

Once Upon a Time-

**How Can the Stories of Our Leadership Journeys Be
Used As A Coaching Strategy With Others Within
Providence Health Care?**

By

Kim Gunning

B.A., York University, 1974

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

**Masters of Arts
in
Leadership and Training**

**ROYAL ROADS UNIVERSITY
APRIL, 2001**

©Kim Gunning 2001



National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Acquisitions et
services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file *Votre référence*

Our file *Notre référence*

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-59447-5

Canada

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As I began this journey, so did many others, whether they wanted to or not! And this is my opportunity to say thank you to each of you who stayed with me as I made my way through the turbulent and chaotic world of the Master's!

To my Mother-To my Children-

To my Wonderful Friends-

To my Research Participants-

To my Father.

Each of you have touched my heart and my soul. Without your wisdom and your love, this paper would be so much less. Thank you for your patience, your words of encouragement and your never failing belief that I would succeed.

I Heard

And I heard a voice say-

Be strong, Be clear, Be heartfelt.

And I learned-

To be silent, To listen, To hear

To cherish, To believe.

In you, In me, In us

Thank you for believing in me.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgment-Thank you!-----	ii
Prologue- And the Story Begins-----	1
Chapter One-And Now the Story Begins (Study Background)	
Problem/Opportunity-----	5
Research Question-----	14
Chapter Two- Story Telling (Literature Review)	
Organizational Information Review-----	15
Literature Review-----	16
• Story Telling and Leadership	17
• Learning and Leadership	20
• Coaching/Mentoring and Leadership	22
Retrospective-----	25

Chapter Three-Why Tell It in a Story? (Research Methodology)

Research Methodology-----	29
Research Tools-----	32
Study Conduct-----	36

Chapter Four-What Did I Hear? (Research Study Findings)

The Words from the Research Participants-----	38
Study Conclusions-----	52
Study Recommendations-----	58

Chapter Five-Let the Stories Begin (Research Implications)

Proposal-----	68
Potential Impact-----	71
Future Research Opportunities-----	74

Chapter Six-The Story of My Journey (Lessons Learned)

What Have I Learned?-----	76
---------------------------	----

What Worked Well?-----	77
What Would I Do Differently?-----	78
Competencies-----	80
References-----	83

Appendices

A An invitation to the research participants-----	A-1
B Research questions for participants-----	B-1
C Letter of intent to the Sponsor-----	C-1

PROLOGUE-TELL ME YOUR STORY

*I am my story.
If you hear me, you will know me.
If you know me, you will understand me.
And by understanding me
You will learn about you.
And
As I hear you, I will understand you
And by understanding you
I will learn about me.
And our journey will be forever
Changed.*

By Kim Gunning

If I can use this paper as a place to start the story, maybe each of us will take the risk to tell each other who we are in this world. If we are willing to step into that wobbly place where only our heart speaks and our story is heard, we will honour our diversity and recognize that life is about relationship. If we can build strong relationships, our leadership ability will only grow stronger and deeper.

"...the most effective leaders...are good storytellers, persons who can both relate and embody a powerful narrative in a way that draws others along side of them." Warren Bennis (1989, p.273)

The words "Once upon a time..." have captured my heart from the first day I can remember hearing a story. They are magical words filled with promise. They speak to me of what might be, what has been and where the two meet. I believe the essence of this leadership journey both personally and for those who will

walk with me is: how did I get from there to here? How did you get from there to here? What experiences have we had that compel us to step into the complex world of leadership and give us the hope that we, you and I, can use our life lessons as tools to create the space for others to look inwardly and use their stories to inspire others?

Threaded through this paper is my story of why I feel compelled to write about the use of stories in the leadership journey. My word for this time has been "courage" and I lost it for a while. But, I am back now and will continue on in that risky, uncomfortable place of "I don't really know..". We don't talk very often about being vulnerable when we talk about leadership, or at least it isn't given as much emphasis as I think it should. I feel very vulnerable much of the time in my work. And yet, without seeing and feeling this place we can not lead anyone anywhere! To be open and transparent means being vulnerable and willing to say "I don't really know...". To be comfortable with the uncomfortable is scary. I am supposed to "know", right?

This paper will be as much about my journey as it will be about the formal research. As I read and re-read the literature on leadership I am struck by the need to hear the stories that have brought people to where they are and that my story is no less important. I have struggled with the exact question but not for a moment have I strayed from my first thoughts...how can we use our leadership journey stories as the basis of coaching with those we are asked to lead? My

challenge has been to trust myself and my instincts, to believe that my thoughts and the research that will follow, will be meaningful. To know and speak to the uniqueness of my "Self" as a part of "We" and honour both is my challenge.

As I have listened to the stories of those in my interviews, to fellow students and to faculty who have struggled as I have, I am struck by the overwhelming opportunity to let my voice be heard. This work is mine and how I choose to put it forward will be mine to decide. And with that sense of freedom comes a form of paralysis. Where do I start? How will I create something that is meaningful, based in integrity and above all, be courageous? So, after one more trip to the waters' edge, I will begin.

I can't remember when I heard the word "leadership" for the first time but when I did, I immediately knew of times when I observed great leadership in action. There was an echo of experiences that were profound but, not yet explored. Part of this journey will be to look at those formative learnings and how they can become part of our consciousness. As I write, I think of my father, the person who first demonstrated leadership to me. I realize that I missed a great opportunity to ask him questions about his journey. Those questions would have taken us to a depth of understanding that we never reached. As I begin to unwrap the meaning of leadership and distinguish it from leader, memories flood my mind. My father taught my Grade Twelve math class. As a specific science you wouldn't think that there would be time or space for stories. But there was and he used moments between algorithms to challenge us to think. With his

stories, he wove pictures that spoke to us of our potential as young adults and of our responsibility to be accountable for living a full and honorable life. The Math class was the vehicle that created the space for us to learn lessons that were so much broader and much more lasting than the actual algebra lesson. Years later I spoke to other former students who had been blessed with my father's stories and it was the essence of those words that lived long after the class ended. He was a leader who used stories to help us find our own potential.

In this paper I will go back to some of those times and use experiences to bring context to the work I am doing now. Traditional research methodologies will blend with the unconventional, specific data will blend with thoughtful discourse and in the end, I will bring my own thoughts to how our stories of our leadership journeys can help others to take the risk to find their own voices and using that voice, to inspire others.

CHAPTER 1-THE STORY BEGINS

STUDY BACKGROUND

In this chapter I will describe the current reality at Providence Health Care, the problems and challenges leaders are grappling with, and the opportunity to be resourceful and creative in transforming how we work together. Each of the eight sites holds a story of its history. Our challenge is to create a new and wonderful story that begins with: "Once upon a time there was a place called Providence Health Care."

The Problem/Opportunity:

I believe that stories of our life experiences can be used effectively as the catalyst for changing how we work. Leadership begins with Self and telling our stories is the first step. Who we are and how we came to Providence Health Care is the foundation for understanding and shared learning, the place where change can begin. Until we embrace this notion, we will be looking at the organization and wondering why we are standing still.

The challenge I grapple with is, how do we build leadership capacity within our organization, Providence Health Care? Can old dogs learn new tricks? Can we shift our old ways and really believe in a new way of doing business? Story telling is one of the oldest ways of teaching and one of the ways that brings

people to a common place. Parables, poems, songs and other forms of giving messages is also a starting place for dialogue. When we can engage in dialogue as a form of conversation, we are more open to the learning that comes from the discussion. How can we capture the feelings expressed in these moments and learn from them? Can we use this to build trust within our teams and across our systems? How do we create a culture that honours the past but embraces the future? Stories is one way.

The world of health care is changing rapidly. We are being challenged to be much more responsible with all of our resources, human and financial, than we have ever been before. How do we do this? I believe we can do this by creating opportunities to learn from each other and build on our collective strengths. This is our opportunity to do things differently, to think differently, to challenge ourselves as never before. We talk about building leadership capacity at every level of the organization but I am not sure we really have a clear picture of what that means or how to do it. The literature gives us a wide definition of leadership and what attributes seem to create successful leaders. How do we bring leadership to a personal level? In her book "The Web of Inclusion" Sally Helgesen (1995) talks about organizations as webs of inclusion, each piece building on the next and each part being interdependent for success. Perhaps sharing our stories of triumph and failure will begin to develop such a web. This web will be the infrastructure that we will need to transform our organization from one that focuses on task to one that values the people who do the tasks. And we

will create the future we want. If we can take the power of stories, learn from them and use them as coaching opportunities, we value our colleagues and we learn from each other.

In my role as an Organizational Development consultant, I work with people who carry the title of Leader. How can I create opportunities for them to learn what has worked for others in a forum that is respectful? There is a sense of urgency around skill building and a need for these leaders to be practicing a new way of being within a somewhat dinosaur-like environment. And some of the leaders don't appear to really want to do things differently! There is a comfort in doing things the way they have been done before, ways that have worked before. Sometimes there is great comfort in standing still and blaming others for our failures. Unfortunately, what worked before isn't working anymore. I want to explore what it will take to move from observing and railing against the change to becoming an active participant. What magic is there to encourage people to want to do things differently? What words are there to encourage people to want to do things differently? What effective tools do I have that will encourage the shift? By definition, Merriam-Webster's Dictionary (1993) defines "shift" as: "to be in motion, to change, to transfer..". From these few phrases I see opportunities for us to move to a new place. Our values, our core beliefs have not changed. How we demonstrate our values of spirituality, integrity, stewardship etc. needs to look different. As Margaret Wheatley says : "...the water's need to flow... The form changes but the mission remains clear." (Wheatley, 1992,p.16). To really

make a shift in how we interact means taking a risk, to move out of the comfort zone requires a willingness to trust the unknown. And this begins the journey of transformation. I go back to Merriam-Webster's Dictionary(1993) and I find transformation defined as "...a marked change." It doesn't say it is a good change! And therein lies the challenge. Warren Bennis reminds us that: "All organizations, especially those that are growing, walk a tightrope between stability and change, tradition and revision. Therefore they must have some means for reflecting on their own experiences and offering reflective structures to their employees." (Bennis,1989, p.185). Perhaps, our stories are one of those structures that supports the shift and the transformational journey that will result.

There is sadness and mistrust within our leadership team. Life has changed rapidly in the last three years. We merged five organizations, eight sites, distinct cultures. We created one Senior Leadership Team that resulted in job loss. And a couple of very significant staff who were strong change agents on the St.Paul's site, suddenly died. There have also been significant staffing changes on the other sites. And most recently, our CEO, the man who challenged us to look up and envision a new way, has left. Add budget issues, a nursing shortage and a challenging community to the mix and we have a recipe for disaster. Some people are stuck, others don't want to lift their heads and others want to fly.

This has created a unique opportunity for me to look at how to shift my feelings of helplessness. Others are struggling too. How can I, in my work, address these

feelings? Stories. As masters of our destiny we can do things differently. I believe that stories of success and failure can help make the shift. Ian Percy (Percy, 1997, p.68) refers to a shuddering that takes place when there is great change happening. The shuddering can't be ignored. Like an earthquake, the shuddering forces one to make a decision: will I stand still or will I move forward? No matter what the decision, life is altered forever. If we don't learn from the changes and the losses, we lose an opportunity to work differently. We are there now. Can we do things in a way that works for us?

The influence of culture is powerful. Edgar Schein writes about organizational culture and he tells us: "If one wishes to distinguish leadership from management or administration, one can argue that leaders create and change cultures, while managers...live within them." (Schein, 1995, p.5) And "...one could argue that the only thing of real importance that leaders do is create and manage culture and that the unique talent of leaders is their ability to understand and work with culture."(Schein, 1995, p.5) As leaders, our single most important role is to build capacity in others to lead. How do we let go of the day to day struggle long enough to fulfill this obligation? Maybe, if we begin with a story about why it is so difficult, we will find our way.

Understanding the organizational culture is important but understanding is not enough to make a change. I will explore what is holding us back and what is

possible in a new future. What allows us to shift from one paradigm to another one? And how do we make the new one a better one? Can our stories help?

The world you and I have known in health care, "the good old days", are gone forever or so we would like to believe. But is it really? Are we pretending that there is a new way while we cling to the mindset of days gone by? Our new direction demands responsible and accountable decision making at the point of care. We haven't built the skill sets that we need to be able to give power to those who actually know best. We need to concentrate on what we are accountable for and how our behaviours will demonstrate a new way of working. Former Head Nurses are being asked to "lead", but we haven't stopped long enough to develop their skills so that they can do what we ask. And they are angry that "We"(Administration!), are trying to look at new and different ways of doing business. Let go and delegate. But remember, you are responsible and accountable for the result and if you fail, look out!

Expectations are high and people are scared. How do we do things differently? What is "different" anyway? I see such personal struggles as the leaders try to do the "right" thing. I wonder how we can build a bridge that will be a walk-way to a new way. We need to try every option available to support a shift in our thinking. One of the rich resources available to us is us. As leaders, courage comes in waves and seems fleeting. If, in my work, I can bring stories forward that speak to the courageous moments of our lives and create a space, even for a moment,

that says it is good to hear the stories, I believe we can begin to move away from the feelings of hopelessness and begin to create a new future.

Our Quality of Worklife survey told us that : “The lowest two items were the leadership awareness of the challenges facing the job and acting to help employees with the challenges.” (QWL Report Providence Health Care, 1999). Our mandate was clear but how to begin? The formal leaders then completed their own personal leadership review through a 360 degree process using the work James Kouzes and Barry Posner defined in their book “The Leadership Challenge” (Kouzes and Posner, 1995). The two areas of greatest challenge for all of the leaders, including the Senior Leadership Team and Physicians, were how to “Inspire a Shared Vision” and how to “Encourage the Heart”. This left no doubt in anyone’s mind that if we were to move forward as an organization, our work was to build skills that expanded leadership capacity specifically in these two areas and we needed to begin with the formal leaders. And again the question was asked, where do we start and how can we be effective?

Stories. There is a power in them that amazes me. If we can begin with stories of who we are and how we came to be in this organization, we begin to build a relationship. We begin to see each other as whole people and not positions. That kind of relationship builds trust. This trust then allows us to use tools like appreciative inquiry and dialogue to dig deeper into our issues and build common solutions. These tools allow us to speak with trust and respect, the

foundational supports for healthy relationships. In one of the presentations made in the MALT program (00-2), Patrick Duffy said: “ You cannot touch someone and not be equal.” He was saying this in a presentation on diversity but it struck me as a wonderful way to describe the impact of our stories. Stories connect and re-connect us to each other. Using our stories to share our vision and to encourage hearts allows us to create a space for others to learn, to be engaged and these are the first steps towards building relationships. These relationships will be the foundation of a new way to do our business.

You and I, Together, Learn

*When you listen, I feel respected
 When I feel respected, I begin to trust
 As I begin to trust, I listen.
 When I listen, I am respectful,
 Trust and Respect
 Trustworthy
 Respectful
 We are in relationship
 And Community is born.*

By Kim Gunning

The Quality of Work Life Survey (1999) also indicated that staff recognition was a major area of concern. This re-enforced the findings of the 360 degree review that spoke to encouraging the heart and inspiring a shared vision. How do you

recognize staff for excellent work if you don't talk about our direction, our vision and how we can't do it without them? We are facing critical staff shortages and consequently, retention is a major focus of concern. But it isn't just front line staff who are leaving the system. Retention within the leadership team is critical. We must look at the issues that affect their ability to lead and build skills so that they can in turn, meet the stated needs of their staff. If we don't address the gaps in leadership skills, the staff will continue to feel a sense of hopelessness and those who are leading will leave because they will feel they have failed.

My paper looks at one way to begin to talk to each other differently and maybe this will support a new way of being together in the work place. When we are authentic, we are real.

"What is Real?" asked the Rabbit...

"Real isn't how you are made" said the Skin Horse.

"It is a thing that happens to you...It doesn't happen all at once.

You become.

It takes a long time."

Margery Williams, (The Velveteen Rabbit, 1866, p.4,5)

How do I begin? What were the right questions to find out if we can be real? How should I begin the dialogue with my research participants? What questions would inform my research? Do they see stories as I do? I learned from the Velveteen Rabbit that it would take time and the only way was to begin.

Research Questions:

- 1.** How can we use the stories of our leadership journeys as a coaching tool for building leadership capacity?
- 2.** Should we tell our stories?
- 3.** What helps us tell our stories?
- 4.** What makes telling our stories difficult?
- 5.** How do we create the space for others to tell their stories?

CHAPTER TWO-THE JOURNEY BEGINS

AN INFORMATION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational Review:

If I look at Providence Health Care through a telescope that has the power to look back as well as forward, I see two different pictures. In this moment I see an organization that has gone through extraordinary change in the last three years. Providence Health Care is the amalgamation of the Catholic hospitals in the city of Vancouver, British Columbia. It is the largest denominational organization in Canada. We have established our mission and vision based on strong values. We have joined sites, programs, departments; created new systems and processes to meet a never-diminishing demand for care and continue to deal with a myriad of external and internal pressures. This has been awesome work and we have been recognized for our excellence in our accreditation process. Hospitals go through a thorough review process called Accreditation on a regular basis. This involves a team of senior health care administrators from across Canada, trained in a process that looks at how an organization functions to ensure excellence in patient care. It is not simply a review of documents but a rigorous look at all aspects of care including interviews with staff, physicians, volunteers and patients. We had sixty accreditation teams! Many of these were new teams and they not only had to respond to the Accreditor's requirements, they had to form a "team". Undaunted, they moved forward and were successful.

We were awarded a three year accreditation and many accolades for the work done to date. But with this kind of change come huge challenges. Nursing and physician shortages, budget restraints, an unstable political structure and most recently, the resignation of our CEO are but a few of the systemic issues we are grappling with across the structure that we call Providence Health Care. One of our biggest issues is trust: how do we trust ourselves and each other, to be trustworthy? Not an easy question to answer. We have begun to build some tentative connections but I fear we are building too slowly. Can we build our connections more quickly? We will engage people like Dr. Tim Porter O'Grady and Bonnie Wesorick, specialists in organizational transformation, to assist us as we define our future and learn the skills we will need to be innovative and focused. But this is our work and we are accountable for the results. If we create a new future, we will own it. If we choose to stand still, we will own the consequences of that decision as well.

Literature Review:

In preparation for this section I started with a mind mapping process to look for the most effective way to address the question of how to use stories as a coaching strategy. I chose four areas:

- storytelling
- learning
- coaching/mentoring
- leadership

I believe that there were clear connections between each and I looked at the literature to see if there was support for my hypothesis. I see the interconnectedness of all four.

As I began I reviewed leadership with the first three and did a literature review focusing on the interdependency of leadership and storytelling, leadership and coaching/mentoring and leadership and learning. To tell a story, yours or mine, and use them as a coaching strategy for leadership, each area must be reviewed and then brought together. It was my intent to do this by reviewing a wide selection of information in each category and look for the common areas as well as the gaps.

Story Telling and Leadership:

The connection between storytelling and leadership is the primary focus of my work. There is much writing available on one or other of the topics but there is a significant gap in looking at the two together. There are places where the story tells about leadership through anecdotes but it is up to me make the connection to the powerful impact of the story on the leadership. This gap leaves me curious about how to make the connection more blatant. Ann Wylie reflects that: "In study after study, people say they believe information more readily if it is portrayed in a story form than through statistics. Stories...a.k.a. anecdotes and narratives...paint pictures in your audience member's minds so they pay closer attention to your communication, understanding your message faster and

remember your key points longer.” (Wylie, “Story Telling”, Communications World, 1998, p.2)

In reviewing many other authors, a similar theme has emerged. To be able to use stories as teachable moments re-enforces the learning. To tell a story brings the moment to life. We hear our own thoughts and dreams come to life through someone else’s words. The images are powerful and the lessons are not easily forgotten.

Peg Neuhauser says “...storytelling is the most powerful form of human communication.” (Neuhauser, Corporate Legends and Lore, 1993, p.13) Martin Cebis and Nick Forester (Cebis and Forester, Leadership and Organizational Development Journal, 1999) define story telling as a skill. This is supported by Peg Neuhauser (1993, p.16)when she reminds us that:

“...story telling:

- Enhances credibility
- Grabs attention
- Makes communication better
- Allows stories to linger in people’s minds
- Ensures that stories get passed along further and faster”

And, “Over the long term...stories reinforce our values and beliefs and mirror what is important. Story telling is the secret weapon of some of the world’s most successful movers and shakers.”(1993,p.20)

Our stories also inform us about organizational culture. Remember the story about the man who kept his lunch in the refrigerator for a year and refused to

move it? Or the one about the ghost that lives in the convent on the sixth floor?
We all have the war stories from where we work. How do we make sure that the stories that are being told are the ones that we want others to hear? As leaders in a large, complex organization, how do we tell stories that are inspiring and contribute to a healthy culture?

Alec MacLeod (1997) talks about "Telling Tales of Transformation ". He speaks about times in our lives when we share stories that are transformative in some way. "Tales of Important Events" like births and deaths form the fabric of who we are and our stories of these times change the way we look at the world. "Tales of Discovery of Self" describe stories that we hear and how we share that impact. In a moment, we are all. He says: "...we shape meaning with our tales..."

(MacLeod, 1997, p.5)

Reviewing leadership development and the impact of story telling on the skills we need helps to focus on what is really important.

"Whoever survives a test

Whatever it may be,

Must tell the story

That is his duty"

Elie Weisel
(A Jew today, 1978)

And at the other end of the scale are the stories about leadership that are told without heart and the lessons have no lasting meaning. Jerry Rosa (1999) writes about the need for an environment that supports coaching. His theory is accurate but I found the presentation of the content unpalatable. He wrote with an objective view, telling the facts as he saw them but they were lost instantly. There wasn't a moment when his heart connected with the essence of the story.

Learning and Leadership:

A great reminder at this point is that teaching doesn't equal learning. How do we learn? Are there specific ideas and thoughts that we need to pay attention to ensure that learning takes place? Does learning happen, no matter what the topic, if the philosophy for teaching is right? And, is there a way that we can use this knowledge about how we learn to build leadership skills? In her article "Thirty-three World-class Competencies", Margot Weinstein (Training and Development, May 2000) comments that "adults want practical knowledge, not theory; adults have preferred learning styles; adults learners are diverse and unique; adults learners are motivated and curious; adults learners already have much knowledge and experience; adult learners need problem-solving skills." (Weinstien, 2000, p.20) We need to use this knowledge to create the best learning environment for our leaders. Lorilee Sandmann reminds us : "The strength of adult learning rests, in part, on the richness and depth present in the multifaceted lives of adults...learning is a shared covenant between learners and educators." (Sandmann, Adult Learning, 1998, p.2)

Marilyn Noble says “ Life’s deepest learnings...seldom happen in the classroom. The more we open ourselves up to startling and unsettling discoveries that can occur anywhere, at any time, the more the journey becomes an adventure of the unknown, lived from the heart.” (Noble, *An Apprenticeship in Diversity*, date,p.6) For me, this describes the magical connection between learning and leadership.

In the leadership development teaching that I do for Providence Health Care, I am continually reminded of the wealth of knowledge held by each adult learner. Part of my role is to create the space that allows conversations about leadership to occur. I bring skill development to the classroom and some formalized structures but the true richness of learning lies in the conversations that happen as a subset of the formal program. In fact it is wonderful to watch people realize that they actually know quite a bit about leadership and already have those qualities! To learn how to bring the leadership qualities to the surface and practice them is my work as the instructor.

We are reminded that : “ The need for leadership in every arena of ...life has become so acute that we don’t have the luxury of dwelling on the unresolvable” (Bennis, *Managing the Dream*, 2000, p.279).

Tools to help learning occur vary as widely as the students and instructors who participate in leadership development. Books, papers, movies and stories are but a few of the media that can create an environment where willing students engage in conversations that look at leadership skills and competencies through a wide

lens. Peter Senge speaks about developing leadership capacity through: "... five disciplines of learning: mental models (making sense of the world and our actions); team learning (mastering the practices of dialogue and discussion); shared vision (answering the question, "What do we want to create?"; systems thinking (seeing patterns and relationships) and personal mastery (clarifying what is important and seeing reality objectively) (Senge, *The Dance of Change*, 1999, p32). This concept helps bridge from learning to learning and leadership. You can't have leadership without learning. Peter Senge helps design the framework for that conversation. And he reminds us that : "...the primary leverage for any organizational learning effort lies not in policy, budgets, or organizational charts, but in ourselves." (Senge, *The Fifth Discipline Field Book*, 1994, p.48).

So how do we create an environment for learning that responds to the learner's needs and holds the learner accountable for developing these illusive leadership skills? Perhaps the next section of the literature review will provide some answers.

Coaching/Mentoring and Leadership:

The last section of the literature review covers coaching and mentoring.

According to Merriam-Webster's Dictionary (1993) a coach is: "one who instructs or trains intensively" and to mentor is to " be a trusted advisor". I believe that to be effective as a coach you must know when you leave the role of coach

and become a mentor. Sandra Carrigan defines coaching as “An interactive process of helping others reach their goals and unleashing their potential to maximize their performance.” (Franklin Covey, Personal Coaching, 2000, p.3)

Wow!! How do we even begin to reach for that star?

I reviewed literature that looked at how coaching influences leadership. Often, the lesson was told in a story. Phil Jackson, Coach of the Chicago Bulls, used stories of his life, his successes and challenges, to motivate his team. He spoke with conviction and dedication. The lessons came to life because he spoke of life events. He painted pictures for his team that they could hold and re-visit in difficult moments. What a wonderful way to deliver a challenging message.

It seems that the use of anecdotes support the greatest teaching moments. Ivan Maisel (Sports Illustrated, 2000, p.12) reflects on his father's gift as a coach and he does this in a story. He listened to stories about his father from those who knew his father as a coach and he recorded those stories. He was able to build a picture of this man that was so much broader than the one that he, Ivan, knew. Those stories talked about his father's leadership skills as seen by a team of young men who wanted to do nothing more than play the best game they could play. Ivan's dad created the space for them to do that and they, in turn told the story. That was their gift to Ivan. Reflecting back I know that this was true for me as well. The stories told by former students of my Dad's helped me to see him through a different lens. It reminds me of a kaleidoscope and the marvelous pictures you can paint when you have input from many sources.

Coaching isn't just about sports teams, we have learned from the world of sport that coaching helps individuals achieve levels of success that they never believed possible. In much of the leadership development literature, coaching has become the newest rage but the results are telling us that it may be a flavour that lasts.

" Coaching helps individuals define their goals and discover what makes them happy. A coach is a trained listener who can also intuit just what people need to find the drive that will make them succeed." (L. Carron, Triangle Business Journal, 1997, p.23) Coaching helps "...people to find their "vision for their life", then help them to find their highest aspirations." . (Triangle Business Journal, 1997, p.24)

Seeking out a coach in business has become as acceptable as having a skating coach. The work is much the same and the commitment to excellence is equally arduous. It requires dedication to the topic, in this case leadership development, and a commitment of time. The coach helps the coachee focus on areas that the coachee wants to develop. helps build a plan and is there to support the learning. However, the work belongs to the coachee. He or she sets the course of action and relies on the coach to keep the sign posts clear. Marshall Goldsmith reminds us that "...nobody can successfully coach people who don't want to improve. And...the key to the process, as a coach, is to let go of our own ego. They won't get better because of us." (A. Alter, Computerworld, 1999, p.27)

Retrospective:

So, what have I learned with this review? There is much written on story telling and an equal amount on leadership. But, little has been written on storytelling and its possible influence leadership development. Nor has there been much depth of insight in the literature on how leaders can use their stories to share their leadership journey. Since I began to investigate this topic, there hasn't been a day go by when I didn't hear a story that moved me. Not every story relates to a leadership journey but many do. And when I have asked people to share their leadership journey with me, everyone is willing to do so. We want to be heard. To listen is respectful and the circle of learning begins again.

My challenge as an Organizational Development Consultant for Providence Health Care is to look for ways of bringing the stories forward. The current literature is not enough. There are gaps. How can our stories become one of the tools we, as leaders in Providence Health Care, use to coach? And is there value in this tool? How do we demand the best of ourselves as we move forward? And what can we share with others to encourage them to come with us, with me, on the journey of being the best person they can be in this world? How do we begin to have conversations that connect us at a deeper level? Can stories help us touch the Soul?

As I wrestled with these questions and contemplated the final words to this section, a book arrived in the mail that I had been encouraged to read a long time

ago. It didn't arrive and didn't arrive so I had decided it wasn't meant to be a part of the review. But, in fact, it arrived at precisely the right moment for me. It is "Synchronicity-The Inner Path of Leadership" by Joseph Jaworski (1996). It has had a profound impact on me at every level. As I read the words, the power of my role, as a leader, became very clear. And, it isn't just about skills and tools, it is about being in the world and embracing anything that comes to me. It is about servant leadership in its purest form. And it is about how we can use our stories to learn from each other.

Jaworski says: " We have all had those perfect moments, when things come together in an almost unbelievable way, when events that could never have been predicted, let alone controlled, remarkably seem to guide us along our path. The closest I have come to finding a word for what happens in these moments is "synchronicity"... Over the years my curiosity has grown, particularly about how these experiences occur collectively within a group or a team of people. I have come to see this as the most subtle territory of leadership, creating the conditions for "predictable miracles."(Jaworski, p.1x) Wow! And that was just in the Preface. My next question is how do we do this? He answered my question on the next page: " We hardly have the language to describe the fundamental shift of mind that permits us to participate in this unfolding creative order. A story is the most powerful way, indeed the only way I know to begin." (Jaworski, p.x)

The arrival of this particular book stopped me for a moment and reminded me that life is about Synchronicity and the way to share those moments is through our stories. And so I too will continue on my journey to look at how we can use

the important stories of our lives to create the miracles that Jaworski tells me are there for our taking.

" Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it.

Boldness has genius, power and magic in it."

Goethe (date unknown)

CHAPTER THREE- WHY TELL IT IN A STORY?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

It is December and as I begin to write this section I look back to the days when I needed to begin to define what my work would be about, it became suddenly and painfully clear that I had no idea how to begin to research my question. My experience was very limited to say the least. I knew I needed to be truthful in my work and so I needed to develop the knowledge base for my work. But where to begin?

So, I started to read. I needed clarity but I also needed simplicity because I felt that if I was going to really answer my question of how to use the stories of our leadership journeys, I needed to do so in a simple way. Enter "Research Decisions-Quantitative and Qualitative Perspectives" (Palys, 1997). In this book Ted Palys described my dilemma beautifully and helped me to focus on what was going to be important. I began to understand the differences between qualitative and quantitative research. And I knew that my journey would be in the world defined by a qualitative study:

" For qualitative researchers, theory isn't something you start with, it's something you build." (Palys, p.19)

" Qualitative researchers believe that understanding people's perceptions requires getting close to "research participants" or "informants" or "collaborators".

You must spend time with them, get to know them, feel close to them, be able to empathize with their concerns, perhaps even be one of them, if you hope to really understand them.” (Palys, p.19)

The biggest challenge was to have the courage to ask the question “why?” and be willing to stand still long enough to hear the answer. And so, armed with the belief that I was asking an important question, I began to look at how I would design my research to give me the best information possible. And so it began.

Research Methodology:

I had to formalize my request and so I picked up the phone to make appointments. Then I met with each person to review my request. I can't remember being quite so nervous in a long time. I questioned myself about the validity of my work and would these people think I was playing at school and not really researching something meaningful. I need not have worried. Each participant was eager to work with me and felt that the question was worthy of discussion. And so we began.

My first question would be : What does leadership mean to you? This helped focus the questions that would follow to the arena of leadership.

We tell stories all the time but my focus was how the stories of our leadership journeys could be shared so that others would learn from what we have learned, hear our experiences and incorporate the learning into their own journey.

But before I began this next step, actually meeting with these folks and asking my questions, I went back to the literature to review how leadership was defined by the Masters. I needed to re-connect with why I had started this journey myself. Warren Bennis in his book "On Becoming a Leader" (Bennis, 1989) reminded me that : "...leaders...know who they are, what their strength and weaknesses are, and how to fully deploy their strengths and compensate for their weaknesses..." (Bennis, p.3) "...they have in common a passion for the promises of life and the ability to express themselves fully and freely. And as you will see, full, free expression is the essence of leadership."(Bennis, p.2)

Peter Senge , in his introduction to Joeseph Jaworski's book "Synchronicity, The Inner Path of Leadership" reflects that "...leadership is about learning how to shape the future... Leadership is about creating a domain in which human beings continually deepen their understanding of reality and become more capable of participating in the unfolding world. Ultimately, leadership is about creating new realities."(Jaworski, 1996, p.3)

These were the words I needed to hear, to remind myself of my own beliefs that leadership is a journey that begins with Self. This was my touch stone and I was now ready to ask my participants to share their thoughts with me.

As I thought about my question, I wondered how this feeling of wanting to hear people's stories could be translated into a valid, research based study.

Understanding the difference between a qualitative and a quantitative study was a first step but what next? The language of research was still a foreign one and I

struggled to find meaning for myself and a way to make meaning for others. It became clear when Tammy Dewar, Royal Roads University Faculty, spoke to our class about Postmodernism. She referred to Laura Richardson's (Dewar, 1996, p.8) definition:

"The core of postmodernism is the doubt that any method or theory, discourse or genre, traditional or novelty, has a universal and general claim as the "right" or the privileged of masking and serving particular interests in local, cultural, and political struggles."

This theory says that there is no "one right way" to look at research and the end result will be what it is meant to be. I began to know that rigor would be imbedded in my integrity of how I conducted the research and how I handled the data. This would then allow me to set a question within a context of learning from experience, mine and others. To learn from life stories I needed this kind of freedom.

By definition, action research "...involves the members of an organization as an integral part of the research process. The researcher involves the members, in varying degrees in analysis, fact-finding, conceptualization, planning, execution and evaluation and then uses the results of the initial study to begin a new cycle of these activities. The emphasis is on research that leads to action ."

(Systematic Inquiry In Organizations, 2000, p.2-3) In the research I used the following assumptions of Appreciative Inquiry as described in the "Thin Book"

(Hammond, 1998) when I defined my research questions and this supporting the definition of action research:

- Good things are happening within the leadership team
- What we focus on becomes our reality-let's talk about what is good
- Reality is created in the moment-what do we want right now?
- The act of questioning brings influence-tell me more
- People have the confidence to move forward when they carry forward part of the past and it needs to be the best of the past. What was the best moment in your leadership journey here at Providence Health Care?
- It is important to value differences. This links back to my belief that if I listen, you will trust me, if I am respectful, you will feel respected and we will be forever changed because of our time together. This is learning.
- Language creates our reality. We speak the words in a way that they can be heard by someone else, they don't exist.

By engaging people in this way, we will move together because I am as active as they are and have an equal voice in the solutions or actions. It was a daunting thought. There was no where to hide.

Research Tools:

Interviews:

Having a better understanding of how a qualitative study might look, knowing that people had been successful in using a postmodernism approach and believing

that action research was my vehicle, I began to look at how I could ask questions and get the very best thoughts from those I engaged.

That took me back to the wonderful philosophy described in the work of David Cooperrider. Sue Annis Hammond, Cooperrider's partner, says in her book, "The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry" (1996):

" The key principle of Appreciative Inquiry is that it is a generative process. That means it is a moving target and is created and constantly re-created by the people who use it...Appreciative Inquiry is a thought process. Every participant makes a contribution." (Hammond, p.5)

As I began the real work of putting thoughtful questions together, I used the principles of Appreciative Inquiry, believing that the answers to these questions would lead me to where I needed to go next.

I used a specific set of questions to start the discussion in the individual interviews:

- What does leadership mean to you?
- Reflecting back on your career, when did you feel like you were demonstrating the qualities of leadership that you have talked to me about?
- Was the impact on those you served?
- Who impacted you in your journey?
- Do you see opportunities to use your leadership journey stories with others?

- What makes it hard?
- How would you encourage others to share the stories of their leadership journey?

Learning Circle:

The second half of the research was conducted with three of the four participants in a Learning Circle. The Learning Circle are not new concept. They have been used by people forever. Their uniqueness lies in the understanding that :

“ The true power of circles is not just the collective insight of the group, but the bonds that form among the people who are given the space and time and invited to tell their stories.” Tammy Dewar (1994)

I wanted to use the Learning Circle as a way to validate my research question and to check for my own accuracy in capturing the themes identified in the interviews. I also saw it as another way of building relationships between the participants and with me in hope that by experiencing both one on one and a group process they would become comfortable with using these methods with their staff. And, they would support each other in the use circles to tell their stories.

And so, I invited the four participants to my home. This was the most challenging part of the process. I was working with senior people within my organization and this Circle would bring them into my home, exposing me to them. They would see where I lived, meet my son and my dog. In essence I was showing my whole self

to them in that moment. I wasn't sure I was ready for this level of interaction but I had to do this if I wanted to uncover their stories. As I held onto my beliefs about leadership, to show up, be present and tell the truth, I need not have worried! It was an amazing evening. The conversation began slowly and I began to panic but as each of us settled down and focused on the topic, the conversation went deeper and deeper. It went to a place that no one of us would have imagined and yet, collectively we spoke from a place of heart about our vulnerability as leaders within a large and cumbersome organization. I will describe the thinking more completely later in this paper but for now, just know that each spoke the same thoughts...that each of us is most fundamentally responsible for bringing ourselves, fully, to our work and if we do that, leadership in the moment can only flourish. Even as the dog barked and the phone rang, I knew that I had accomplished my goals. I had heard and participated in a moment of life that started and ended with a story.

This paper is a reflective study of people. I will endeavor to end with conclusions that can be turned into actions. I wanted these four people to feel that this is a valid way of interacting and to see that by creating new conversations, relationships will shift and we will hear each other differently. However, the journey toward the actions will be the most significant part of the study for me. I want to hear from people, to understand their experiences with story telling, what impact these stories have had on their leadership development and how they can use their stories as a coaching tool with those they support.

I was also aware of the impact I had on the group. Action research is a living, breathing form of research and I was acutely aware that my part in the Circle was significant. I was asking these people to talk about themselves in a way that wasn't the norm. To create the space, the time to reflect on days gone by and then to ask how we might use this knowledge was at the heart of all I was doing. I was honoured that these people would trust me enough to go to these quiet places within their hearts.

Study Conduct:

The following process was used to engage participants:

- I approached people individually to see if they would participate. I chose people who held formal leadership roles within Providence Health Care and whom I respected in their demonstration of leadership.
- Once they agreed I wrote them formally, outlining the processes including the guidelines defined by Royal Roads University
- I scheduled one to one interviews, conducted them and had the material transcribed
- I held a learning circle at my home that lasted two hours. This material was them transcribed
- All tapes are held in my home and will be until six months after my paper has been accepted by Royal Roads University. At the six month point, all documents will be destroyed.

- Participants will receive a copy of my paper upon its completion

CHAPTER FOUR- WHAT DID I HEAR?

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

“ In matters of ethics and spirit there may be nothing more practical than a good fable.”

Lee Bolman (Leading With Soul, 1995, p.4)

Study Findings:

Can stories be used as a coaching tool to develop leadership capacity? If they can, why don't we do it more often? What makes it hard? As I began to think about my question and decide who I wanted to interview, my courage slipped. I had talked to potential participants much earlier but had not secured their involvement. Would these people step into a very personal place and share their stories? I wanted to make sure that I had people who understood my question and at the same time, would speak truthfully. It was critical that they say what they believed even if their thoughts didn't support my belief that storytelling was a way of developing leadership capacity. I chose my participants carefully, trying to ensure that although the group was small, they varied in their thought processes enough that a thoughtful discussion would result. At least that was the theory!

Specific themes and common themes emerged from this question that set the tone for the continued discussion. Wisdom. Integrity. Justice. Harmony. These were the themes identified by research participants. All of the themes, specific to

each and common across the discussions, were based on values that I understood and applauded. I kept waiting for a different set of themes for no particular reason but when I reviewed the transcripts and these emerged, I knew they were right.

*For me, leadership is primarily role modeling.
People see the way you go about doing things
and that inspires them.*

*I would stand up to things in the organization that
they thought were right and yet other people didn't.
I am someone who stands up and says what they believe,
whether in fact others agree or not.*

(Vice President B)

His sense of honesty and the need for integrity in his leadership set a tone for how he lived his life. The notion of show up, be present and tell the truth are fundamental in this leader's work.

The second participant defined her leadership in the following way :

*To me leadership is about unleashing people's capabilities.
I think everyone is capable of leading and
everybody is capable of following. But it is really about
creating the conditions where people can lead.*

(Vice President C)

And she followed with:

...given the right circumstances and the right support they'll do the right thing or if they do the wrong thing, they didn't mean to.

(Vice President C)

This leader was also very clear that her leadership developed out of a need to change systems and structures, not out of a need for power and position.

As far back as I can remember I would question why things were done. If they didn't make sense to me on the surface I would question why things were done.

I would see a situation and think it was unjust.

And I wanted to be able to influence it differently.

(Vice president C)

Her passion for doing what was right and good prefaced all of her comments regarding her leadership and her definition of leading.

The third participant spoke about being aware of humanness and the need for connections. Relationships grounded her.

I really want people to see me as somebody who has helped them on their journeys of leadership and somebody that made a difference. I have a really strong desire to have positive relationships with people.

(Vice President D)

My fourth participant challenged the use of the word leadership commenting that

You don't lead, you inspire.

(Vice President A)

He then continued with further thoughts on leadership.

It is partly inspirational, partly teaching.

There is a level of trust. Even when they are not absolutely sure they like you, they have trust and they feel that you as an individual have integrity and they're willing to go along with you.

(Vice President A)

There were other common themes throughout all of the interviews that spoke to leadership as well. Words like vision, passion, integrity ,commitment and systems thinking were a part of every discussion. These supported the fundamental themes of harmony, justice, integrity and wisdom.

It's having vision.

(Vice President C)

...it's the ability to articulate or create within an organization a clear sense of vision.

(Vice President D)

If you have a broader scope and try to take into account,

*in an appropriate context, things from a broader perspective
I think you will make better decisions.*

(Vice President B)

*...when I was asked to do the job. I just felt I had to,
I didn't think I had a choice. It was my duty, my pay back...
because I have a strong commitment to the organization.*

(Vice President A)

*It is driven by a deep passion that there is something that
will make the world a better place.*

(Vice President C)

You as an individual have integrity.

(Vice President A)

I couldn't do it all myself. So I learned I had to develop people.

(Vice President B)

These thoughts regarding the essence of leadership took us to my next questions that asked the participants to reflect on their journeys and comment on moments that helped them to define their leadership. Each had stories to share about people and times that that helped to shape who they are today and how they act in their role of Leader and throughout all aspects of their lives. Each story came with a lesson learned.

*How fragile we are as human beings and how strongly
our spirits can be squelched by others. And what a
responsibility that is when you're in a leadership*

position to know you have the ability to influence in a negative way somebody's entire perception of themselves and their life.

(Vice President D)

And I remember him challenging me, but at a values based level. He was really asking me to dig deep and think about my values and my principles and what was behind that, that was kind of leading me to this decision-making point.

(Vice President C)

...he was an inspirational teacher as well, brilliant teacher. It was such a joy to go to his class. He was such an exciting teacher and it was nothing about him, he was a wonderful teacher...he just loved it and wanted you to have the knowledge.

(Vice President A)

Question Three was did you feel that telling stories about your journey would be helpful to others who were at a different place on the leadership road. And, more importantly, would you use your own stories? If not, why not? I asked this question in the individual interviews and then posed it again in the Circle. These thoughts are from the individual interviews.

...the stories I tell are based on the clinical experiences I've had...to try to illustrate a point.

Will my stories stay with the Residents? I don't know.

(Vice President A)

...I will use a lot of analogies rather than my own personal stories.

(Vice President B)

*I don't use stories lightly. But I have used a story
because of its profound influence on me.*

(Vice President C)

*I certainly do see opportunities for storytelling because
I think it is profound to reflect on one's own personal experience...
you're giving of yourself which is also the struggle in
telling stories. Because it involves a piece of you.*

(Vice President C)

The initial reluctance, shown by all of the individuals, to view their stories as useful or relevant was somewhat disconcerting. I started to panic and think-what if stories are not a good way to learn about leadership journeys? Then what? And I was acutely aware that I wanted them to support my beliefs. This thought caused me to take a giant step back and remember that my primary role in this part of the process was as interviewer and I needed to honour all their thinking. This was a moment of learning for me as a student and as a researcher. I had no control over the situation at all. A huge reminder that I had embarked on an action research project involving qualitative research methodology. Great...maybe! But, I would have to sort that question out for myself later because at this precise moment, I was in the middle of a series of questions. So, I continued, after taking one huge deep breathe!

Why don't you use stories?

You don't necessarily want to share a piece of you...

(Vice President C)

*I don't want to hear that you had to walk to school
ten miles in twenty feet of snow again...*

(Vice President B)

*I don't think you can just...turn to someone and say,
tell me your story and expect that something personal
or meaningful is going to necessarily come out of them.*

(Vice President D)

*The story needs to be relevant, to be relevant to the
conversation we are having...the relationship should form,
start to give permission for people to tell their stories.*

(Vice President D)

The risk of exposing part of Self seemed to be a huge barrier. I wanted to know that if they took the risk, did they think it would be worthwhile. I asked...what if, as a leader, you took the risk to tell your story? And they said...

*I think that telling stories is a way of exposing people
in some small way to life experiences and the more life
experiences we have I think the more open to possibilities
and kind of where our personal strengths,
interests, ambitions may be able to go.*

(Vice President D)

*I think story telling is increasingly used and I believe
a powerful tool for causing us to reflect,
causing us to be exposed to a wider sense of life experiences.*

(Vice President D)

*I think they have a place...I think it shows a certain amount
of respect for the audience that you're willing to share that
piece of yourself. That you are vulnerable, that you are
willing to open yourself up.*

(Vice President C)

*...what about thinking about stories that have meaning
for you because if you create, you have to create meaning
for yourself in order to give meaning to others.*

(Vice President C)

*I use stories with the Residents and describe the experiences
I have had...many of the stories I tell are little stories,
little things to try to make sure people don't make
stupid mistakes that either I personally made or
saw others make.*

(Vice President A)

*There is nothing fancy about the stories. They're basically just
stories from my personal experience. And some of them are funny,
some are serious. They are just things I remember...*

(Vice President A)

*...no question I can appreciate what you're saying about those
stories. For people that truly have respect and care*

*about you they want to know your story...
they understand they are not alone.*

(Vice President B)

At the end of the individual interviews I was unsettled. I had a sense that these people understood my question and to a certain degree believed that stories had a place in developing leadership capacity. But there was clearly reluctance to use stories without careful consideration and even then, hesitation expressed by each of the participants about how to do this.

My next hurdle was the Learning Circle. I was bringing the research participants together to talk about their stories and how they could use them with their teams. The Circle was new way of having this conversation for each of them. The Circle would create a deeper level of understanding and I was afraid they wouldn't participate. To this point I had used conventional interview techniques. The circle was different. But, they were gracious in their support of what I wanted to do. They arrived at my home ready for whatever was next. They were enthusiastic and willing to talk. My anxiety began to decrease ever so slightly! Unfortunately, Vice President A was not able to join us. However, the discussion was rich and continued to inform my research question.

To begin the discussion, I took the group back to the concept of leadership and asked: what did leadership mean to them and could people learn to be leaders?

...absolutely it can be learned and I hope we are still

learning along the way but I still think there's a core part of our personality, our characteristics that give you the propensity for certain attributes and therefore certain behaviours. But learning a skill in some ways is different than having the attribute of leadership... I think the skills are easier to learn and the attributes are more closely linked with who we are as people.

(Vice President D)

...developing leadership is about sort of emphasizing and de-emphasizing certain things that are inherent in who you are to help you become more effective. I think we all have leadership within us.

(Vice President C)

I think we all have the predisposition. I think you can learn the skills that help you a lot...

(Vice President B)

There are some people that may just have a predisposition just to be followers. And, some people are just fundamentally born leaders...people take leadership, they do it from day one.

(Vice President B)

...another attribute of leaders is to conjure up images... and teach you something very significant or shift your whole thinking just on an image that they put forward.

(Vice President D)

I sensed from these comments as well as from the earlier interviews that even within this small group there was the question of whether people are born with the capacity to lead and you build on this or whether all people born with the ability and life decides who steps into the role. This was one of the moments that a Circle creates, a question that develops because of the dialogue. And it was an thoughtful question but I wanted them to move on to my question: how can we use our personal leadership journey stories as a coaching tool to build capacity in others?

I will seldom do that and I'll only do that if the situation really fits.

(Vice President B)

I think I probably do share things...things that I struggle with or things that excite me...partly that's been a way to link me to why I was there...and to giving the words meaning...

(Vice President C)

I really started to reflect on...how do I make a connection for people and how do I create meaning for myself so that this means something to me and if it means something to me then it will have meaning to them as opposed to thinking about it the other way around. So I told my story.

(Vice President C)

...the story...really was a way to create something that was meaningful for me that made me want to tell my story... in order for me to reconnect with the work, it needs to be meaningful to me and I can maybe create meaning to others...

(Vice President C)

...you're using stuff that is like human... of how you felt about something...it isn't as important as the specificity of the event that you went through, it's just I felt vulnerable.

(Vice President B)

...I think it is when it reveals that we're people, the humanness, the vulnerability and that opens a door for something else.

(Vice President D)

...I think there is a connection between storytelling and that imagery... somehow out of stories I think people get images that have significance for them that might change their perspective.

(Vice President D)

And as I began to bring the Circle to a close I asked for final thoughts: why or how would using stories be useful to them and to others in our organization?

They have to be real.

(Vice President D)

I think it is about relationship...if you don't have that basis for relationship you're not going to be able to lead or develop them.

(Vice President B)

...the only point which is slightly different...is the concept of patient and resident stories...we don't use them at all as a way

to paint the picture of what's wrong with the way we are currently doing things...

(Vice President C)

...storytelling...it makes a personal relationship then that opens the door for a different interaction.

(Vice President D)

...we don't do enough now as leaders to share our current stories... and what is the corrective or personal learning that come from that.

(Vice President D)

There is so precious little time for us to do just that.

(Vice President D)

I heard that stories can have a profound impact.

And I think that there's a connection between the storytelling and imagery because leaders that I've most admired... are the ones who can take a very powerful image of very simple diagram and teach you something very significant or shift your whole thinking just on an image that they put forward.

(Vice President D)

The stories that each person shared with me were personal and told with thoughtfulness. Their willingness to go where I wanted to go and their openness was humbling. They set the tone and who they were, as individuals, was evident

right from the start. Their leadership beliefs were threaded throughout the conversations and were, clearly, beliefs they held closely as they faced each day. Individually, they shared moments that had profound impact on the path of their lives. I learned that each holds life as precious and whatever they can do to be whole people, they will do and they will challenge those around them to do the same. Each one of these people was surprised that I believed their stories held merit and others would want to hear their wisdom. Coaches? Absolutely.

Study Conclusions:

So, how do we create a space for leaders to bring themselves to work, all of them, including heart and soul, and encourage them to use their stories to support others? How do we create an environment that will honour our stories and believe they bring value to the organization?

When I reviewed all of the tapes and the written summations my biggest surprise was that these leaders didn't really think that their stories would necessarily add value to conversations with others. The idea of opening up to others about what had been difficult for them was a surprise. Was this legitimate? Was it helpful? Wisdom, justice, integrity and harmony. Those were the words that threaded through the conversation. Could the story begin there, with these values that each held so strongly?

I had to go back to my books to find inspiration and a way to make sense of what I heard and begin to define some conclusions.

“ We hardly have the language to describe the fundamental shift of mind that permits us to participate in this unfolding creative order. A story is the most powerful way, indeed, the only way I know to begin.” (J.Jaworski, p.x, 1996)

I am really stuck. It seems that the conclusions reached by my participants suggest, tentatively, that stories are, in fact, a way to define lessons or share knowledge. But they shy away from the opportunities. Why? Words like vulnerability, authenticity and attitude come to mind and are supported by the quotes above. A key statement spoke to the need for space, a place away from where we do the daily work so that we can speak differently to each other and more importantly perhaps, hear differently.

*To trigger the space where it's different. So even doing this...
you're sitting at home versus if you did this in a conference room...
people let down. They show more of themselves.*

(Vice President B)

People don't leave their souls at the door when they come to work. And we know that when they bring their whole selves to work and feel respected for doing so, they are happier employees. And people are their stories. When people stop for a moment and listen to the stories of their colleagues, the connection is different. When they are heard, the connection is different. The result is a work place that values people in their wholeness.

My thoughts begin to get quite tangled as I try to separate the use of stories from other ways of engaging people in the leadership journey. When I reflect on what my participants said to me and consider my own experience as a life long learner, I know the lessons that have stayed with me are ones with vivid images attached. These images were created by the stories told me to be by many people through my life. They were not necessarily long or involved stories but the images were sharp and clear. The words fade but the pictures are strong. The stories helped me define who I am and what is important for me.

This brings me back to definitions of leadership that are based on individual values and how we live these values.

“Perhaps we lost our way when we forgot that the heart of leadership lies in the hearts of the leaders. We fool ourselves, thinking this is sheer bravado or sophisticated analytical techniques could respond to our deepest concerns.” (Lee Bolman, *Leading With Soul*, 1995,p.6)

Each of the participants spoke from their hearts about the importance of being whole and balanced. They all spoke of their leadership journeys as paths they took to get from there to here. It wasn't a planned adventure but they took leadership roles when they were asked to do so, when they felt compelled to respond. When I asked why they stepped into leadership roles that they had not expected to have, I heard compelling reasons.

...I just felt I had to, I didn't think I had a choice.

It was my duty.

(Vice President A)

I want to make a difference because I know what it feels like to be in a position where you feel like you have something to give and can't give it.

(Vice President C)

I have heard from the participants that stories are a powerful way to give messages. I heard that it is difficult to share these stories because they are always personal and it is risky to share these moments. I heard that telling their stories to me allowed them reflect back on their life-defining moments.

...it allowed me to verbalize things that I hadn't really verbalized in a long time. It made me think about what it was that I saw my role as a teacher...and as a mentor.

(Vice President A)

And I heard that the imagery of stories can have a profound impact.

And I think that there's a connection between the storytelling and imagery because leaders that I've most admired... are the ones who can take a very powerful image of very simple diagram and teach you something very significant or shift your whole thinking just on an image that they put forward.

(Vice President D)

And I knew from the literature that stories are just the beginning.

The whole point of stories is not “solutions” or “resolutions” but a broadening and even a heightening of our struggles-with new protagonists and antagonists introduced, with new sources of concern or apprehension or hope, as one’s mental life accommodates itself to a series of arrivals: guests who have a way of staying, but not necessarily staying put.”

(Robert Coles, *The Call of Stories*, 1989, p.129)

What did this say to me? I concluded that it is the telling of our stories that creates the connections we long for whether they are in our work place or elsewhere. Our story is our history and our history helps us define the steps we will take as we move forward. Facts have a place but I need more. We have a choice regarding how we deliver our message. To develop strong leadership within our world requires a variety of tools. Story telling is just one. But, it has an impact that appears to be far reaching. To listen to a story, hear the message and use the knowledge implies a trust in the storyteller. If the message is without heart, the lesson is often lost. Who tells the story and how the story is told often defines if the lesson will be received. If I open my soul for you to look in and you believe I do this with integrity, you will hear me.

So often we are too concerned with tomorrow to recognize the significance of yesterday. Yet that represents the thread of explanation which guides us to who we are now... We owe each other a knowledge of the past. It’s a shared bond from which we gain the knowledge and strength to face our tomorrow’s.” (Leo Buscaglia, *Bus #9 To Paradise*, 1986, p.254)

Leaders have the opportunity to share their past and present through stories, to share their humanness and vulnerability. They can create an environment for others to do the same. And by doing so, the dialogue will begin. Listening to the research participants, individually and collectively, I heard that stories can be an effective way to coach. They didn't see it as clearly as I did but standing on the side, reflecting on their words, privileged to hear their stories, I was struck by the opportunity to tell our stories. Through the individual interviews and in the Circle, I saw the potential for our stories. What we do today is informed by yesterday and what we do today will inform tomorrow. How do we capture our wisdom to ensure we make the best decisions? Our stories.

Tell Me

How did you get here?

What story do you have to share?

I am listening

I want to hear you.

Talk to me

Tell me the story of your Being.

I will follow you

I will walk beside you

I will lead you through sad times.

Because,

When you tell me who you are,

Share the threads that

Weave the fabric of your Soul

I will know you

I will see you.

I am You.

By

Kim Gunning

Study Recommendations:

As I move my telescope to the future, I see an organization that continues to deal with many of the same issues that it had in the past. But there is a difference. We have taken a giant step forward. We are using the tools of dialogue and appreciative inquiry to connect with each other. Our conversations are deeper and we are learning from each other. Operations Network is the structure that supports the leaders as they operationalize the organizational goals and objectives. Eighty people come together twice a month to learn from and support each other. How this time is used is where the difference lies. It is not simply a “come and listen” event. There are issues to be resolved but how they are resolved is different. There is an expectation that we will question each other using the tools of Appreciative Inquiry. Climate goals have been established and are rigorously honoured. There is also time set aside in these meetings for specific learning opportunities such as how can we use learning circles with our teams. Each leader has a learning plan that they share with their teams. This includes a yearly 360 feedback session so that staff can support the leader’s development. This is reflected back in the performance management model we

adopt that encourages a cross section of voices to speak to performance. The union-management meetings are no longer based in the adversarial arena. There is a belief that respectful conversation leads to good decision-making. There is an expectation that people will share their stories so that others get to know them and begin to build strong connections. And perhaps the most significant shift is the willing involvement of Physicians in the organization. They are no longer standing on the sidelines, hoping that the changes will go away. They are active in decision making and expect to be a part of the leadership team. The strategic direction of the organization has been articulated, accepted and implemented. The patient and families we serve are receiving the best care possible and the staff consider Providence Health Care the best place to work. We are honouring each other's voice and the stories we share re-defined our organization. It is no longer our vision. It is our reality.

When Phil Hassen joined us as the CEO he reminded us that:

We are asking our people to make a journey of change, where it is not possible to predict the future by looking at the past. In our current environment, the past has only limited indications for shaping our future and this is the most difficult part of the complex changes we face.

Journeys of change are never easy; however, the rewards are great.

(Hassen, A Journey of Change, 1999)

So, what does this mean for the stories? What did this mean for the history of where we came from to get to where we are? Is there a place for stories? Do stories matter?

I reviewed all of the interviews and the literature and at the end of the day, decided to take the risk that I began in the summer. I do believe that our past has an impact and when we hear the stories of how we got from there to here, it will help us create the world that Phil Hassen refers to when he reminded us that: "The establishment of truly authentic organizational reform begins with leadership." (Hassen, 1999)

Presently, the Leadership Development program has the following components:

- an introduction to leadership development
- a three day introductory leadership course
- a 360 leadership review
- a personal learning plan

But there is a gap. Once you get started on this work, how do you sustain yourself and how do you pass your learning to others? There is a need to be able to come together and share what is working, what is difficult. I believe we can do this by sharing our stories. The greatest challenge will be to develop an infrastructure that will support the telling of these stories and then find the time to actually make it happen! We have begun this work with the help of Dr. Tim Porter O'Grady and Bonnie Wesorick, two consultants who have extensive knowledge

about developing leadership within the healthcare system. With their guidance, we will create interdisciplinary teams whose work will focus on the needs of the patient. And, a part of their work will be to listen to each other and to learn from past experiences so that care will continue to be the best possible. The Leaders within these teams will be charged with learning the skills of dialogue and bringing them forward so that each member of the team learns the value of listening, sharing and using their new found knowledge to create the best place to work and the best place to receive care.

From time to time, (the) tribe (gathered) in a circle. They just talked and talked, apparently to no purpose. They made no decisions. There was no leader. And everybody could participate. There may have been wise men or wise women who were listened to a bit more-the older ones-but everybody could talk. The meeting went on, until it finally seemed to stop for no reason at all and the group dispersed. Yet after that, everybody seemed to know what to do, because they understood each other so well. Then they could get together in smaller groups and do something or decide things." (David Bohm, On Dialogue, 1996, p.8)

" The question to be resolved: how to remove the blocks and tap into that knowledge in order to create the kind of future we all want?" (Joseph Jaworski, 1996, p.109)

That is what I want stories to do for our organization. We have the means to create the space to allow this to happen. We just need to believe it is possible.

So, what now? I have thought about this chapter since I began my major project, knowing that this would be the time when I needed to say what I believe we can do, as an organization, to create a place where people will feel valued and respected. And, at the end of all the work I have done, I believe that our stories are the place to start. As we hear each other, our community will grow strong.

CHAPTER FIVE- LET THE STORIES BEGIN

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

As I began to prepare for this chapter, I reviewed the vision, mission and values of Providence Health Care. These words fill me with a sense of pride and in the same moment, a sense of doom. These are lofty goals and if we can keep reaching for them, we will create the place we all see in our mind's eye. But when we lose sight of them we are so easily moved to complacency and blame.

How do we have conversations with each other about what the values mean to each of us? What does trust mean? What does it mean to be trustworthy? We crave respect but we never stop long enough to tell each other what it means to be respectful or respected. So, I read a little about respect and learned from the wonderful words of Bonnie Wesorick:

*Respect describes
the visible linkages
of a healthy human relationship-
the connection with another
at the Being level*

Bonnie Wesorick

(The Way of Respect in The Work Place, 1998,p.9)

And she challenged me further with her own experiences about being respectful.

What I learned is that if I can't demonstrate respectfulness, why would anyone be

respectful to me? It begins with me. And so too, my story begins with me. As Leaders we will tell our stories, we will re-live moments where we felt respected and trusted, where stewardship was demonstrated and spirituality permeated all that we did. Those are the stories we need to share! Those stories and our courage, as Leaders, to share them, will shape our culture. Leadership is based on these values. They are strong and good. We will come together in any way that we can, one to one, small groups, large gatherings and we will use our stories to share moments when these lessons were learned. And in sharing our stories, we will share our wisdom. The following is one person's story about:

A Lesson on Respect

I was taught this strong lesson about respect from a colleague who works with addicts in the streets. One day she mentioned that they were a gift to all of us. I had never thought of the people she works with as a gift. In what way could this person, drunk with drugs, be a gift? She thinks of them as a teacher for us about life. What could they teach me? I could only see their fragile, dirty bodies. I would be distracted by their lice and the maggots in the food by their side, their dirty, smelly breath and bodies, and obnoxious behaviour. I could feel pity, but respect? The difference between her and me is that she could see their Soul. I could not and I realized I had work to do. She did not judge them. She did attempt to tap into the potential of their Soul." (Bonnie Wesorick, *The Way of Respect in the Work Place*, 1998, p.27)

And so it is with each of the values that sustain us as an organization. But, how do I communicate my recommendations in a compelling way? How do I send a message to my colleagues that tells them how important it is to hear the stories of those who stand beside them? How do I convince them that their stories have value and by telling them, they will help to create the healing environment that we all long for?

The greatest learning from the time I spent with Dr. Tim Porter O'Grady and Bonnie Wesorick has been that I am a catalyst for transformation. I think I always knew this but it became clear as I listened to Dr. Tim Porter O' Grady speak to the leadership team at Providence Health Care about our future. He reminded me that my role as a steward of change is to invite people into the circle and to hold the space for them to have a conversation. He called me "a gatherer", "someone who helps build Community". Powerful words! And again I ask myself, will our stories help? A colleague reminded me that our leaders need to step forward and be the champions for the work we are doing with teams. How can I and those I work with support the leaders? Encouraging them to tell their stories of how they got to here from there, what helped and what was hard-these are the stories that will help teams create new ways of being in the work place and stewardship will live in each person. Can the leaders do this? I believe that they can. How ? Bonnie Wesorick's partner Laurie Shiparski helped me see the next steps with the following words:

Create A Place...

*Create a place
where we can gather
learn our stories
be with each other.*

*Create a place
where ears are open
words are welcome
truths are spoken.*

*Create a place
where learning is constant
practice is permitted
wisdom is abundant.*

*Create a place
of meaning and purpose
a respite from busy
time to focus on service.*

*Create a place
where wholeness is nourished
Connecting in Body Mind Spirit
together we will flourish.*

Laurie Shiparski

(Partnership Council Field Book, 1997, p.50)

So, next steps? What do I see? I see myself as the a “gatherer” bringing Leaders together to reflect on what helped them on their journey in leadership and what hindered them. Talking to each other, sharing the moments that we have all had

and pulling the learnings from those moments. They will use these moments with their colleagues to build relationships with their teams. The learning from a Leader in the Cardiac Program is as useful in Nephrology as it is in Medicine. It isn't about the discipline. It is the story of how you came to this place. It is the story of the staff and of the patients. If the stories of the staff hold meaning so will the story of the patient and we will have begun the creation of a new system, a place where our stories are valued and who we are is about our spirit. The people who participated in the research told me that having the opportunity to tell their stories reminded them of what brought them to health care and what keeps them here. It gave them time to reflect on their strengths and on what they have to offer to those they support. This is what I want to for all the leaders.

*I am making up my own mind
but my sense of identity has shifted.
I am now part of the unfolding, generative process
and in this state of being
I am no longer controlled by
things and instincts.*

J .Jaworski (1996, p.134)

So, what will this shift look like? How will leaders come together and share their journeys? When I try to imagine how this would work I reflect back on the second summer residency for this program. The most valuable time for me was when we came together in small groups to dialogue about leadership. Those times were rich with wisdom and the lessons I learned have stayed clear in my mind. I

wonder if we can create this format in our organization. The cry for time is loud, there is never enough of it so whatever we do needs to be viewed as valuable, not just another “must do”.

Proposal:

- create a time for leaders that will focus on storytelling. This will be a specific time designed for this purpose. For example, once a month, an hour of Operations Network will be devoted to story telling on a specific aspect of leadership development. The key success factor will be valuing the time set aside for conversation and recognizing that this time is as important as time set aside for items such as the Care and Service Agreements.
- the use a learning circle format including check in and check out will become the format for the above as will the tools of dialogue. This formal time will be the catalyst for other times set aside by leaders to come together. For example, the Residential Care Leaders will follow up on this time with monthly breakfasts where they will continue the discussions began at an Operations Network meeting. The key to this time is the telling of stories about personal leadership journeys and the subsequent conversation about how to use this wisdom to help interdisciplinary teams hear their colleague’s story and their patient’s story.

- focus the stories on leadership journeys, past and present. This will re-enforce the belief that who we are is a result of where we have been and where we have been has value.
- the Leadership Forum 2001 will focus on storytelling as a way of learning about past, present and future. It will offer skill development in areas such as dialogue to support the use of storytelling with their teams.

It will be crucial that this time is seen as a learning time for the individuals. If we really want to create a learning organization, we have to honour the voices of those who are the organization. I see this as an opportunity to do something different, to create a safe place for people to come together and talk about what is working in their world, what is hard and what lessons they can share with others. And for each of us to acknowledge that this kind of work is different from what we have traditionally done before. We are saying that we cherish and respect whole being. And I acknowledge that what I am proposing is very different from anything we have done before. The evaluation of this work will be both challenging and important. We will need to measure the effectiveness of the dialogue. We have the Quality of Work Life Survey in place and we have the opportunity to add questions to the survey. In a year, we need to ask a question about the effect of hearing our colleagues stories and the impact of telling our stories. I am not sure of the exact words but I am clear on the intent of the

question. I am aware that I am asking a very nebulous question but I am also very sure within myself that my question will help redefine how we relate to each other in our work place. How did you get from there to here? Every time we come together as colleagues we need to be ready to ask this question and to hold the space to hear the answer. In turn, we will ask the question of those we support and create the space they will need to answer.

Is It One, The Other Or The Same?

*I have marveled at the beauty
of the mountains
The opportunity to
be near the moose, the elk and the buffalo.
I stood in awe of the glaciers
reflecting the sun-while
eagerly awaiting the next whale sighting.
And then I noticed one person
reaching out to help another.
I wondered, how could I ever
take for granted the beauty, the mystery,
the potential, of one uniquely splendid
human being connecting with the soul of another?
I have been in awe of mountains but failed
to notice the vastness of one soul
the invisible but tangible presence of every
human being.
It is one, the other or the same?*

Bonnie Wesorick

(Partnership Council Field Book, 1997, p.244)

Potential Impact of this Work:

If we can create a space in our organization where our voices are heard, we will begin to address the distress we feel because our souls will no longer be discounted. And I know that I can't make the change happen for anyone but me. But I can be a catalyst for creating the opportunity for people to make it happen for themselves. It will require time and attention to the process to ensure the space, both physically and mentally, is available. Baby steps!

We talk about organizational transformation. What does that really mean? I believe it means that we look at what we are doing now to create a better place for tomorrow. One of the ways we can create a healthier system is to care for ourselves and each other. This means that we share who we are and to do this means sharing our stories. How did I get here? Begin with my story and share my journey. Taking the time, structured time, offered and supported by the organization. We will know that any work we do together will be better because we have taken the time to get to know one another through our stories. As individuals and as a collective we long to come together in a way that honours our spirit. If we are willing to step into this wobbly place, we will transform our work place into one where we value each other in spite of our differences. This isn't about numbers or graphs. It is about people, understanding that each of us is unique and how we interact in a complex world will define our quality of life. I think

of fire flies and the magic they create in a moment. Creating that kind of magic is what I am proposing. The following is a poem that speaks about what really matters in our lives. Work is an important part of our lives so we need to do everything we can to ensure that we bring our whole self each day. Sharing our stories will be one of our steps.

The Invitation

*It doesn't interest me what you do for a living,
I want to know what you ache for and
if you dare to dream of meeting your heart's longing.
It doesn't interest me how old you are.
I want to know if you will risk looking like a fool for love,
for your dreams, for the adventure of being alive.
It doesn't interest me what planets are squaring your moon.
I want to know if you have touched the centre of your sorrow,
if you have been opened by life's betrayals,
or if you have become shriveled and closed from fear of further pain!
I want to know if you can sit with pain, mine and your own,
without moving to hide it or fade it or fix it.
I want to know if you can be with joy, mine or your own,
if you can dance with wildness
and let ecstasy fill you
to the tips of your fingers and toes
without cautioning us to be careful, to be realistic,
or to remember the limitations of being human.
It doesn't interest me if the story you are telling me is true.
I want to know if you can disappoint another to be true to yourself,
if you can bear the accusation of betrayal*

and not betray your soul.

I want to know if you can be faithful and therefore trustworthy.

*I want to know if you can see the beauty
even when it is not pretty everyday and
if you can source your life from its presence.*

*I want to know if you can live with failure,
your and mine,*

and still stand on the edge of a lake and shout to the silver moon,

“Yes!”

It doesn't interest me to know where you live or how much money you have.

*I want to know if you can get up after a night of grief and despair,
weary and bruised to the bone.*

and do what needs to be done for the children.

It doesn't interest me who you are or how you came to be here.

*I want to know if you will stand in the centre of the fire with me
and not shrink back.*

It doesn't interest me where or what or with whom you have studied.

*I want to know what sustains you
when all else falls away.*

*I want to know if you can be alone with yourself
and if you truly like the company you keep
in the empty moments.*

Oriah Mountain Dreamer, Native American Elder

Year Unknown

Potential Research Opportunities:

And now, we begin. The success lies with each of us. I believe that my role will be to challenge the leaders to come together, tell their stories to each other. Learn from each other. And then, take this learning to their teams. The next step in my research will be to will follow the development of the teams I work with by asking them to tell their stories to each other. As I did with the research participants for this paper, I will use both individual interviews and circles to check in with the teams to see if, by telling their stories and listening to others do the same, they feel that their practice is enhanced and their relationship with their colleagues have improved. If so, how. If not, why not. I will ask the same teams to use stories as a way of getting to know their patients. Together we will create a format for hearing the patient's story so that all staff will understand who the patient is in a more complete and holistic way. At the end of one year we will present our findings to other staff.

“ Leadership is about creating, day by day, a domain in which we and those around us continually deepen our understanding of reality and are able to participate in shaping the future. This, then, is the deeper territory of leadership- collectively “listening” to what is wanting to emerge in the world, and then having the courage to do what is required.” (J.Jaworski, 1996, p. 182)

“...true leadership is about creating a domain in which we continually learn and become more capable of participating in our unfolding future. A true leader thus sets the stage on which predictable miracles, synchronistic in nature, can-and do-occur.” (J.Jaworski, 1996, p.182)

And for me, this is the end of this part of my journey. Chapter Six will reflect what I have learned as I wrote this paper. But, this chapter brings closure to my question of how we can we use our stories about our leadership journeys as a coaching strategy in leadership development. I have explored a variety of literature, I have spoken to esteemed colleagues and I have reflected for many hours on all I have heard, read, imagined. I believe even more passionately today than when I began this journey that our stories open a world of endless opportunities for how people can be together in the world.

I end as I began. I believe that as leaders, we must share our stories and our wisdom so that those we serve will be encouraged to do the same. If we do this leadership will become a part of everything we do and the values of Providence Health Care will evidenced in all of our interactions with each other and with the patients and residents we care for. Our stories will be our greatest coaching strategy.

CHAPTER SIX-THE JOURNEY ENDS

LESSONS LEARNED

I believe in the power of stories and impact that they have to help us as we define ourselves in a complex world. I began with "Once Upon a Time..." and I conclude with the words below:

"Stories that instruct, renew, and heal provide a vital nourishment to the psyche that cannot be obtained in any other way. Stories reveal over and over again the precious and peculiar knack that humans have for triumph over travail. They provide all the vital instructions we need to live a useful, necessary, and unbounded life-a life of meaning, a life worth remembering." (Clarissa Pinkola Estes, *The Gift of Story*, 1993, p.1)

What Have I learned?

This has been a long year. I began preparations for this work in August, 2000. As I began to define my question, I had no idea where I would end up and what lessons I would learn. My prospectus helped me to define the steps I would take and as I moved forward I realized that keeping the focus would be my challenge. When I began to wander, I would re-visit my question, how could we use our leadership journey stories as a coaching strategy, and assess where I was with respect to that question. Whenever I lost sight of the question, I was unable to move forward. I also learned that research was more intense than I imagined and

to be rigorous was challenging. I learned that you never read all that is available and that everything you read isn't helpful. Knowing when to stop reading other people's thoughts and when to start writing my own words took time. But, once I started to write, I began to develop clarity and balance between the thoughts of others and those that were mine. Finally, I learned to trust myself. I found my voice.

What Worked Well?

My choice of participants was my best decision. They were articulate, thoughtful and willing. They spoke openly about their struggles with my questions and the frank discussion allowed me to move forward with conclusions and recommendations.

The questions I asked my participants were key to my success. It became clear very quickly that if I wasn't sure what I needed to know, my research would not be helpful. And I learned to keep clear and consistent notes. My head couldn't hold all the information! I heard the voices of former students reminding me to keep my work simple. Such words of wisdom! Given the nature of a qualitative approach, my decision to use a circle was a good one. It created the space that allowed the participants to speak in a safe environment. It also allowed me to see them together in a way that is different from our other interactions. This gave me information that was not evident in the individual interviews.

It was very important to have the support of friends, family and fellow students. When I would get stuck and my path started to meander, someone would feel my anxiety and help me re-focus on my purpose. I learned to take time off for reflection and I would come back to work with renewed energy. And I learned, never, never, forget to write all the information you might need for a reference!

What Would I Do Differently?

My first thought about this question was to have done something different! But I know that isn't really true. I would, however, be much clearer with my questions and keep them as focused as possible. The questions I used led to many tangential conversations that were very interesting but didn't always help to inform my question. I struggled to keep us moving forward without losing the essence of the discussion. And, it was very distressing in the moments when I knew that the answers to my questions were not what I hoped for and the conclusions I would end with were different than I wanted. Action research at its best gave me a few worrisome moments!

I would take more time with the research participants. I underestimated the time frames and consequently rushed the process. Rushing caused a loss of potentially valuable information. This was particularly true with the circle. Deeper conversation takes time. I could feel my courage slipping as time moved forward and I just wanted it to be over.

This has been an amazing time. Life has a way of taking you to places you never knew existed. Writing this paper has been one of those wondrous moments for me. I didn't believe I could do it but I have and now I know I can do anything I choose. Head up, looking forward, remembering to breathe and never losing sight of the mountain top. I have learned to challenge and to trust. I have learned to be courageous. And I will continue to be a traveler, an artist and a scientist as described by Lao-tzu and translated by Stephen Mitchell:

“ A good traveler has no fixed plans and is not intent upon arriving. A good artist lets his intuition lead him wherever it wants. A good scientist has freed himself of concepts and keeps his mind open to what is.” (S. Mitchell, *The Enlightened Heart*, 1989, p.16)

Major Project Competencies

1c. Provide Leadership:

1. I demonstrated this competency throughout the research process by inviting senior leaders from my organization to participate in the interviews and in the circle. I believe that leadership is not about position but about how we demonstrate leadership qualities. By creating a place to have deeper conversation with these people, I demonstrated my leadership.

2a. Apply systems thinking to the solution of leadership and learning problems:

2. Systems thinking asks for a whole picture. By asking the question: "How did you get from there to here?" I look at the uniqueness of four people and of myself. This is the ultimate definition of System. This informed my belief about the value of leadership and of how we learn from each other.

5a. Identify, locate and evaluate research findings:

1. This is evidenced in my research review, my conclusions and my recommendations.

5b. Use research methods to solve problems:

3. The methodology is evidenced in my paper.

7b. Communicate with others through writing:

1. I was in contact with my supervisor regarding my progress by e-mail, telephone and face to face conversations.
2. I was in contact with my sponsor as needed. He will receive a copy of the final paper.
3. My research participants were informed individually and collectively regarding what I was asking of them and of the follow-up. They will each receive a copy of the final paper.

Others:

- (4a) Assess the implication of the learning environment:

This project stimulated me to look at the learning environment of Providence Health Care. My ability to articulate my findings and recommendations as evidenced by my paper demonstrate my competency.

- **Creativity:**

Being creative in the production of my project-being courageous in the process and creating a project that I am proud of and others will be willing to read as evidenced by my paper demonstration my competency.

- **Integrity:**

I demonstrate adherence to the values of honesty and trustworthiness. I demonstrate my compliance to the ethical standards defined by Royal Roads University and I demonstrated my own value system by informing my participants of their roles.

- (1b) Demonstrate leadership characteristics:

I demonstrated leadership characteristics by completing what a very challenging research component. This is validated by the success of the circle.

- (4e) Help others:

I demonstrated this through my support of my effective critical friend.

REFERENCES

- Alter, Allen, 2000, " Leadership Today is All About 'We', Not About 'Me' ", Computerworld, 07/11/2000, Vol.34, Issue 28
- Bach, Richard, 1970, Jonathon Livingston Seagull, Avon Books, New York
- Baun, L.Frank, 1990, The Wizard of Oz, Konechy and Konecky, New York
- Bennis ,Warren, 1989, On Becoming a Leader, Perseus Books, Reading, Mass.
- Buscaglia ,Leo,1986, Bus 9 To Paradise, Ballentine Books, New York
- Block ,Peter, 1996, Stewardship, Berrett-Koehler, San Fransisco
- Bohm, David, 1996, On Dialogue, edited by Lee Nichol, London, Routledge
- Bolman, Lee and Deal, Terrence, 1995, Leading With Soul, Jossey-Bass, San Fransisco
- Carrigan, Sandra, 2000, "Coaching at Providence Health Care", Personal Coaching, Franklin Covey Inc.,
- Cebis, Martin and Forester, Nick , 1999, "The Role of Story Telling In Organizational Leadership", Leadership and Organizational Development Journal, Vol.20, Issue 1
- Coles, Robert, 1989, The Call of Stories, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston
- Covey, Stephen, 1994, First Things First, Simon and Schuster, New York
- Covey, Stephen, 1990, Principle-Centered Leadership, Simon and Schuster, New York
- Crawley, LaVera, 1997, "Mirrored Reflections on 'Telling tales of Transformation' ", Re Vision, Summer 97, Vol. 20 Issue 1

Dewar, Tammy, 1994, Learning Circles As Catalyst: Exploring Adult Educator's Training and Development (Unpublished Paper), University of Alberta

Dewar, Tammy, 1996, Doctoral Dissertation: A Feminist Poststructuralist Story of Transformation, University of Calgary

Dewar, T., Greer, N., Hamilton, D., and Parsons, J., 2000, Systematic Inquiry in Organizations, MALT LT 513

Estes, Clarissa Pinkola, 1993, The Gift of Story, Ballentine Books, New York

Ghesquiere, Sister Kateri, 1998, Values Integration Assessment Report, Providence Health Care, Vancouver

Hammond, Sue Annis, 1996, The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry, The Thin Book Publishing Co., Plano, Texas

Hassen, Philip, 1999, A Journey of Change, Providence Health Care, Vancouver, Canada

Helgesen, Sally, 1995, The Web of Inclusion, Doubleday, New York

Hendricks, Gay and Ludeman, Kate, 1997, The Corporate Mystic, Bantam Books, New York

Hoff, Benjamin, 1993, The Te of Piglet, Penguin Books, New York

Jaworski, Joseph, 1996, Synchronicity-The Inner Path of Leadership, Berrett-Kohler, San Francisco

Kouzes, Barry and Posner, James, 1995, The Leadership Challenge, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco

Lionni Leo, 1967, Frederick, Alfred A. Knopf, New York

MacLeod, Alec, 1997, "Telling Tales of Transformation", ReVision, Summer Vol. 20 Issue 1

Maisel, Ivan, 2000, "Daddy's Other Boys", Sports Illustrated 04/03/2000 Vol.92, Issue 14

- Manz, Charles, 1999, *The Leadership Wisdom of Jesus*, Berrett-Koehler, San Francisco
- Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1993, 10th Edition, Merriam-Webster Incorporated, Springfield, Mass.
- Mitchell, Stephen, 1988, *Tao Te Ching*, Harper Collins, New York
- Mitchell, Stephen, 1989, *The Enlightened Heart*, Harper and Row, New York
- Munsch, Robert, 1980, *The Paper Bag Princess*, Annick Press Ltd., Willodale, Ontario
- Noble, Marilyn, 1999, "Learning to Lead from the Middle, An Apprenticeship in Diversity", *Adult Learning*, Vol. 11, Issue 1
- Oshry, Barry, 1995, *Seeing Systems*, Berrett-Koehler, San Francisco
- O'Toole, James, 1995, *Leading Change*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco
- Palys, Ted, 1997, *Research Decisions-Quantitative and Qualitative Perspectives*, Harcourt Brace and Co., Toronto, Canada
- Neuhauser, Peg, 1993, *Corporate Legends and Lore*, McGraw Hill
- Percy, Ian, 1997, *Going Deep In Life and Leadership*, MacMillan Canada, Toronto, Canada
- Ray, Linda C., 1999, "Coaching Builds leadership", *Triangle Business Journal*, 04/09/99, Volume 14, Issue 32
- Rosa, Jerry, 1999, "Leadership: Motivated Environment Relies on Coaching", *Computer Reseller News*. 03/02/99 Issue 835
- Sandmann, Lorilee, 1998, "Adult Learning and Leading, A Shared Responsibility", *Adult Learning*, Spring 98, Vol.19, Issue 3
- Schein, Edgar, 1992, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco
- Secretan, Lance, 1996, *Reclaiming Higher Ground*, MacMillan Canada, Toronto, Canada

- Senge, Peter, 1999, *The Dance of Change*, Doubleday, New York
- Senge, Peter, 1994, *The Fifth Discipline Handbook*, Doubleday, New York
- Seuss, Dr., 1990, *Oh the Places You Will Go*, Random House, New York
- Shiparski, L., Troseth, M., Wesorick, B. and Wyngarden, K., 1997, *Partnership Council Field Book*, Practice Field Publishing, Grand Rapids, Michigan
- Weinstein, Margot, 2000, "Thirty-three World Class Competencies", *Training and Development*, May 2000, Vol.54, Issue 5
- Weisel, Eli, 1978, *A Jew Today*, Random House, New York
- Wesorick, Bonnie, 1998, *The Way of Respect in the Workplace*, Practice Field Publishing, Grandville, Michigan
- Whalley, Dean, 1970, *Lamont the Lonely Monster*, Hallmark Cards
- Wheatley, Margaret, 1992, *Leadership and the New Science*, Berrett-Kohler, San Francisco
- White, E.B., *Charlotte's Web*, 1952, Barnes and Nobles, New York,
- Williams, Ryan and Williams, Tudor, 1999, *Quality of Worklife Survey*, Providence Health Care, Vancouver, Canada
- Wylie, Ann, 1998, "Story Telling", *Communication World*, Feb/Mar, Vol.15, Iss. 3

Sept.15,2000

Ms. XY
Vice President
Providence Health Care

Dear X

Please accept this letter as the formal request for your participation in my project,
" How can we use our life stories as a coaching strategy for leadership development in Providence Health Care."

This study will be conducted by me, Kim Gunning, Graduate Student, Masters of Arts, Leadership and Training, Royal Roads University. My faculty advisor is Anne Schultz (250-) and my project sponsor is Philip Hassen, CEO, Providence Health Care (604-).

The focus of my research is to see if leaders can use their personal leadership journeys as a coaching tool for leadership development with others. We each have stories that we can share about how we came to be in the formal leadership roles we hold. I want to hear your stories and use them as a basis for developing a strategy for leadership development within Providence Health Care.

I am asking you to participate in this study for two reasons:

- You are a recognized formal leader within Providence Health Care and therefore have an opportunity to look at how you can support leadership development with the staff you support.
- I have great respect for your personal integrity and demonstrated ability to positively impact those you support.

The research will be held in two parts:

1. I will conduct a personal interview with you in my office. The interview will last approximately one hour and will be tape recorded. The focus of the interview will be to capture your journey of leadership. I will ask a series of questions that will result in a dialogue with me. The information will be transcribed by an independent source. Your name will not be revealed in the transcription thus safeguarding the confidential nature of our discussions. The transcription will be reviewed with you to ensure that I have captured the themes accurately.
2. I will hold a concluding circle in my home with you and the three other participants. The purpose for the circle will be to review the themes that emerged in the interviews. Your

personal stories will not be revealed. Themes from the four interviews will be brought forward. The discussion as a group will focus on what the themes indicate and how we can use this knowledge to create a strategy for using story telling as a coaching tool for leadership development at Providence Health Care.

The names of the other three participants will be shared when consent has been received and before we begin the process. All data gathered through the interviews and the circle will be held in my home. The data will be kept for six months after the project is accepted by Royal Roads University and then destroyed. The person transcribing the data and I will be the only people to see the raw data. The participant's names will not appear in the documentation. The actual identities of the participants will be known only to them and to me. Pseudonyms will be assigned to ensure confidentiality when the research is incorporated into the project.

There will be minimal harm to you and no financial costs. Every effort will be made to ensure you are not inconvenienced in any way. If for any reason, at any time during the research, you wish to withdraw, you may do so. Any information that you will have shared with me to that point will be immediately destroyed by me.

If, at any time, you have questions for clarification, you can reach me by phone (604-946-0810) or by e-mail (Kim_Gunning@telus.net). My faculty supervisor is available to you at any time for verification of the authenticity of the project (Anne Schultz, 250-)

At this time, I have no intention of using this research for commercial gain. If that changes at any time, I will seek further consent from you.

There is no expected conflict of interest with Providence Health Care. The project will support leadership development initiatives that are already underway.

The research will be used in the completion of my project. The project will be completed by March 31, 2001. You will be given a copy of the final project if you wish to review it.

Thank you for agreeing to be a part of this study. Your knowledge and expertise will help to make this project a very meaningful study.

Sincerely,

Kim Gunning
Graduate Student
Royal Roads University

I, _____, have read the above consent letter and agree to participate in the study as it has been defined.

Kim Gunning
Masters of Arts, Leadership and Training
1999-02

We are going to spend two hours talking about your leadership journey. I am going to ask you a series of questions and it is my hope that you will answer them using stories about your life...tell me about the moments when you became aware of your leadership abilities and tell me about those who influenced you in your journey. By the end of our time, I want to have a sense of how you got from there to here. You have a rich history...which parts of that history supported you as you moved through your life...career...to be where you are now. Who influenced you, who guided you...how did they guide...what have you done with this learning for those that you support...

Questions for Individual Interviews

1. What does leadership mean to you?
2. Reflecting back on your career, tell me about a time when you felt you demonstrated leadership? What did it look like? Feel like?
3. How did it impacted your work?
4. What was the impact of that moment on others? What did they say or do to let you know that you had an impact? Have you used this knowledge? How would you use these moments? What story would you tell?
5. How could you use this story with others?
6. What have you learned about yourself and your leadership from the time we have spent talking?
7. How would you encourage others to tell their stories?
8. Describe three wishes that you have for the future of this organization with respect to leadership development. How can we use our stories to make these wishes come true?

Questions for the Focused Conversation

1. What was it like to tell me your story?
2. What did you learn about yourself?
3. How would you share this learning with those you support?
4. Will you use your stories?

RRU/Providence Health Care Letter for Agreement

Organization Participating in the Study:

Providence Health Care
1081 Burrard St.
Vancouver, B.C. V6Z-1Y6

Contact Person/Project Sponsor

Philip Hassen, CEO
Phone: 604-806-8002
E-mail: phassen@providencehealth.bc.ca

RRU Project Leader/Graduate Learner:

Kim Gunning
Phone: 604-946-0810
E-mail: Kim_Gunning@telus.net

RRU Faculty Supervisor:

Anne Schultz
Phone: 250-744-1418
E-mail: Anne.Schultz@royalroads.ca

Roles and Responsibilities

The Project Leader and Project Sponsor agree to participate in the successful completion of the proposed project and perform the roles and responsibilities identified in Attachment A.

Project Description, Action Steps and Milestones

The project goals, process and anticipated outcomes are described in the project proposal. (See Attachment B). The project proposal highlights the activities to be completed, the study milestones and the involvement of the Providence Health Care and their staff.

Confidentiality

The RRU Project Leader/Graduate Candidate agrees to honour individual and corporate confidentiality and non-disclosure guidelines. Providence Health Care agrees to allow the Project Leader every opportunity to canvas and collect data from individuals and groups identified in the prospectus/proposal.

Providence Health Care project participants will be asked to formally acknowledge that the information they provide to the researcher will be handled in confidential and privileged manner, as described in the "RRU Guidelines for Conducting Research With Human Subjects".

Intellectual Property

Providence Health Care agrees that the final project report and supporting materials will remain the intellectual property of the author (Kim Gunning, Graduate Student). The commercial potential of all products will be assessed upon completion of the project and if deemed necessary, mutually agreeable arrangements will be identified to exploit the product in the commercial marketplace.

Deliverables

The Project Leader/Graduate Student, Kim Gunning, will provide Providence Health Care a copy of the final project report. In addition, the Project Leader will provide formal briefings to individuals or groups identified by the Contact Person/Project Sponsor.

Company Commitment

Providence Health Care agrees to provide the Project Leader with the following support: photocopying, fax, mail, phone, workspace, access to relevant records or data, access to individuals and groups essential to the completion of the project and other items identified throughout the conduct of the project.

Kim Gunning, Graduate Student

Philip Hassen, Project Sponsor