

*1956 Eleanor Clarke Slagle Lecture*

## **Therapist Into Administrator: *Ten Inspiring Years***

June Sokolov, OTR

### **Foreword**

To my peers and colleagues: You have seen fit to confer upon me a high award, the symbol of your respect and affection. I have been awed by this honor. I spent many hours deliberating a fitting subject for my discourse with you today and settled finally, not without some misgiving, upon the core of those philosophical beliefs which have been tempered during the past ten rewarding years of practice as a therapist and administrator. I am not an innovator; what I say here is far from new. I would only have you know that what I humbly share with you is representative of the deepest convictions I hold as a therapist, as an administrator, as a human being.

### **Therapist Into Administrator: Ten Tempering Years**

Some ten years ago the writer sat in a classroom attempting to assimilate and commit to indelible memory an impossible array of facts about the practice of occupational therapy. We were being prepared, in time-honored fashion, for the registration examination. From today's vantage point it is difficult to refrain from comparing that process with those rituals which accompany tribal customs. Certainly we resembled the uninitiated in all respects too closely for the comfort of either teachers or pupils.

Today, undeniably older if questionably better informed as a result of exposure to practical considerations, it is possible to recognize with some degree of equanimity that the makers of that first registration examination undoubtedly faced its trial run with something of the same apprehension that dogged the students who were soon to provide the test of its validity. However, ten years ago, such reasoning was at least temporarily denied to me. I could sense only considerable foreboding, reproach myself for my lack of faith in teach-

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ers and God and return to the fine print of the almighty text books there to search unremittingly for the meanings to puzzles which persisted in eluding me. What accounted for the sudden and bewildering synergistic action of a muscle which, up to a point, had behaved in calculable fashion as a prime mover? What nature of chemical compound was known to remove printer's ink from some spot where it had no official business? (And, wouldn't it be more efficacious in this instance to remove one's offending self from the premises as rapidly as possible?) What precautions did one observe with a sixty-five year old hemiplegic complicated by total aphasia, cardiac insufficiency and diabetes mellitus? Or, more to the point, what kind of occupational therapy program did one offer because, of course, there had to be one. This major faith, at least, in the unlimited scope and authority of one's chosen profession was unshakable.

So we pondered the technicalities of our profession, secure only in the one, irrefutable fact that all this was worthwhile and even possible because it would eventually permit us to realize our common aim of helping people to help themselves. What a rude surprise then, as we sat in that relatively peaceful classroom, to be singled out for the prediction that within three years' time I should have left the practice of occupational therapy for the province of administration. Impossible! Cold, forbidding word and world of topside decision and responsibility, devoid of all patient—nay, all human contact. How could one help but react with immediate rejection of such a fate? This could not happen to me. I wanted nothing to do with boards and committees, community action, finances, services and all the rigamarole of executive responsibility. I wanted to work with people. (Heaven forgive me and ascribe to the naivete of youth my repudiation of communities and their citizenry as something other than people. For among these were later to be found the generous affirmation of a personal faith.)

I have wondered since how many young people draw the same faulty inference. And, if they do, may our incorrect assumptions be traced to certain common administrative practices we meet as we move toward maturity and responsibility, as well as to our human way of prejudicing a situation by seeing it in the narrow framework of imperfect knowledge rather than against the unlimited horizon we can flush with a little vision.

The predictions of our teacher were painfully accurate. Were I not so well acquainted with her discerning and judicious approach to life, I might well have suspected her of consulting a crystal ball or dabbling in extra-sensory perception. Almost three years to the day after taking up my duties as an occupational therapist, I found myself involved in administrative functions and by the time five additional years had elapsed, this had become the provocative and rewarding substance of my working existence.

I have no inclination here to propound the role of the administrator in scholarly or detailed fashion. The accepted texts devoted to this subject are adequate if not overwhelming. It shall be my pleasure (and yours, I hope) to dwell for a while on the art of administration which is essentially an art of working with people to encourage and assure those personal and group satisfactions which tend to result in affirmative, effective performance.

The great American myth of the push-button executive to the contrary, executives in social agencies, at any rate, must work chiefly with and through people. Some measure of

their success may be noted in the degree to which this capacity for working through the medium of people bears fruit in the improved and even inspired performance of staff and the consequent greater good that accrues to those served. Obviously, we subscribe to a definition of success which pivots upon the quality of our human relationships. We are not primarily concerned with the size and scope of endeavors, the number and variety of personnel, the roster of services, the soaring annual budget, indicative as these may be of growth and development. Such attributes seem to be all too easily come by in an era of prosperity when rehabilitation of the ill and injured receives almost as much daily attention from the press as the political scene receives in an election year. The trick becomes how to avoid a mushrooming growth and hold to a realistic operation, a qualitative service, to moderate change that suits the circumstances and is not dictated by the artificial stimulus of a current trend.

What, then, are some of the values one perceives, infers and confirms in the process of working with and through people to achieve group goals?

If one tends to be inherently a "doer," a prime but difficult lesson to master and practice is the restraint and rechanneling of energies. The goal changes from personal performance to eliciting increased assumption of responsibility from others. For many people (therapists not excepted) doing comes easier than talking about it. In consequence, we may resort to showing or performing rather than sketching in a backdrop or opening a door, as it were. As has been said, a good teacher is one who leads the pupil to the threshold of his own mind and bids him enter. While more difficult to achieve, this is the procedure of choice and tends to ensure more lasting satisfactions and greater gains in personal stature.

In any case, the pangs of relinquishing proof of personal competence are lessened at the earliest observation of staff satisfactions. And these staff satisfactions are the natural corollary of expanded horizons and the chance to come to grips with new and more challenging responsibilities. The first time one is suffused in a glow of pure pleasure because a staff member has ventured into new and untried territory to emerge either bruised and questioning or victorious and wiser, becomes the memorable date of a new romance with the art of administration. This is the moment when one feels the bite of conviction and knows where the greatest rewards will henceforth lie.

We hear frequently that young people of today do not crave responsibility—that they seek freedom from the burden of responsible choice and decision. As always, one does well to be chary of such generalizations. In those rare cases where the glove fits, we should perhaps be quicker to recognize true personality disturbances instead of chalking the response up as yet another "sign of the times." In our admittedly limited experience, an atmosphere in which the premium is placed on achieving personal satisfaction through exploring, investigating, making mistakes, finding out why, pooling group thinking and reaching out constantly to new accomplishment in the name of commonly cherished ideals, exerts the irresistible tug of a strong current and carries the worker with it magnetically. There is no substitute for the exercise of reason and self-trust and the reward thereof is constant. Given the basic aim of wanting to help people help themselves, human beings tend to gravitate toward those ways of life which promise to transform their intangible aims into realities.

The administrator is on the scene to provide this opportunity, to set the stage for personal growth and to allow the accomplishment of group and agency objectives. How does he go about his role of catalyst?

One significant contribution he can make is to free the work atmosphere of irritating fears and tensions. We readily acknowledge that no one works successfully or happily in an atmosphere charged with constant anxiety or apprehension. Yet the evidences of such circumstances are legion. The writer has frequently been called on to define and analyze the reasons for ineffectual performance and poor standards of work, only to find that something akin to staff demoralization exists which freezes into immobility every healthy human and professional impulse. A change of leadership is contemplated, staff cutbacks are being considered, financial problems loom, a new order is in the making but no one has thought it necessary or fitting to discuss these crucial problems with the people intimately concerned. An undertow of panic results.

Let us illustrate the administrative function in such a situation. A new worker has been added to a well-integrated and functioning staff. This worker has left a secure position in the highly organized and orthodox field of education to seek new opportunities and horizons in the field of rehabilitation. He represents an unexplored aspect of service in the agency and brings with him a host of techniques, talents, beliefs, practices and prejudices which are new to the staff. He brings with him, also, a natural concern about the merits of his decision which was perhaps arrived at somewhat rapidly. It seemed like a good idea at the time. After a few days in a totally new environment and some encounters with unfamiliar practices, he's not so sure. During the orientation to the agency's services and the people behind them, it becomes fairly obvious that he is unable to listen, absorb, assimilate. He appears pre-occupied, concerned with other things. He catches at details and misses concepts—sees the grain of sand but not the world mirrored therein. These symptoms readily communicate themselves to other staff members. Mental images are stored, calculations and reservations are made. It is time for administration to intervene in an attempt to rectify the situation before the staff begins to reflect an established group attitude which is apt to anchor these early responses. Informal conferences with the worker are aimed at clearing the air. These are not effective. The administrator takes another avenue. He consults with supervisory staff (department heads) about the problem. The possible and probable causes of the worker's reactions are weighed and considered and a potentially influential group attitude is forged. The staff concludes that the new worker deserves all the help they can muster to convert his energies and will to the job at hand. They agree that his unease is, undoubtedly, temporary. To a man, they go forth determined to offer extra assistance, encouragement and support to help channel responses and criticisms to appropriate sources for consideration. Within a very brief period results may be measured in the new staff member's relaxed manner, receptiveness to suggestion and participation in group thinking and planning. After a month or two, he is working with obvious satisfaction and making a substantial contribution to the agency's objectives in terms of his personal endowment. A group of people who have worked toward and achieved a common set of goals have succeeded in communicating their good-will, enthusiasm and positive experience to another human being. The link is forged

into the chain. Administration has helped to refocus group energies on meeting client needs. Similar examples abound. Every department, every agency is the scene of innumerable tensions, group and personal. They are a part of the fabric of existence and no more to be frowned upon than the rind we discard with the eating of an orange. But they must be recognized and evaluated for potential damage. Sensitivity to impressions, recognition of a disturbed environment, proper timing, analysis of the problem and bringing to bear upon it the powerful antidote of group acceptance are implicit in the administrative function.

The cultivation of impressions or intuitions is worth a moment's digression. While we may not rely indiscriminately upon a single impression, many such perceptions constitute the genesis of all ideas, the basis for achievement. Henry James has summed this up exquisitely in *The Art of Fiction and Other Essays*.<sup>1</sup> He discusses the business of writing from experience and says, "Experience is never complete; it is an immense sensibility, a kind of huge spiderweb of the finest silken threads suspended in the chamber of consciousness and catching every air-borne particle in its tissue. It is the very atmosphere of the mind; and when the mind is imaginative—much more when it happens to be that of a man of genius—it takes to itself the faintest hints of life, it converts the very pulses of the air into revelations. The power to guess the unseen from the seen, to trace the implications of things, to judge the whole piece by the pattern, the condition of feeling life in general so completely that you are well on your way to knowing any particular corner of it—this cluster of gifts may almost be said to constitute experience . . . If experience consists of impressions, it may be said that impressions are experience, just as they are the very air we breathe . . ." And he goes on to admonish "Try to be one of the people on whom nothing is lost."<sup>1</sup>

One of the major fears which confront occupational therapists as administrators is an expressed or implied fear about the value of occupational therapy itself. Like most fears, this one if suspected must be taken out and viewed in that strong daylight which does so much to dispel shadows and reduce problems to size. Conversely, when it has been examined and analyzed for the benefit of all concerned, doubt and distrust should be dispersed by the active, intensive and changing practice of our profession. The Overstreets speak convincingly of learning to call an episode finished when it is over with, and label this "the art of rescuing the present and the future from the tyranny of the past."<sup>2</sup> If occupational therapists persist in some of the breast-beating and loud self-recrimination which have attended us too regularly in the past eight to ten years, we cannot expect the world to look upon us with either respect or trust. No one denies that we must examine the reasons which invest our practices. We might, however, do well to remember that T. V. Smith, the eminent philosopher, upon his retirement thanked God publicly for the right of old age to "withstand all easy commitment." "All my life," says Mr. Smith, "I have been abashed at having to decide things in the name of reason for which there were no adequate reasons. I know there were not, because equally reasonable men are always deciding such things differently. And the more important the issues, the more differently they get decided. . . . Indeed, I myself incline to the view . . . that there are never adequate reasons for doing anything."<sup>3</sup>

All of us have heard and perhaps uttered the cry of frailty: occupational therapy will not live to see another decade if it is not perfected as a science; if we do not recruit more

therapists; if we do not settle the problem of unregistered personnel. All these qualifications are dependent on which crisis looms largest in the group addressing itself to the problem of our future. These are problems we must deal with, yes, but they do not constitute a final threat to the life and vitality of occupational therapy any more than the rising cancer rate threatens the life or continuous practice of medicine or the hazards of the road threaten the use of the automobile. The seriously debilitating factor is our own lack of faith and conviction about what occupational therapy has to offer the patient. Nothing will erase this basic fault except the cultivation and practice of a genuine belief and its substantiation in the daily revelation of efficacy.

A good deal of our discomfort and uneasiness may stem from the fact that we, along with other disciplines, are living through an attempt at conversion to a more exact science. This is a painful process at best and can be devastating to a profession burdened with amorphous beginnings which lend themselves all too easily, in the hands of the unselective, to branding occupational therapists with currently unacceptable labels, such as "do-gooders."

Daily we are impressed with the revival of interest in religion, the renaissance of hand-crafts, the renewed emphasis on a liberal arts education. All about us are signs of the swing of the pendulum from crass materialism to a renewed acknowledgment of man's continuing need for human kindness and compassion, for individual creative effort. What could be more reassuring to people engaged in the practice of healing through doing?

With an apology to our psychiatric colleagues who, I suspect, have always known and held to this conviction, it behooves us to emphasize and underscore the significance of effective human relationships implicit in the practice of occupational therapy whether we are talking to a physiatrist or a psychiatrist. Regardless of our tools, it is primarily by virtue of our interest, enthusiasm and concern that we shall bridge the chasm of illness to draw the patient back into the mainstream of active participation which signifies the return to life and hope.

This is in no sense a repudiation of the effort to improve our practices, sharpen our professional tools, better our methods of work. It is dictated by a deep-seated belief that the medium we use is always secondary to the motives and drives which direct our actions.

The administrator becomes an important avenue for the unequivocal voicing of such sentiments since his attitudes and beliefs will unfailingly be sensed and transmitted to the staff. His is the job, then, of conditioning the atmosphere so that unspoken fears may be voiced, group attitudes reshaped and fused, healing action taken to correct the profound debilitation caused by irritating doubt.

Patient evaluation sessions, used as a teaching device, may provide a useful vehicle for crystallizing group attitudes about occupational therapy. It is more than a passing impression that, given the opportunity to comment on the function of occupational therapy, the therapist too often remains passive and silent only to fester later under an impossible assignment doled out by the attending physician. Administration has a responsibility for overcoming such deadlocks. A leading question directed to the physician, the therapist or both, may instigate the conversational give and take that is essential to the forging of individual ideas, the art of selling them to others, the grace of retreating with good countenance and

heart when fairly defeated and the satisfaction of having actively contributed to decisions about the purpose and function of one's own métier. The old, if somewhat impertinent, remark about "put up or shut up" has its merits applied to this situation. Staff members must learn to charge, parry, thrust, defend or retreat in the intellectual arena much as they have previously learned the rules of the game in the sports arena.

Clearing the air of basic fears about the value of occupational therapy is an on-going process. Self-recrimination should give way to the more purposeful activity of meeting problems as they arise for these are the stuff of life and ours the incomparable privilege of rising to their eternal challenge.

The art of administration supposes, also, acknowledgement and cultivation of an atmosphere in which a premium is placed on the making of courageous errors. We do well to recall often the sense of peace and freedom to be found in reviewing our identification with the family of man, that curious groper after knowledge, that colossal maker of mistakes. How comforting to know that one is entitled to try and fail, that it is upon this shifting foundation that all human advances are achieved. From *The Mind Goes Forth*, we take heart in the following quotation: "The deeply civil person knows life as imperfect, flawed, limited, self-contradictory; as unfinished; often immature, raw on the edges, unfulfilled; but as remarkable in fact and possibility and as structured for growth. With all these aspects the truly civil person feels at home."<sup>2</sup>

Administration generally has responsibility for inaugurating teaching programs. The example set by first-class hospitals leaves little doubt that clinical teaching enriches and improves services rendered to the client. The new knowledge, the fresh perspective, the spirit of inquiry the student brings with him illuminate the scene and stimulate the staff to their best creative effort. To the degree that all experience is grist to the human mill, we may assume the student also profits. In attempting to qualify the returns to the student over a period of years, certain basic ingredients of a teaching program parade before us for review.

Young people often come to us hemmed in by the safe margins of the knowledge they have assimilated well. They will not readily push these margins out unless we commend the pioneering spirit and, indeed, breast the frontiers ourselves. This should not be promptly equated in the listener's mind with study and research, applicable though they be. It is much more an attitude, a state of mind which invests our every action, from shifting a schedule to tossing out a traditional method for some new system. It is, we believe, a refreshing jolt for the new student who arrives on the scene primed for performance (with the mental image of the rating scale never far away) to be assured that he will be rewarded for imagination and invention, that his supervisor will cherish trial and error rather than past performance according to text book specifications.

Gradually, we have had the temerity to question the fine line drawn between the status and responsibility accorded the student and the therapist. It seems to us that this is a chimera which cannot be perpetuated if we hope to give to student and patient that sense of security and authority which are prerequisite to a positive relationship. In seeking to create for the student a level somewhat below that of staff prestige, yet to demand from him those things expected of a staff member (with the possible exception of ultimate

responsibility to administration), we seem to be pursuing an unrealistic, if not unattainable objective. In good government we underwrite responsibility with authority. The student in training is anywhere from one to nine months short of his first job. Overnight, he will be expected to drop the pose of subservience and assume the mantle of adulthood. Since few of us are quick-change artists when it comes to personal development, the outcome of such a system will generally be an additional year of growing into responsible performance. Yet the current situation demands prompt assumption of leadership and mature judgment from the new therapist. This is often deplored but I suspect it is something we might cease to deprecate. In many of the established giant businesses of today this golden option for personal responsibility has been severely curtailed. Thousands of young clerks and typists seem never to move beyond the immediate assigned task, be it filing the card meticulously under “C” or typing the letter neatly and accurately. The card may bear information of keen significance to the boss and the letter may read like gibberish but there will too seldom be an attempt to check on the information or to read the letter for sense. This is not necessarily the sign of a dull mind but rather of a dependent one which has been denied the God-given opportunity of thinking for itself, of questioning, of investigating even at the risk of appearing foolish.

To a degree our schools perpetuate this state of dependency. We still persist in spoon-feeding substance to students, examining them regularly and all but lifting them through the business of learning with methods and devices as adroit as they are stultifying. We forget or overlook the fact that education in its deepest sense is “life-long discipline of the individual by himself.”<sup>4</sup> We assume self-discipline will set in, like grey hair, after the student is on the job.

If the therapist-administrator seeks to engender a dynamic and rewarding teaching program he will do well to examine this dichotomy and establish the student as a full-grown person of whom is expected the creative effort, natural error, renewed curiosity and growing capacity for responsibility which we associate, whether rightly or wrongly, with the finished therapist. In place of the smothering pat of authoritative approval, we may substitute the listening ear—the sounding board against which the student may try the “ping” of his ideas. While this may play some havoc with established efficiency, it will assuredly contribute to personal and professional growth.

We are reminded of an episode which may illumine these abstractions. A student was treating an emotionally labile hemiplegic woman of middle age. The physician in charge was carried away with the importance of self-care for this patient and somewhat arbitrarily emphasized this in his prescription to the exclusion of other activities. In the manner of many busy doctors, he had found little time to examine the background of the case which indicated a long career of drudgery interrupted for the first time in many years by the respite of illness. The student was vaguely aware of this implicit contradiction but failed (in traditional fashion) to verbalize it to the doctor. Instead, she proceeded to carry out the orders to the letter. The patient broke down and sobbed uncontrollably on the day she was first able to master her shoelaces alone. The student, shocked, discussed the situation with a therapist who, neither condemning nor approving, helped the student to voice her desire to try a less

orthodox approach. Utilizing a spark of interest the patient had revealed for drawing and painting as a stimulus to other activities, the student encountered some success. She was asked to present the results to the physician, who, in the face of the evidence and the student's new-found assurance, was moved to adjust his recommendations. Much was learned; a small world was conquered. Had the therapist, at the outset, issued warnings about deviating from the prescription, we might have succeeded solely in perpetuating a blind and mulish adherence to rule.

Physicians who enjoy the practice of medicine as art and science, rather than the artificial prerogatives bestowed by overawed humanity, tell us that they are neither qualified nor interested in planning discrete occupational therapy programs. They alone can and will set the guidelines for us, indicating the pitfalls and dangers inherent in treatment. We must heed this advice and also the ring of inner conviction which tells us that we alone can create, devise and adjust the program of therapeutic work which is our contribution to the healing process.

The cult of objectivity in human relationships has occasioned a good deal of fanfare in our teaching and clinical training settings. Random observations in our own field and allied situations moved us to examine this precept and to cast our vote with those who believe it is neither possible nor desirable to establish antiseptic relationships with people, to divest our relationships of some degree of emotionality. Undoubtedly some of the existing confusion we experience here rests upon problems of semantics. The word "emotional" is often viewed in the narrow sense of uncontained feeling. It appears to the writer that what we bring to patient or staff relationships rests largely upon our ability to manifest a warm interest in individuals as people. An axiom of our profession is the importance of our approach to people. Just what do we mean by this? Is it a kind of come-on that we hold out as bait until the fish is hooked, then to withdraw rapidly into our shell of cool aloofness? Or does it mean that we are able to convey to people at all moments of our relationship that they are important and valuable to us, that we have an investment in their future, that we care considerably what happens to them. If we accept the evidence that what we do and say often influences even momentary or fleeting relationships, how much more obvious is this potential in daily association? As members of the genus *homo sapiens* we all move in a constant search for understanding. As human beings we are not constituted to live together without involvement. We have learned that events across the span of oceans and continents affect us, that we are in more than an abstract sense our brothers' keepers. This is no less true of our more intimate associations with patients and colleagues. To the degree that these feelings are neither unrecognized nor unmanageable, they are, we submit, the most powerful tool we have for evoking response and encouraging movement forward. And, if we should err, let us remember that we were not meant to be omnipotent. People will forgive us the errors made in the name of earnest belief more readily than the achievements which result from calculated planning. We should differentiate this kind of response to others from the casual benevolence that rests upon familiarity with the size and fortunes of Joe Doake's family as the base of association. The kind of interest we propose as a part of the administrative armamentarium is an enlightened concern with personal growth and achievement.

In this role of helping people to achieve commonly held objectives, nothing is more rewarding than our deepening awareness of human strength and frailty. One learns to hold aloft the ideal, to expect from people the most and the best of which they are capable yet to respect human frailty and hence to treasure the least of the offerings. As the staff family grows from a few people who have learned to harmonize “exceeding sweet” to a whole chorus which is more apt to give out with a sour note from time to time, there is, for the administrator, the endless fascination of reading an increasingly complex score. The bass are the conservative element, holding the line, providing the foundation; the tenors are the mercurial element, given to temperamental sallies and sudden bursts of melody; the contraltos are the mediators creating a blending of voices; the sopranos carry the design ever onward. All have their inalienable place and the whole is the less for any loss or absence.

The importance of expecting the best from people is illustrated by the remarks of a famous dancer who, as she exhorted young and very green converts to attempt greater feats, pointed out that few of us know even the inside limits of our endurance, nor do we take the time or trouble to find this out except when life itself calls the turn. I remember that we students had been complaining that we could not run any longer. The artist dared us to test this statement. She suggested that we run until we dropped of breathlessness or a stitch-in-the-side. Some of us took the dare and learned, in the process, an illuminating lesson about the depth of our endurance and physical powers. This can be translated into mental efforts. People may gripe and complain about being stimulated and provoked to new and greater efforts but, in our humble opinion, they respond to challenge as the hound to the hare. This is no more nor less than a reflection of man’s eternal striving after perfection. Attainment may, indeed must, in many instances fall far short of the goal. This is secondary. It is the reaching that counts; not the thing we grasp. The sense of joy and accomplishment, of participation, are to be found on the march. The goal, achieved, has already altered and is elusively beyond us again.

Another lesson to be mastered in this complex and provocative business of working with people is the sharpening and refinement of the sense of timing. How easily one loses the golden opportunity to communicate an idea or advance a plan when the time is either too soon or too late. We might speculate lengthily that timing is the essence of success in all things great and small. Certainly it has a place in successful administration. The atmosphere of a staff or board meeting, the readiness of people for a concept or plan, the degree of skepticism, the point at which this turns to argument, the introduction of personal motives and consequent loss of focus on the objective, all these are as significant to the development of the administrative sense as the scent of smoke on the air is to a present danger for animals of the forest. Reactions like these are not to be overlooked in the ardor of one’s own beliefs. Personal conviction and zeal spice an offering but they must be preserved within the framework of group readiness much as a treble phrase plays a counterpoint against a holding base.

While the sense of timing can be enhanced with experience, it has in common with all true things an intuitive basis. We say of the gifted politician that he can sense the mood or will of the people, and uses this to introduce advanced ideas and doctrines. This is equally

applicable to the administrator who, seeking to inaugurate a new policy with staff or board, must consider group structure, mood and will. Long ago Shakespeare immortalized this idea when he said, "There is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at flood, leads on to fortune . . ."

By way of example, a staff may resist the introduction of a timesaving procedure for the exchange of routine information. They are unmoved by the suggestion that such measures will reduce the burden of frustration upon individuals. The matter is discussed and, wisely, tabled for the present. Soon the moment for which our administrator has been waiting arrives. Several staff members register complaints about the lag in communication. While this irritation is prominent the staff is convened to hear an expression of the problem by its own members. Together the group seeks an answer and happens, magically, upon the plan originally proposed by administration. The time is right; the goal is realized. Astute members of the group recognize some semblance of coincidence, to others this is not yet revealed. This is unimportant. With faithful practice, everyone is eventually in on the secret and common obstacles may be hurdled with the speed and co-ordination that endow the polished athlete.

The tempering years have sustained our conviction that the goal of harmonious group performance, per se, is a false idol. One insurgent and gifted human being is worth twenty robots who have been chastened into the uncomplaining performance of assigned tasks. New ideas, new people, new projects may threaten to disrupt equilibrium, upset patterns, create temporary dissensions. Do we decide for or against their injection into our midst?

Some of our social scientists have been preaching that "the whole is greater than its parts, that the system has a wisdom beyond the reach of ordinary mortals." William H. Whyte, Jr., writes tellingly of this quandary in *Is Anybody Listening*.<sup>5</sup> Says Mr. Whyte, "The individual can be greater than the group and his lone imagination worth a thousand graphs and studies. He is not often a creator, but even as spectator, as the common man, he can rise in ways his past performance would not predict. To aim at his common denominators in the name of ultimate democracy is to despise him, to perpetuate his mediocrities and to conceive him incapable of responding to anything better than the echo of his prejudices. . . . It is not in the nature of social engineering to be creative; it must necessarily be based on what is already existent. It can measure what is or what was . . . It cannot dream or conjure; it cannot find out from people whether they would like something new, something untried, because people cannot judge what they do not know. And they will not know until someone is damn fool enough to stick his neck out and have faith in his intuition, his perception and his hunches."

There is room for rugged individualism within the staff framework; room for these insurgents, these uncommon men and women to make their contribution to the patient and the agency and to claim in return the honest respect of other personnel. To the administrator falls the challenging job of placing such people in optimum positions to insure their productiveness, of providing the environment which will foster their creative effort.

The incomparable privilege of working with people, lay and professional, leads inevitably to a reaffirmation of principles expounded by great men in every era. Man hungers after

beauty, goodness and truth. He seeks to experience life first-hand and in so doing develops a personal independence and esteem which sustain him through trial and tribulation. He seeks also to identify with mankind, to give and receive warmth, affection and love. He is a problem-solver and so dispels, inch by painstaking inch, the fears which beset his way. He responds to the challenge of perfection yet craves acceptance of his frailty. Although actually he may present a less than admirable figure, he is potentially superb. The practice of administration, like the practice of occupational therapy, is another way of recognizing these truths.

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