



Waiting Your Turn

by Bob Whipple, MBA, CPLP

Ever since we were children we have had to wait our turn. The world is filled with individuals who all have needs, and the services available to attend to those needs are pitifully inadequate to meet them all at once. Hence, the need for a cue and a triage process. Hospitals deal with this problem every hour of every day. The decision process is complex, but the hospitals are used to the routine and do it by rote.

Other institutions handle the problem of priority with varying degrees of skill. For example, some nursing homes are quite good at assessing the needs of the individuals. Unfortunately, many of them are so understaffed, the residents often feel abused when they have a personal need and have to wait long periods for assistance. Attempts to gain higher priority by several different methods, like calling out every 15 seconds, usually backfire and put that person lower on the priority list than those who humbly wait.

For the person waiting, it seems so unfair and annoying. I learned that lesson when I was in High School. One cold winter night, I had finished my homework and decided to take a hot bath before going to bed. My Dad was out of town on business, and my Mom was out at an art class. No problem; I was 17 years old. I got in the hot tub and gleefully soaked for as long as I could stand. Then I got out of the tub to dry off.

I remember grabbing the towel, then immediately blacked out from the lack of oxygen. The next conscious moment, I was on the floor of the bathroom with blood all over the place. I had fallen, hitting my chin on the tub resulting in a gaping cut that would require stitches for sure.

I called the place where Mom was taking her art class and told them to send her home for an "emergency." Can you imagine how cruel that was to do to my mother? She had no idea what the emergency was!

She came screaming home and transported me to the emergency room of the hospital several blocks from our home. I sat in the waiting room of the hospital for over an hour

with a towel to sop up the blood. They took me into the triage room and started to work on me. Then, it seemed that the attention went elsewhere. There was a bunch of activity in the room next to me and all of the staff was called over there.

I was very upset because I had to wait longer to get treatment. After another hour, they came back and stitched me up. When I complained, they told me that a man was brought in with a heart attack, and he died. It turned out that the man was the father of one of my friends. Ten minutes earlier I was feeling sorry for myself, and now I realized my problem was nothing compared to what was going on just a few feet down the hall. That was a memorable moment for me.

Never assume you know the full extent of the load on service providers and be patient when other people are getting attention.

Bob Whipple, MBA, CPLP, is a consultant, trainer, speaker, and author in the areas of leadership and trust. He is the author of: *Trust in Transition: Navigating Organizational Change*, *The Trust Factor: Advanced Leadership for Professionals*, *Understanding E-Body Language: Building Trust Online*, and *Leading with Trust is Like Sailing Downwind*. Bob has many years as a senior executive with a Fortune 500 Company and with non-profit organizations. For more information, or to bring Bob in to speak at your next event, **contact him at** www.Leadergrow.com, bwhipple@leadergrow.com or 585.392.7763

New Book in 2014 - *Trust in Transition: Navigating Organizational Change* For more information go to www.astd.org/transition

