

Contribution from the system

Introducing Revd Jez Brown, Lead Chaplain, Devon Partnership NHS Trust



Foreword from Erk (pronouns: he/him/his), South West Leadership Academy's Inclusion Coordinator

I am delighted to share with you a reflection written by Revd Jez Brown, who is the Lead Chaplain in Devon Partnership NHS Trust. Religion and belief are a protected characteristic under the 2010 Equality Act.

Hence, we in the NHS have a duty to advance equality of opportunity between people who have religious beliefs and those who do not. To increase our appreciation for diversity of religion, faith and belief, I believe we should have more conversations with colleagues like Revd Brown, whose duty is to provide religious, spiritual and wellbeing support to NHS staff and patients.

Jez started his role as Lead Chaplain in Devon Partnership Trust roughly a year ago, and was tasked with creating a Chaplaincy department from scratch. He wrote the trust's first Spiritual Care Policy and also adapted a Multi-Faith Book which increases awareness on the customs of different faith groups. Over the coming months, we look forward to highlighting more projects taking place in the religion and belief space. I extend my heart-felt gratitude to Revd. Brown for sharing his reflections below on what it means to be a leader.

Leading from the front: what's it all about?

It is tough managing other people, individually or in teams. Don't you agree? Even getting people to concentrate on what you are saying can be a challenge! Back in the days when I was an accountant, I remember trying to get new employees to concentrate on understanding the difference between debits and credits (which is crucial!), whilst at the same time explaining to them just how extraordinarily exciting accountancy can be. It was hard work!

Then, later, having become an ordained Baptist Minister, I served as a Baptist Regional Minister (a bit like an Anglican Bishop). I had no direct authority over the 100 Baptist churches and ministers in the South West – except what they chose to invest in me. This had a different leadership feel to it in comparison with my time as an accountant. But why?

And in joining the NHS 13 months ago as a Lead Chaplain, I have come to see different variations again, around styles of leadership and management. And what about you in your setting? Do you see yourself as a leader or a manager? What tools have you at your disposal to undertake such a task? A stick, a carrot? An encouraging word? Humour, a nice smile? A stare, a stern voice, a look...? Or worse?!

I want to suggest to you, that in order to become a great manager, you first have to become a great leader: somebody who others look up to. This doesn't happen overnight by being appointed to a position within an organisation or by the inappropriate wielding of power or authority. Rather, the starting point is becoming known as a person who can be trusted, who is well regarded, and by becoming a person who is willing 'to get their hands dirty' and to lead by example.



Revd Jez Brown
(pronouns: he/him/his)

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In my experience, one of the keys to becoming a great leader is being prepared to work hard at attempting to walk in the shoes of the 'other person'. Because until we understand that individual, or team, or the disengaged 'herd of cats' before us, and the way that they are walking, and the reason, and the direction in which they are heading, we can never hope to effectively manage and care for those for whom we have some responsibility.

Now, put that way, everything changes. Management then becomes a quality outworking of Leadership. Jo Miller (a globally renowned authority on women's leadership) puts it this way:

- Managers have people who work for them – whilst leaders have a sea of talent ready to follow in their footsteps.
- Managers rely on positional authority, whereas leaders exercise interpersonal influence.
- Managers like to control, while leaders inspire trust.
- Managers focus on delivery, while leaders focus on developing and empowering others.
- Managers dole out tasks, while leaders share a vision that's motivating and meaningful.

Can I encourage you to pause for a moment and reflect on your leadership style to date? What changes could you make in order to become a great leader? How might your management then be viewed by others?

Jez Brown is Lead Chaplain of the Devon Partnership Trust. This article is based upon a 'Pause for Thought' first written and delivered by Jez to a team of NHS managers, at the outbreak of Covid 19.