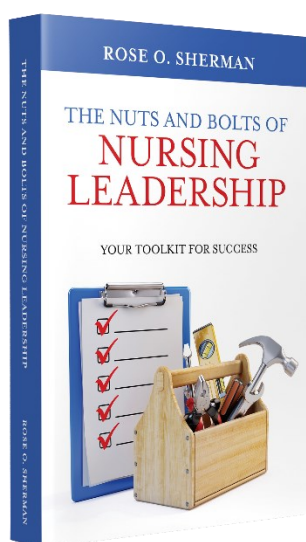


The Nuts and Bolts of Nursing Leadership

Your Toolkit for Success

Book Club/Leader Development Guide



Overview of the Book

Moving from a clinical role to leadership requires a different mindset and new knowledge, skills, and competencies. Both nursing staff and leaders in healthcare organizations have high expectations of nurses who become leaders. Knowing what to do and what not to do in leadership today is essential. Nursing research demonstrates that front line leaders are the linchpins in their organizations that drive recruitment, retention, and staff performance. Despite the challenges, nurses often take leadership roles without the tools they need to be successful.

The *Nuts and Bolts of Nursing Leadership* provides you with the essential knowledge, skills, and behaviors you need to become a successful leader, whether you are just beginning or have years of experience. In an easy-to-read format, each chapter includes stories of challenges that leaders have shared with me to help you learn from their experiences. The book contains tactical advice and actionable strategies that you can apply to feel less overwhelmed and more confident. Many nurse leaders have found it helpful to use this book as part of a leadership development program or book club. With that in mind, I have designed this book club guide with discussion questions and follow-up activities for you and your team.

Chapter One Stepping into Leadership

1. What are the top five essential priorities in your leadership role?
2. Have you met 1:1 with each of your direct reports to assess their observations and needs from you as a leader?
3. Which ONE of the five exemplary practices of leadership is the most challenging for you?
4. Are you a Superman or a Yoda in your leadership role?
5. What are the pros and cons of taking an internal promotion within your organization?

Suggested Follow-up Activities

- Design a 100-day leadership transition plan for either yourself or a leader in your organization.
- Develop a *Guide to Working with You* for your staff – see Chapter 5 Toolkit.
- Watch a short YouTube video to learn more about the Leadership Challenge Model at [PNTV: The Leadership Challenge by James Kouzes and Barry Posner \(#341\) - YouTube](#)

Chapter Two Leading Yourself

1. How do you get things done – are you a reader or a listener? Do you work better alone or on a team?
2. Have you ever been in a role that was not a good fit for your strengths? How did that feel?
3. Which ONE of the five key areas of emotional intelligence is the most challenging for you? How do you monitor yourself to be more emotionally intelligent?
4. On a scale of 1-10, with one being very introverted and ten being very extroverted – where do you fall?

5. Which ONE of the ten leadership derailers discussed in the chapter is a challenge for you?

Suggested Follow-up Activities

- Take the Clifton Strength Finder Assessment from Gallup to identify your top five strengths. Carefully read your assessment finding and discuss your reports with a colleague who knows you well. Available at [CliftonStrengths Online Talent Assessment | EN - Gallup](#)
- Take the Harvard Business Review Assessment on Emotional Intelligence and ask at least one of your direct reports and one of your peers to assess you as well. Compare your self-assessment to how others evaluate you. Available at [Quiz Yourself: Do You Lead with Emotional Intelligence? \(hbr.org\)](#)
- Develop a leadership self-care plan by identifying at least one activity outside of work that energizes you and you can commit to doing.

Chapter Three Building Trust and Accountability

1. What types of deposits do you make to the emotional piggybank in your daily leadership?
2. Describe a time when you violated the trust of a colleague or staff member. How did you rebuild the trust?
3. How do you share your core leadership values with your team?
4. Which ONE of the three relational styles of leadership resonates with you?
5. How can you demonstrate more Fire Starter behaviors with your team?

Suggested Follow-up Activities

- Review the list of personal core values outlined by Brene Brown and circle your top five. Available at [Values.pdf \(brenebrown.com\)](#)
- Take time to do some internet research on the relational leadership style that you chose in question four above. What actions can you take to be more effective in being that type of leader?
- Review the comments on your last staff engagement survey – look for Fire Starter and Fire Extinguisher behaviors noted by staff.

Chapter Four Organizing Your Work

1. How effective are you right now in establishing work boundaries?
2. What is the ONE thing that you can do in your leadership that would have the most significant payback in your work?
3. How do you decide what meetings to attend in your organization? Do you have any FOMO if you are not present?
4. What is the process for leader rounding in your organization? How could it be improved?
5. Have you learned to say NO to activities you don't have time for?

Suggested Follow-Up Activities

- Watch this Youtube video as an example of effective nurse leader rounding on inpatient units. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWuMDCp3vaA>
- Make a list of all the organizational meetings that you currently attend – highlight at least two that you could either send someone else to or not attend at all.
- To evaluate your success in setting work boundaries - ask a spouse, partner, or trusted colleague who knows you well for their observations about your ability to balance work and personal life.

Chapter Five Improving Your Decision Making Skills

1. Have you ever made a decision without all the evidence you needed and then regretted it?
2. When you read the decision biases part of this chapter, have you noticed any biases in your own decision making?
3. Do members of your leadership team feel comfortable challenging decisions in group meetings?
4. How do you seek feedback in your leadership?
5. Think of a time when you have reflected on a negative experience in your leadership – were you able to gain a better perspective over time? What did you learn from it?

Suggested Follow-Up Activities

- Develop a strategy to seek feedback about your leadership using guidance given in this chapter.
- Try reflective journaling for one month about a current challenge in your leadership.
- Review the decision biases in this chapter – look for evidence of these biases in group thinking during organizational meetings over the next 3 months.

Chapter Six Mastering Communication

1. Has your nonverbal body language ever been misinterpreted by staff?
2. Review the styles of communication on pages 38-39 – which one of the four most closely fits with your style of communication?
3. How do you get buyin from your staff with your messaging?
4. Have you ever sent an email that was misunderstood – what follow-up did you do an what was the outcome?
5. Have you ever made an off the cuff remark that was misunderstood by staff and that you later regretted?

Suggested Follow-Up Activities

- Seek feedback from your supervisor and trusted colleagues about your digital presence and email communication. What are some areas for improvement and what should you keep doing?
- Take the communication style inventory available at <https://health.ucdavis.edu/cppn/documents/classes/preceptor/FinalCommunicationsStyleInventory.pdf> to validate your answer to question 2 above.
- In your next 1:1 conversation with a staff member – work on your listening skills with a goal of only talking 20% of the time. After you do this, reflect on the experience and conversation.
- Put a coin jar in your office and deposit money every time you say **no, but or however**. Alert your staff that you are trying to eliminate these words from your vocabulary and give a small reward to anyone who calls you out on the use of these words.

Chapter Seven Giving Effective Feedback

1. Do you have staff members that are perfectionists and have challenges accepting feedback – how are you managing this behavior?
2. How do you currently plan sessions where you will be giving negative feedback? Have you ever rehearsed these sessions with a peer?
3. Is there a crucial conversation that you should be having with one of your staff but have not yet done it? What is stopping you?
4. What forms of recognition feedback do you currently use in your leadership role?
5. Do you regularly nominate staff for awards that are available in your organization?

Suggested Follow-up Activities

- Watch the YouTube video by Kerry Patterson, author of Crucial Conversations. Video Review for Crucial Conversations <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EFaXx3pgaxM>
- Develop a short survey to ask yours staff how they prefer to be recognized.
- Plan in advance for at least one nomination of a staff member for an award – take the award criteria and ask the staff member for examples of how they have achieved the criteria.

Chapter Eight Promoting Constructive Conflict

1. Which one of the five modes of managing conflict is your default conflict management style?
2. What are the most common sources of conflict on your team?
3. Have you ever become involved in a conflict without having all the background information? What did you learn from that experience?
4. What are you doing to build the conflict management skills of your charge nurses?
5. What have you observed happens when a conflict escalates out of control?

Suggested Follow-up Activities

- Take the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict assessment and learn more about how to use the assessment at <https://kilmanniagnostics.com/assessments/thomas-kilmann-instrument-one-assessment-person/>
- Identify a time when you avoided a conflict. What led you to make that decision and was it the right choice?
- The next time a staff member brings a conflict to your attention that they should be dealing with themselves, coach them to mediate the conflict.

Chapter Nine Encouraging Diverse Thinking

1. Review the four elements of inclusive teams at the beginning of the chapter – are they present on your team?
2. How do you build psychological safety for staff who work with you?
3. What generational differences do you see on your team? Think of one example where you have flexed your leadership to accommodate generational differences.
4. How do you promote the sharing of diverse points of view to discourage group think?
5. Have you observed arguments about political viewpoints among your staff? If yes – how have you managed them?

Suggested Follow-up Activities

- Use Amy Edmonson guidelines outlined in this Google ReWork post to design a psychological safety scale for your team. [re:Work - Guide: Understand team effectiveness](#)
- If there is a controversial issue that your team is debating – assign team members to each side of the issue and then have a discussion.
- Do a generational profile of the staff on your unit – share it with your staff.

Chapter Ten Developing a Coaching Mindset

1. What changes will you need to make in your leadership to be less of a traditional leader and more of a coach?
2. What are some examples of coaching conversations that you would like to have with your staff using the GROW coaching model?
3. How do you avoid being an advice monster in your leadership?
4. What strategies do you use to help your novice nurses to grow in their careers?
5. What kickstarter questions do you like to use in your conversations with staff?

Suggested Follow-up Activities

- Schedule one short coaching session with at least three staff over the next two weeks using the suggestions in this chapter.

- Identify at least three “grow in place” activities on your unit that you can suggest during career coaching sessions.
- Watch this YouTube video on Why Become a Leader Coach Available at [Nurse Leader Coach Program 1 - Why Become a Leader Coach - YouTube](#)

Chapter Eleven Building Cohesive Teams

1. Which ONE of the characteristics of effective teamwork is a strength for your team? Which one do you need to work as a group?
2. Have you chosen a team member for a position despite nagging concerns as to whether they were a good fit? What was the outcome?
3. What is your favorite interview question?
4. How do you ensure that your team members have a good onboarding experience?
5. How effective is interprofessional teamwork on your unit or in your department?

Suggested Follow-up Activities

- Review the characteristics of great teamwork with your staff and ask for feedback on areas where the team could improve.
- Meet with your organizational education staff and review the current staff orientation plan as well as your unit plan to assess for any gaps in onboarding.
- Schedule a week one check-in on your calendar with each new staff member using the questions outlined in this chapter.

Chapter Twelve Creating a Culture of Safety and Quality

1. Have you observed the bullying behaviors described in this chapter on your unit?
2. What strategies do you use to promote a culture of no-bullying?
3. Do you use the TeamSTEPPS communication tools in your clinical area? How effective are they in improving communication?
4. How do you communicate your HCAHPS survey scores to your staff? Are there any interventions you have designed on your unit as an outcome of your survey findings?
5. What performance metrics does your unit do well on? What metrics do you struggle to improve?

Suggested Follow-up Activities

- Put bullying and incivility on a staff meeting agenda and encourage staff to tell their stories.
- Plan a schedule to monitor compliance with bedside shift report and effectiveness. Review your expectations with your charge nurses.
- Ask your staff to take the HCAHPS survey themselves and honestly answer what their perceptions are about what patients experience. Available at [HCAHPS V15.0 Appendix A - Mail Survey Materials \(English\) \(hcahponline.org\)](#) Share the findings at a staff meeting.

Chapter Thirteen Promoting Staff Engagement

1. What current factors in your work environment either promote or discourage staff engagement?
2. How involved are your staff in the governance of your unit or department – if involvement is low, how could you improve it?
3. How would you manage a situation where you disagreed with a decision made by a shared governance committee?
4. When staff tell you that they are here to “work my 12 hours and leave” – how do you respond? Is involvement in unit governance a value on your unit?
5. Based on the content in this chapter, is there anything you will change in how you manage resignations on your unit?

Suggested Follow-up Activities

- Connect on Linked In with any valued members of your team who have left your organization in the last 18 months – ask how they are doing.
- Review your last two staff engagement surveys – what are some actions you can take based on the findings to improve staff engagement?
- Coach at least two of your high potential new nurses to become involved in your unit practice council as a way to develop their leadership skills.

Chapter Fourteen Managing Resistance to Change

1. Think about a time when you tried to implement a change on your unit that failed. What were some of the reasons behind the failure and lessons learned for the future?
2. How have you created a sense of urgency to implement a change?
3. As you look at Everett Roger’s diffusion of innovation – what percent of your staff are on the left of the bell curve and what percent are on the right? How can you use this information to more effectively manage change?
4. How do you deal with change fatigue when you see it in your staff?
5. How do you ensure that initiatives like bedside shift report become embedded in everyday practice?

Suggested Follow-up Activities

- Review the nurses that you lead and consider Kerry Bunker’s four different ways that staff respond to change – entrenched, overwhelmed, poser or learner. Which of your staff fall into each of the four categories?
- Choose a change that you will be implementing in the next three months – use this chapter to develop a strategic plan for implementation.

Chapter Fifteen Fostering Individual and Team Resilience

1. How do you assess for burnout in your staff?
2. Which of the resilience strategies discussed in this chapter have you found to be the most effective for your staff in promoting their resilience?
3. Which three coaching questions to promote resilience are ones that you could easily implement in your practice?
4. Which Life-Quake phase is your staff currently in?
5. What strategies have you used to help staff reframe the COVID-19 experience?

Suggested Follow-up Activities

- Download the IHI Conversation and Action Guide to Support Staff Well-Being and Joy in Work During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic. Choose a conversation starter to use with your staff from the guide. Available at <http://www.ihl.org/Topics/Joy-In-Work/Pages/default.aspx>
- Use the Circle of Influence in your toolkit (Part 5) to coach a staff member who is struggling with fear and anxiety.
- Prepare a brief survey for your staff asking them some of the after a life-quake questions posed in this chapter.

Chapter Sixteen Understanding Healthcare Reimbursement

1. What is the payer mix in your health system and in your department?
2. What are the top five admission DRGs for patients on your unit?
3. Which of the Hospital Value-Based Purchasing outcome measures has been most problematic in your specialty area?
4. What hospital acquired condition metrics do you track in your role?
5. What is the level of bad debt in your health system?

Suggested Follow-up Activities

- If Medicare decreased health system reimbursement by 10% to maintain solvency – what financial impact would that have on your unit?
- Hold a jeopardy quiz during a staff meeting to determine staff knowledge on hospital billing.
- Talk with your CFO about the impact of the Hospital Value Based Purchasing program on reimbursement for your facility – have you gained or lost resources?

Chapter Seventeen Learning Budgeting Basics

1. What is the budget cycle for your facility?
2. What types of equipment can you buy as part of your capital budget and what equipment needs to be reviewed by a committee?
3. What is the ALOS on your unit?

4. How many HPPD or HPPM do you schedule for?
5. Is your role part of the unit productive or non-productive hours?
6. How many FTE are in your core staffing plan?

Suggested Follow-up Activities

- Schedule a meeting with your CFO or designee to review the cost centers in your budget and their recommendations about budget management.
- In the reviewing the list of key expectations of nurse leaders in budgeting – what are you expected to do and what activities are not currently in your role description?
- Choose a few frequently used but costly supplies on your unit - hold a contest on your unit where staff guess the cost with the winner being the person who comes closest to the real cost.

Chapter Eighteen Managing Staffing Resources

1. What are examples of work rules in your organization that impact staffing and scheduling?
2. What is the major reason for staffing variances on your unit/department?
3. How does SL or FMLA usage impact staffing in your area?
4. What is your unit turnover and replacement costs?
5. Have you considered changing your nursing care delivery system – if yes, what changes would you like to make?

Suggested Follow-up Activities

- Hold a meeting with your charge nurses and review the hourly differential budget costs of using part-time, per diem, overtime, agency and travel staff. Discuss the budget implications of their staffing decisions.
- Review two months of unit variance reports – what trends do you see? How could the variances be reduced?
- Plan to conduct a STAY interview with at least three highly valued staff. Reflect on what you learned from these interviews and how you would plan to use them in the future.

Chapter Nineteen Developing a Strategic Mindset

1. Which ONE of the six essential strategic thinking skills is a strength for you? Which ONE do you need to work on?
2. What are you doing to develop a strategic awareness of what is happening with your specialty area – locally and nationally?
3. How do you monitor trends in technology that impact your practice?
4. Are there future trends that could change your specialty practice?
5. What question would you ask on interview to determine the strategic thinking skills of the nurses that you interview?

Suggested Follow-up Activities

- Ask your unit practice council to do a SWOT analysis on recruitment and retention similar to that outlined in this chapter.
- Obtain and copy of your organization's strategic plan – what are the potential impacts on your clinical area?
- Develop a go-to question to assess future trends when you attend professional conferences such as – what new trends are you seeing in your environment and among your patient population?

Chapter Twenty **Building Your Influence and Professional Brand**

1. Review the list of behaviors that you need to adopt to be influential – which of these come naturally to you? Which do you need to work on?
2. Have you ever become involved in a political battle and later regretted it – what happened and why did you get involved?
3. How could the SCARF model be helpful to you in influencing others?
4. Review the 10 questions to ask yourself to become a person of impact – what are areas that you do well? What do you need to improve?
5. Have you observed leaders who have left organizations and damaged their brand when exiting – what happened?

Suggested Follow-up Activities

- Do the branding exercise that is in your leadership toolkit – Part 5.
- Check with three close colleagues and ask them what people say about you when you are not in the room.
- List at least three ways that you can build social capital to develop influence in your organization.

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Rose Sherman is the Editor of *Nurse Leader*, the American Organization of Nurse Executives' official journal. She writes a popular leadership blog www.emergingnleader.com that is read by thousands of nurse leaders each week. Rose is a Fellow in the American Academy of Nursing and an alumnus of the Robert Wood Johnson Executive Nurse Fellowship program. She is a Gallup certified strengths coach and author of the bestselling book, *The Nurse Leader Coach: Become the Boss No One Wants to Leave*. In 2020, Rose received the Pioneering Spirit Award by the American Association of Critical Care nurses for her innovative work in developing nurse leaders. Contact Rose at roseosherman@outlook.com