table 8).<sup>2</sup> What are our sources of stress? There are time stressors, encounter stressors, situational stressors, and anticipatory stressors. A major attribute of being a good leader is effective time management. The most common causes of “burn out,” and at the heart of most dysfunctional organizations, are what is called encounter stressors: Role conflicts, issue conflicts, and action conflicts.

There is a physiologic syndrome—attention deficit trait (ADT)<sup>26</sup>—that differs from attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder because the origin of ADT is not genetic, but environmental; the result of chronic, unremitting stress.<sup>27</sup> I believe I get ADT every August right before my vacation. I can’t tell you how many times I have sat behind my desk and asked “What happened to the day?” It seems as if a day has been wasted and nothing has been accomplished. Objectively, work was accomplished, but one’s mindset and set of values cause disbelief. The symptoms include working flat out but barely staying afloat, and chronic low-level panic about getting things done. The frontal lobe manages executive functions—the higher functions of keeping us organized, keeping us calm, and keeping us focused. When stressors overload us, the frontal lobes become distracted and have to deal with the stress rather than the work.<sup>4,10</sup>



**Fig 4.** Daily activities and the use of time. If a manager spends too much time in the low-importance, low-urgency domain, time stress is never permanently reduced. Adapted from Reference 2.

Time management is a crucial skill for effective managers. We face tasks that are high in importance and low; and we face tasks that are high and low in urgency. In the upper left of Figure 4 are depicted high-importance, high-urgency problems.<sup>2</sup> These require an immediate response—we have to stop what we are doing to respond. In fact, we have days as trauma surgeons when our primary responsibility is in that upper left box. Where we need to spend time, and where we so often cannot, is in thinking, reflecting, planning, and looking forward. Too many interruptions of the everyday kind can lead to avoidance behaviors, and problems are never solved. Try to spend your time on the high-importance, low-urgency matters, rather than procrastinating or creating turmoil. Effort spent on matters that are not urgent and of low importance perpetuate the problem.

The manager who is under stress is robbed of his or her flexibility, sense of humor, and ability to deal with the unknown. What are sacrificed are fluid learning and a nuanced understanding of the big picture. Self-renewal is very important, but we often refuse to devote much time. Reserve daily time to think. Make an effort to connect with others; don’t just hunker down in the foxhole that your office has become. Break projects into manageable ones. Do important things when you are at your best. Multi-tasking leads to an inability to do anything well. Overload and working too hard are rewarded perversely. We look at our junior faculty and marvel at their productivity, but in fact we eat our own young.

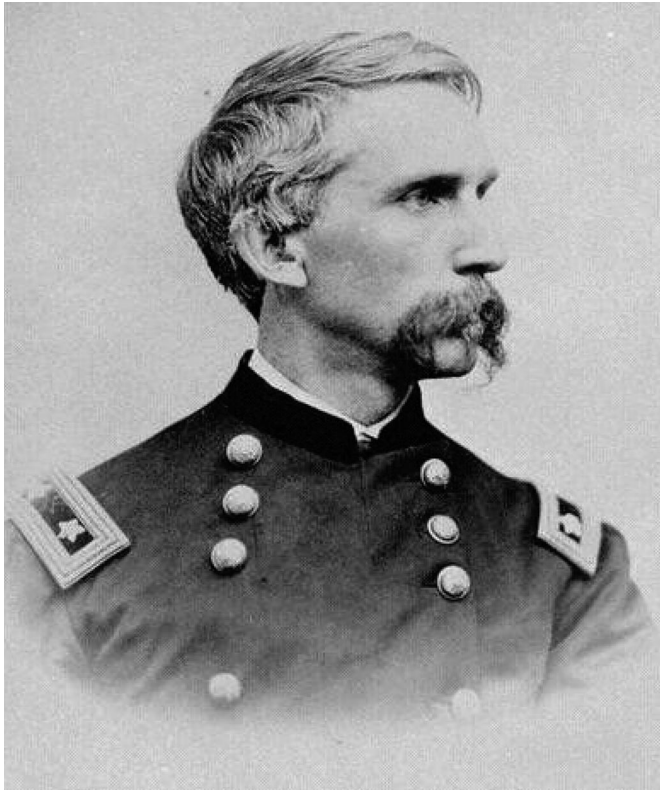
## Leading During Adversity

Finally, I want to talk to you about managing in a crisis by telling a few more stories. Storytelling is a subtle and powerful management tool to build bridges and communicate expertise.<sup>25</sup> The Chinese pictogram depicts crisis as danger combined with opportunity. Opportunity seldom exists unless one is prepared. We all have heard the aphorism that chance favors the prepared mind. Preparation minimizes fear and uncertainty, and instills confidence in the team.

## Joshua L. Chamberlain

In May, 1863, the Army of the Potomac was reeling.<sup>20,28</sup> It had been a long time since victory against Robert E. Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia, and on May 24, 1863, the Army





**Fig 5.** *Brevet Major General Joshua L. Chamberlain, 1865.*

was in full retreat, having been pummeled by a Confederate Army half its size at Chancellorsville, VA.

Four days beforehand, in the midst of chaos, Joshua L. Chamberlain (Fig. 5) took command of the 20<sup>th</sup> Maine Regiment of U.S. Volunteers. They had served since the beginning of the war, and their original 1,000 volunteers were down to 35% strength. The regiment had been in the thick of six major campaigns and had been cut to ribbons. Their new commanding officer was a professor of rhetoric with little formal military training other than a stint at boarding school.

Morale was low; and four days after taking command, Chamberlain was assigned 120 mutineers from another Maine regiment. What would he do? Would he shoot them for desertion? He would never be able to go home to Maine again. Would he guard them? He could hardly afford to assign any of his few able-bodied men for guard duty. Rather, he assimilated them. He rebuilt his team, and five weeks later, after an all-night march, the 20<sup>th</sup> Maine arrived on the field at Gettysburg, PA, in the late morning of day two, July 2, 1863. In the midst of the greatest crisis our nation has faced, Joshua L. Chamberlain led his men to an act of courage that not only would save the day, but also probably saved our nation.

It had not gone well for the Union forces on July 1. Having been pushed back several miles through town, they were clearly on the defensive, although they did hold high ground southeast of the village of Gettysburg as July 2 dawned and combat resumed. In assessing the defensive positions that afternoon, Brigadier General Gouverneur War-

ren, a trained engineer from New York, noticed that the extreme left flank of the Union line was unguarded. With one scant hour to spare, the just-arrived 20<sup>th</sup> Maine was put right at the end of the line, free in the air to anchor the left flank of the Union army. Had that flank been turned in the ensuing battle, a bi-directional assault would have been possible, and the Union defenses could have collapsed.

The attack came at about 4:00 PM by repeated assaults from the 15<sup>th</sup> Alabama under the command of Colonel William Oates. Theirs was a seasoned fighting force. They made many advances upon the Union defenses, despite the fact that they were climbing uphill over rocky and forested terrain, and were taking their toll. Finally, the battle progressed to the point where the already-depleted 20<sup>th</sup> Maine had sustained 30% additional casualties, and they were completely out of the sixty rounds of ball assigned to each man. Surrender? Die gallantly upon the ramparts? Or take the advantage of surprise, and attack?

Under fire, Chamberlain repositioned his troops. He kept the right end of his emplacement steady and wheeled his wing around the left, almost like the hands of a clock moving clockwise. With fixed bayonets and no ammunition, the 20<sup>th</sup> Maine charged into the advancing 15<sup>th</sup> Alabama, which was superior in numbers and still had ammunition. They routed the Alabamians and stabilized the Union left flank.

This schoolteacher was wounded six times during the Civil War, including a gunshot wound to the hip sustained at Petersburg in July 1864 that left him with a bladder fistula for the rest of his long life (he died in 1914). Chamberlain became Governor of Maine and President of Bowdoin College, and was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

What is Chamberlain's leadership message? When you are appealing for crucial support, your appeal is based on shared objectives. Winning the confidence of your team when you are not in crisis is invaluable when under duress later. Modest actions can multiply and have great results. When thrust into a responsible position without skills, figure out what has worked in the past. Chamberlain did not have military training, but he was a voracious reader, and he read everything he could get his hands on about military tactics. It also helped that he had a mentor. His predecessor as regimental commander was a hero himself, having won the Congressional Medal of Honor at the second battle of Manassas, or Bull Run.

### **Eugene F. Kranz**

John F. Kennedy said on September 12, 1962, in a legendary speech given at Rice University, "We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard. . . ."<sup>29</sup> On April 11, 1970, ten months had elapsed since Neil Armstrong took his giant leap for mankind. A second twosome had set foot on the lunar surface as well. Complacency and routine may have set in. Fifty-five hours into the Apollo 13 mission,



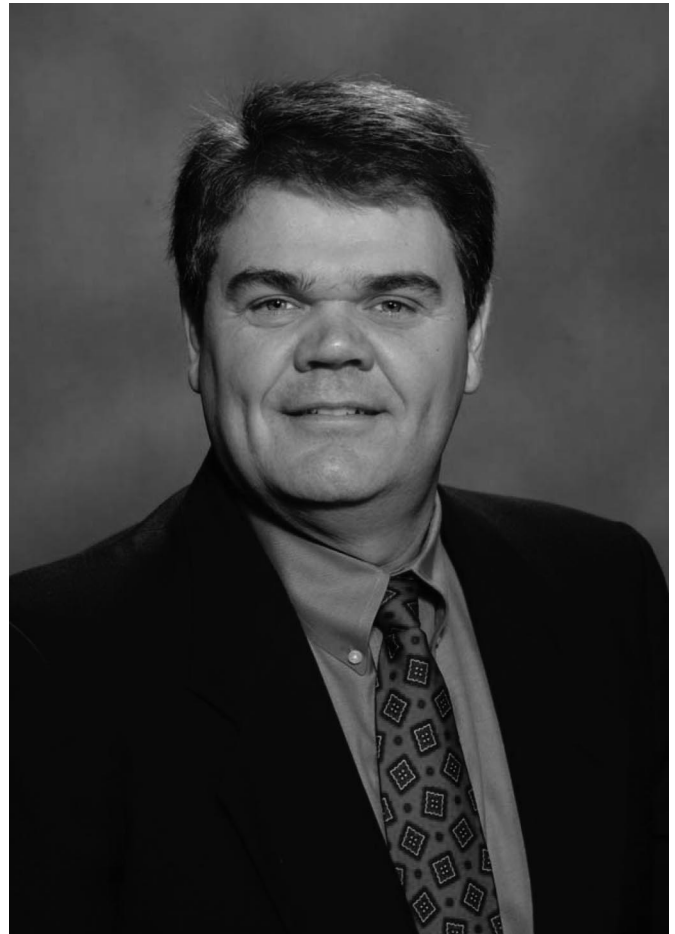
**Fig 6.** Apollo 13 mission director Eugene Kranz, shown during the Apollo 16 mission.

a spark ignited a hydrogen explosion in a fuel cell, critically damaging the Apollo 13 vehicle.

The mission controller was a man by the name of Eugene Kranz (Fig. 6), another hero of his time.<sup>20</sup> Everyone knows the story, but what Kranz did may or may not be known. First of all, he urged everyone to remain calm in the face of crisis and panic. He focused his team on solving the problem, and he urged them to act decisively based on facts and knowledge, not guesswork and supposition. He asked a question that is fascinating in that he was not only accentuating the



**Fig 7.** G. Tom Shires, MD, Emeritus Professor of Surgery, Weill Medical College of Cornell University. Professor of Surgery, University of Nevada, Las Vegas.



**Fig 8.** Stanley G. Harris, PhD, Celita Everett Professor of Management, Auburn University College of Business.

positive, but also taking an inventory. Paraphrasing, he asked “What have we got in the spacecraft that’s good?” He is even better known for exhorting his team that “Failure is not an option.”

Apollo 13 was losing fuel, losing oxygen, losing power, losing heat, and eventually was 40,000 miles off course. It would still orbit the moon, but the spacecraft would not return to Earth unless it was almost completely powered down. If successful, the crew would endure a return trip in freezing temperatures, with minimal power, and with carbon dioxide accumulating dangerously. The crew also had to execute a mid-course correction via a manual 39-second engine burn to reach the reentry window. Solutions were found to every problem. Command pilot Jim Lovell executed that burn so successfully that they landed within sight of their recovery vessel, the U.S.S. Iwo Jima.

What was Gene Kranz’s leadership lesson? Expecting high performance is a prerequisite to its achievement. Speed and precision are important (just as they are in the trauma bay). Construct your teams, drill them, and instill confidence and expertise before they are needed. Trained teams make

fast, correct decisions under duress. Following protocols reduces the possibility of error.

### **Meriwether Lewis and William Clark**

The Lewis and Clark Expedition is one of the finest examples of team building and leadership in American history.<sup>21</sup> The year was 1804. No one knew what lay ahead in the wilderness. Fear and uncertainty could easily have destroyed the expedition, which forged a trail through 8,000 miles of forbidding, unknown terrain. They were in jeopardy of life or limb no less than 56 times during the journey. In fact, from a technological standpoint, the Lewis and Clark Expedition has been likened to landing men on the moon in 1969.

Lewis and Clark were both junior officers. Lewis outranked Clark, but they decided to be co-commanders. They forgot rank, just as rank is suspended on an aircraft carrier flight deck during flight operations. Lewis and Clark created an atmosphere of respect, and they were willing to lead their people into danger while assuming their own responsibilities.

They selected their team members based on talent. They put the entire team in the same boat to build bonds among team members. Their sergeant was elected, not appointed.

They led from the front. In a very difficult winter encampment, they were out of their tent, engaging their people. They had compassion for the individual, and they had the flexibility to lead in different ways at different times. They admitted their mistakes. In the Bitterroot Mountains, they were eating candles and their own horses, but they led the teams that went out to forage for food.

On reaching the Pacific Ocean, they conducted what was almost assuredly the first truly democratic election in United States territory. Every member had an equal say, including Sacagawea and a black slave. It was 116 years later that women won the right to vote in the United States, and 160 years before obstacles were removed from the path of our African American fellow citizens and their right to vote. Lewis and Clark, 201 years ago, taught us respect and trust, shared sacrifice, concern for others, courage, persistence, and the willingness to learn, innovate, and make mistakes.

### **Rudolph A. Giuliani**

There may come a time in your career when you are challenged personally and professionally by stressors that are almost beyond your ability to comprehend. For me, that day was September 11, 2001. We were in the trauma bay watching television, watching the World Trade Center collapse. Our radio- and telecommunications were completely knocked out. We had no idea how many more casualties there would be, what their injuries would be, or when they would be coming. Neither did we know the fate of two of our paramedics who had perished. We had activated our well-rehearsed disaster plan, we were prepared (to receive casualties,

at least), and we could have triaged and cared for hundreds more.

In the aftermath of the attacks, it was Rudy Giuliani, who was disparaged as a leader and probably going to be remembered as one of the worst mayors in New York City history, who kept the city together and functioning. Giuliani found the personal courage and leadership skills to do an extraordinary job in leading New York City out of its crisis. Few realized that he approached this as an important opportunity to manage change.<sup>30</sup> Giuliani articulated a positive vision. He was visible, he was calm, he had the information, and he stayed on point with his message. He dealt definitively with the naysayers, and he lavished public praise on those who made positive contributions. I'm not sure that New York City has recovered completely to this day, but nonetheless, it is doubtful that we would have recovered to the extent we have if it had not been for his extraordinary leadership in a time of unimaginable crisis.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

What are the enduring principles of leadership? The six most important words are: I admit I made a mistake; the five: You did a good job; the four: What is your opinion; the three: If you please; the two: thank you; and the one, we.

What are the take-home messages?<sup>5</sup> Leaders can be made. You can make yourself into a leader if you know yourself and you know your boss. Clarify your personal values. Envision the future, and align the actions of your team with your shared vision. The team is all-important. We as surgeons understand that, but we have to remember it every single day.

Seek innovative ways to change, grow, and improve. Drucker has said every organization must be prepared to abandon everything it does to survive to the future.<sup>8</sup> Experiment and take risks. Challenge everything; bend everything to the breaking point. That which snaps back is good to you. That which does not need to be abandoned and you need to move on.

Lead by example, but manage to get results. Foster collaboration to build trust. Strengthen your team by delegating responsibility. Recognize contributions and celebrate success, but maintain accountability.

Crisis is the crucible of change. You can't find leaders during a crisis. Leaders have to be ready and they have to know what to do.

Thanks go to many, but I certainly would not be standing before you today if it were not for Tom Shires (Fig. 7), who is considered by some to be the greatest academic surgeon of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, certainly of the second half.<sup>31</sup>

Sam Powers was my mentor in the lab in Albany. He was a great, maybe the great, surgical physiologist of his day, working in acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) when we



didn't understand what it was. Sam died at age 60 in 1980 of carcinoma of the rectum. I miss him dearly to this day.

Stan Harris (Fig. 8), Celita Everett Professor of Management and Director of the Physician Executive Master of Business Administration Program of Auburn University, taught me about leadership, management, and organizational behavior and change, along with my classmate, friend, and colleague Jeff Hammond, a member of EAST and the EAST Board of Directors, who is in the audience today.

I thank my team: Lynn Hydo, Fanny Tsesselis, Mendy Eckhaus, and my partners Soumi Eachempati and Jian Shou. I thank the leadership of EAST. It has been an enriching experience to lead this organization, but after all, this organization is about you and about our patients, and it is to you the members that I am most indebted. Thank you so much for the opportunity to serve as your President.

## REFERENCES

- Buckingham M, Coffman C. *First, break all the rules. What the world's great managers do differently*. New York: Simon and Schuster; 1999.
- Whelton DA, Cameron KS. *Developing management skills*. Fifth edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall; 2002.
- Quinn RE. Mastering competing values: An integrated approach to management. In Osland, JS, Kolb DA, Rubin IM, eds. *The organizational behavior reader*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 2001:58–66.
- Goleman D, Boyatzis R, McKee A. *Primal leadership. Recognizing the power of emotional intelligence*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press; 2002.
- Kouzes JM, Posner BZ. *The leadership challenge*. Third edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass; 2002.
- Nanus B. Why does vision matter? In Nanus B. *Leading the way to organizational renewal*. Portland, OR: Productivity press; 1996.
- The Business World According to Peter F. Drucker. <http://www.peter-drucker.com/about.html>. Accessed December 15, 2004.
- Drucker PF. The essential Drucker. New York: HarperCollins, 2001.
- Drucker PF. Managing oneself. *Harvard Bus Rev*. 2005;1–14.
- Goleman D. *Emotional intelligence*. New York: Bantam Books; 1995.
- Goleman D. What makes a leader? *Harvard Bus Rev*. 1998;73–102.
- Sull DN, Houlender D. Do your commitments match your convictions? *Harvard Bus Rev*. 2005;17–26.
- Know your type. <http://www.knowyourtype.com>. Accessed December 15, 2004.
- Benfari RC. *Understanding and changing your management style*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass; 1999.
- Goodwin DK. Lessons of presidential leadership. <http://drucker.org/leaderbooks/12/summer98/goodwin.html>. Accessed December 15, 2004.
- Bennis W. *On becoming a leader*. Cambridge, MA: Basic Books; 2003.
- Gabarro JJ, Kotter JP. Managing your boss. *Harvard Bus Rev*. 1980; 58:92–100.
- Bies RJ, Tripp TM. Two faces of the powerless: Coping with tyranny in an organization. In Kramer RM, Neale MA, eds. *Power and influence in organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; 1988.
- Augar P, Palmer J. *Player manager. The rise of professionals who manage while they work*. London: Penguin Books, Ltd.; 2004.
- Useem M. *The leadership moment: Nine true stories of triumph and disaster and their lessons for us all*. New York: Three Rivers Press; 1998.
- Lencioni P. *The five dysfunctions of a team*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass; 2002.
- Shepard HA. Rules of thumb for change agents. In Klein G. *Why good people make poor decisions*. In Osland, JS, Kolb DA, Rubin IM, eds. *The organizational behavior reader*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall; 2001:589–594.
- Watkins M. *The first 90 days. Critical success strategies for new leaders at all levels*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press; 2003.
- Ciampa D, Watkins M. *Right from the start. Taking charge in a new leadership role*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press; 1999.
- Klein G. *Sources of power. How people make decisions*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press; 1998.
- Hallowell EM. Overloaded circuits. Why smart people underperform. *Harvard Bus Rev*. 2005;1–8.
- Cartwright S, Cooper CL. The growing epidemic of stress. In Osland, JS, Kolb DA, Rubin IM, eds. *The organizational behavior reader*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall; 2001:169–184.
- Denman J. What really happened on Little Round Top? *Civil War Times Illus*. 2005;44:34–40.
- Famous Quotes. [http://www.famousquotes.me.uk/speeches/John\\_F\\_Kennedy/3.htm](http://www.famousquotes.me.uk/speeches/John_F_Kennedy/3.htm). Accessed December 15, 2004.
- Giuliani RW. *Leadership*. New York: Hyperion Books, 2002.
- Organ CH, Jr. The interlocking of American surgery. An analysis of surgical leadership in the United States, 1945 through 1985. *Am J Surg*. 1985;150:638–649.