

YOUR LEADERSHIP

EDGE

LEAD ANYTIME, ANYWHERE.

ED O'MALLEY
AMANDA CEBULA

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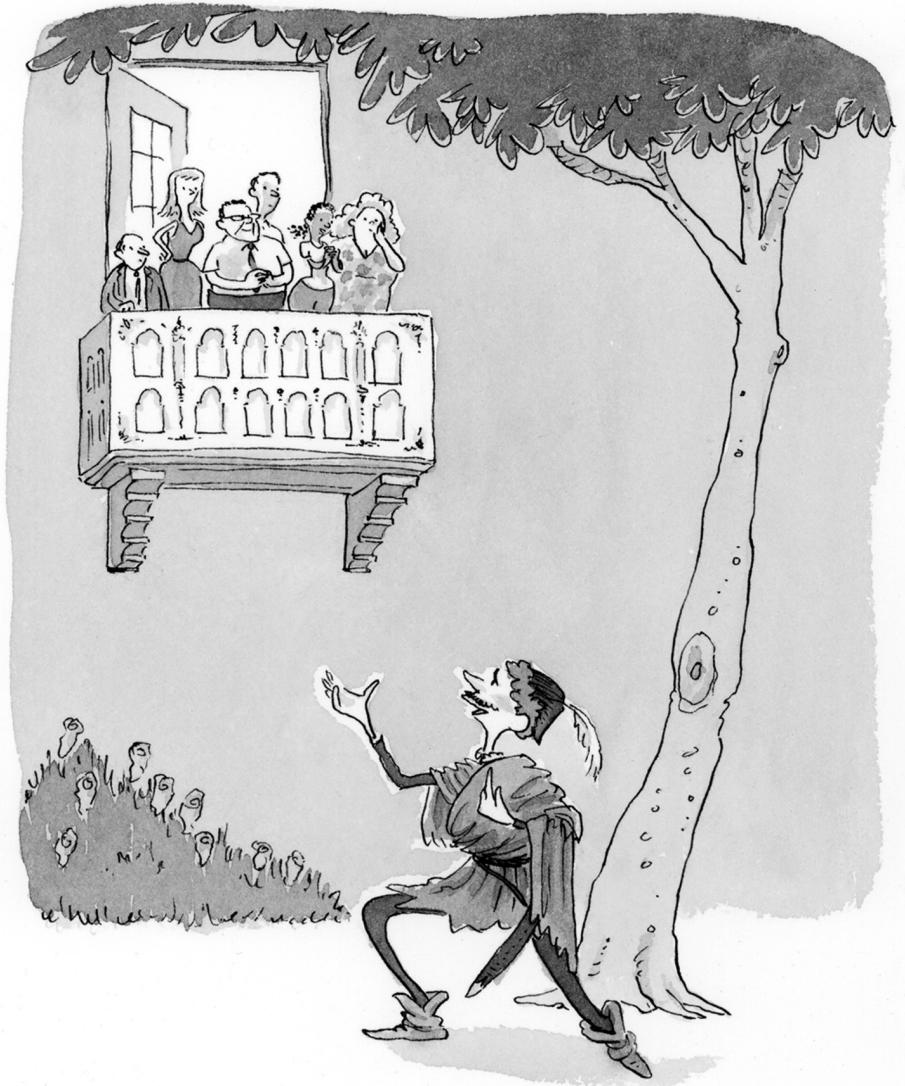
CHAPTER 21
INTERVENE SKILLFULLY

*Speak
from the Heart*

Robert Greenleaf ushered in a new way to think of leaders: as servants. He coined the term “servant leadership” and has helped millions of people think differently about their role as a manager or authority figure. Those moved by his ideas would no longer think it was the job of their employees to serve them. It would be the other way around.

This approach lifted the spirits of employees and managers alike. Uplifted spirits led to better performance, which resulted in success for the organization or company. Greenleaf, the longtime AT&T executive, was on to something.

The notion of “speak from the heart” connects with this wonderful idea of servant leadership. The idea here is to speak from your heart in a way that connects to the hearts of the people you are trying to lead. A more complete name for this idea would be “speak from your heart TOWARD their heart.” It is speaking with a purpose in mind. It is communicating your values at a level that connects with what the other person cares deeply about.



The key to “speaking from the heart” is that it’s about them, not you.

What makes it hard to speak from the heart?

It’s hard to do this if you don’t have a genuine care and concern for those you are engaging. This is the root of Greenleaf’s servant leadership idea. Leadership — different from management — is about helping people transcend their current state. You’ll struggle to speak from the heart if you focus on what YOU want. Instead, focus on — and speak to — THEIR aspirations.

“Speaking from the heart” is a leadership behavior when you make it a strategic choice, an intervention designed to mobilize others. It is emotion with purpose. The exercise of leadership is often about finding connecting interests among various factions. Picture a singer holding people in rapture. The poetry of the words, the emotion of the music. A really good singer has a way of capturing the audience, enveloping listeners in the song and its story.

You’ll be more likely to engage people in tough adaptive challenges if you demonstrate your connection — heart to heart — with them.

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SPEAKING FROM THE HEART?

Read “The Story Factor: Inspiration, Influence and Persuasion Through the Art of Storytelling” by Annette Simmons for ideas about how to use stories to speak from your heart.

Lessons from History

SPEAKING FROM THE HEART

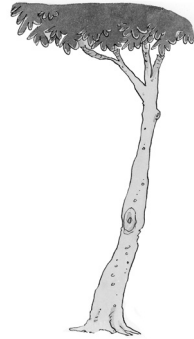
It's hard to find a better example than Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. when it comes to speaking from the heart. His words were and are powerful because they connect with the hopes and dreams of the people listening. He wasn't trying to get his audience to value new things. Rather, he was connecting to what they already valued and helping them understand the importance of standing up for those values.

U.S. Rep. John Lewis in "A Call to Conscience: The Landmark Speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr." describes King's words at the end of the march from Selma to Birmingham.

"When Dr. King gave his address on that Thursday afternoon he spoke from his heart and the depth of his soul. He spoke for all of us. Dr. King called upon the conscience of a nation. In his moving and eloquent address, Dr. King urged us to march on."

HOW DO YOU SPEAK FROM THE HEART?

- ▶ **FIRST, USE BASIC COMMUNICATION SKILLS.** Understand the environment, make eye contact and actively listen.
- ▶ **KNOW WHAT OTHERS CARE ABOUT, WHAT'S IN THEIR HEARTS.** Ask questions: What do you care about? What matters to you? Why is this important to you? How would you feel if this was successful?
- ▶ **TELL THEM YOU CARE ABOUT THEIR FUTURES, THEIR HOPES AND DREAMS.**
- ▶ **CONSIDER SHARING A BRIEF STORY WITH PURPOSE** that allows you to connect to things they care about.
- ▶ **SPEAK OUT OF PASSION, NOT BECAUSE YOU ARE EMOTIONALLY TRIGGERED.** Feel the emotion, compose yourself and think through what you are going to share. A moment's awareness allows you to be strategic about speaking from the heart.





The board of our small community hospital has lately been focused more on trying to turn a profit than on the mission of why we exist. They want graphs and number charts when we're making our case about the things we need, but it just doesn't seem to be getting to the core of what our hospital needs right now. How do I get through to them?

- HANNAH THE HOSPITAL CEO

Dear Hannah,

Being a board member of a small community hospital surely isn't a lucrative financial position. Odds are those board members, deep down, joined the board in the first place because of the mission of the organization.

Ask a different board member each meeting to speak for three to five minutes about why the hospital is important to them and why they said "yes" to serving on the board. You'll create the conditions for members to speak from the heart. Building this into your board routine will ensure a connection at every meeting to what matters most.

Onward!

P.S. Make sure you give board members a few days' notice to prepare to speak.