Beginning at the Beginning- Who are we?
The Power of Symbols to Affirm Identity

• Communicate complex principles in elegant and simple terms
• Make abstract concepts real
• Unify teams around common themes
• Create a common template from which to discuss issues
• Provides a point of departure for further learning
• Provide emotional strength to see a difficult task through

• Our symbol will be the Sanguis Anima
Sanguis Anima

- Latin for “Lifeblood of the Soul”
  - The blood that nourishes the inner self that animates our beings
- Anima are the organizational principles that animate our decisions and our behavior
- Sanguis is the nourishment and sharing of those principles
- It makes us more than an organization, it makes us an organism, with life and breath and intellect and emotion
- Because we are one organism, we will share one process, and avoid carve-outs and one-offs
- Blood touches very cell, and provides the strength to move
  - It is the fuel for change
- Blood prevents internal hemorrhage
  - Holds the organism together, prevents loss
- Blood fights external invasion
  - Prevents infection with selfish values
Like blood, which is shared by every cell, principles must be shared to be functional

• Shared principles means that when we use the words, they mean the same thing
• When we say “Equity” or “Integrity” every one of us knows what it means
• But sharing the same meaning is not enough- we have to agree to incorporate them, to live by them, to let that blood animate us
  • We have to agree to change our position if it conflicts with a shared principle
• These principles then become the foundation of our relationship with each other
• Sanguis Anima- having the same blood flowing through each of our souls- makes us more than an organization, it makes us an organism, with life and breath and intellect and emotion
• Because we are one organism, we will share one process, and avoid carve-outs and one-offs
Sanguis Anima as the foundation for discourse

• This will be our agreement for discourse, for decision-making and for behavior
• By agreeing to the meaning of these principles we agree to share, we now have a vocabulary by which we can rationally discuss difficult and emotional issues without fear
• We cannot hold others accountable to these principles if we ourselves do not exemplify them
• Appealing to a shared principle is the best and only lasting mechanism for changing someone’s mind in a discussion
• If you agree to our shared organizational principles, sign the magna carta
The first organizational principle
- Humility
What does Humility mean?

- You give up the right to be offended
- You give up the right to have the last word
- You give up the right to your position
- You give up the right to keep score
- You give up the right to rationalize your behavior
- You give up the right to measure the future by your past
- You give up the right to assume you are essential
- You give up the right to take credit for your team’s achievements

Everything I needed to know about leadership I learned in marriage

These are all essential to leadership!
What does Humility not mean?

• Humility is **not** sloth
  • It is **NOT** an excuse for not doing your homework on an issue

• Humility is **not** stupidity
  • It is **NOT** an excuse for making poorly conceived decisions

• Humility does **not** mean assuming you are always wrong
  • Virtue is **NOT** the absence of all pride
  • You have to be able to say, “I did that right” and “I did that wrong”
  • It allows you to define productive versus unproductive decisions, and learn from them

• Humility is **not** meekness
  • Humility is **NOT** letting circumstances dictate your decisions
  • Humility is **NOT** being passive and failing to act in a blossoming crisis
  • Humility is proactively preventing small problems from becoming large crisis

• Meekness leads to an inability to confront important issues
  • Like struggling to address unprofessionalism

• In team dynamics, meekness allows one member’s certainty to rule over truth
  • You back down even when the evidence favors your position
What does True Humility look like?

- The ability to laugh at yourself
- Accepting blame
- Deflecting credit
- Gift-giving
- Gratefulness
- Active listening - don’t interrupt, ask a follow-up question that gains more information
Courage
Courage is NOT absence of fear

• It is the willingness to face emotional, financial, or intellectual pain in order to keep “Sanguis Anima” despite being afraid
• Without courage, one cannot keep hold of any of the other principles in the face of stress
• Courage means being strong enough to admit your own wrong
• Readily admit mistakes, and you report near misses as well
• It is tempting to not report near misses, since the end result was satisfactory, and reporting them makes us look worse
• Without fear there is no courage
• The opposite of courage is despair, giving up and retreat
Aristotelean Courage

• “Courage is the first virtue of a leader, because it makes all the other values possible”

• Without courage – tend to give any principle up as soon as it costs us

• “He is courageous who endures and fears the right thing, for the right motive, in the right way and at the right times,” Aristotle said

• Aristotle also referred to vices of “recklessness and cowardice”

• Aristotle went on to define courage as somewhere in the middle, but more towards recklessness than cowardice

• Some situations require more recklessness, and others more caution

• Some of the most courageous acts require caution (be thought a coward) in order to protect the team, project or patient
“We inhabit a universe characterized by diversity”  Desmond Tutu

Diversity and Equity
What is Diversity and Equity?

- Others that are different than us are valued just as much as we value ourselves
- Our team is a safe and welcoming place for all cultures, gender identities, disabilities, religions/beliefs, races, sexual orientations, veterans, etc.
- We embrace and value different viewpoints, backgrounds, and life experiences
- Meritocracy of ideas rather than positional or historical weight
- It means becoming comfortable with being uncomfortable, and not trying to resolve differences, but celebrate them
Accepting we live in a diverse world...

• Means that we accept truth
• Means that we can stretch beyond what we ourselves know
• Means that we can be more creative because we have a larger toolbox from which to work

• The alternative is that we lie to ourselves about reality
• We create a small error in our reasoning that will become our internal amplification of fault
• We cannot make any true progress if we build our internal reasoning processes on an untruth
Why Diversity and Inclusion?

• For diversity to generate the innovation needed to address the massive problems in health care, it must come from the inside out and not the outside in

• It must start with our internal acceptance that some differences may never be reconciled, and that we may be continuously uncomfortable

• Only when we accept such continuous differences can we start to look at our problems from new angles
Trust
Trust builds teams

• For a team to exist, each member must believe that the team has their individual interests at heart, and that they will prosper more in the team than outside it

• Trust is earned by a leader’s visible and invisible selflessness, when they demonstrate that they care more about the team than their own careers
  • Discovery of unselfishness of the leader by a team member is much more valuable to building trust than stating it is a principle

• Trust begets loyalty and duty in the team

• Trust is the foundation of communication, because it means that words matter, and we share the same definitions of those words

• Trust is earned by integrity - making and keeping commitments over time
Trust requires more than being unselfish

• An essential part of building trust is demonstrating selflessness and keeping your word consistently over time
• Most leaders stop there!
• However an essential but forgotten part of trust is **competence**
• The team must trust that you can make decisions that benefit the team better than they can
• This is complicated when they might be much smarter than you
• How do you get the team to go where they need to go when they have 20 reasons why they should do something else?
THE THREE PILLARS OF OUR PYRAMID ARE COMMUNICATION, INTEGRITY, AND TEAMWORK.

QUESTION: SINCE WHEN DO PYRAMIDS HAVE PILLARS?

ANSWER: SHUT UP.

PROBLEM: ALL OF MY TEAM MEMBERS ARE IDIOTS.

IF I COMMUNICATE MY HONEST OPINION OF THEIR IDEAS, I WON'T BE A TEAM PLAYER.

BUT IF I PRETEND TO AGREE WITH THEIR BAD IDEAS, I WON'T HAVE INTEGRITY.

SO INSTEAD OF BEING A PYRAMID, CAN I BE A TWO-LEGGED STOOL LIKE YOU?

WOW! THAT WAS MUCH BETTER THAN MY PILLAR QUESTION. AREN'T I ON YOUR TEAM?

“I love our values- it’s the people I can’t stand!”
Authority and Responsibility
Marry authority and responsibility

- The largest barrier to productivity is the failure to delegate appropriate authority with responsibility.
- This is the most important cause of burn out (more later).
- The most important single biomarker of burn-out is feeling helpless.
- Learned helplessness comes from knowing a task is crucial, yet one feels unable to perform it.
- Learned helplessness - Seligman found that dogs unable to avoid an electric shock stop trying to get away (long before IACUCs).
- Authority without responsibility is tyranny.
  - Leads to loss of accountability.
- Responsibility without authority is slavery.
  - Leads to learned helplessness and burnout.
Unlearning learned helplessness

• Slice the task up in smaller pieces to provide an early success that can be recognized
  • Teaches that I can do something that succeeds
  • Early successes need to be publicly attributed to the person
• Don’t rescue by reassigning the task or person, rather provide explicit instruction to succeed
  • Define a more efficient method for the task
• Provide resources when needed, but not to the point where the person becomes superfluous
• Emphasize their role in the team - makes them feel less alone
• Recognize and give value to the struggle as an end in itself
Integrity
**Integrity is...**

“In looking for people to hire, look for three qualities: integrity, intelligence, and energy. And if they don’t have the first one, the other two will kill you.” Warren Buffet

- Doing the right thing even when it is costly, attacked, or ignored
- Keeping your word, even when it was in the hallway
- When external actions match an internal moral compass
  - Your True North is more than the professional success of your Team, it is their personal growth towards a moral purpose
- More than being honest- you can be honest and be mean at the same time, but why be mean?
- More than being transparent - you can be transparent about doing something selfish

*Integrity at its core means not lying to yourself about your motives*
Success makes self-assessment harder

- Success makes us think we are better than we really are
- It blinds us to our weaknesses, and makes us take risks that we would not have usually taken
- *We are all prisoners of our own desire for self-respect, and it prevents integrity by seducing us to lie to ourselves*

- “People become arrogant, regarding success virtually as an entitlement, and they lose sight of the true underlying factors that created success in the first place,” Jim Collins
Preventing self-deception

• Learn to laugh at yourself
• List all the reasons why you are grateful for your job
  • Gratitude prevents self-deception
• Use external reviewers of your organization philosophy and your organizational process
  • Find a buddy and meet monthly
• Use Integrative self-reflection
Empathy...
Empathy- Seeing yourself in the eyes of another

- Empathy means that you hurt when your neighbor hurts and rejoice when they rejoice.
- This requires respect and unselfishness - you must hold your neighbor as valuable as yourself.
- Empathy must be communicated without being superficial - this involves listening more than speaking.
- Without empathy, without giving your team equal worth to yourself, you will refuse to be accountable for your actions.
- You will justify any harm you caused, because you will think that no one is as valuable as you are. You begin to believe that you are the reason the team exists.
- You will judge others by their actions and not their intentions. You measure your virtue by what you meant to do, and you judge the virtue of others by their actions.
Empathy creates equal psychological accounting between us and others

• This disconnect between how we judge ourselves and how we judge others can lead to mutual mistrust
• This makes everyone prone to overestimate his own virtue and underestimate the virtue of everyone else, especially in a crisis
• We will hold principles only when it is to our advantage and discard them in times of crisis, but we will insist that everyone else keep them no matter what
• By giving ourselves credit for feeling bad when we compromise, we create different psychological accounting between us and others
Transparency
Transparency prevents disaster

OLD JOHANNSEN HAS KEPT HIS JOB ALL OF THESE YEARS BECAUSE NO ONE ELSE HAS HIS CRITICAL KNOWLEDGE.

PSSPSS PSS PSS PSSS

THERE’S THE WORST-CASE SCENARIO RIGHT THERE.
Transparency means...

• Providing all data relevant to a decision to anyone the decision affects
• Asking input from everyone a decision affects before the decision is made
• “Nothing about you without you,” Kenyatta Lee
• It can be embarrassing, scary, and sometimes costly
• It builds trust, while secrecy creates more mistrust
• Secrecy isolates you, and decreases your support in a crisis
• Truth disarms any attacks against you and protects you from future recriminations. Sunshine is the best disinfectant
• Lying is always more costly and harder to keep up than the truth
• You have to keep the fake story current with changing circumstances
• Lying degrades the other person, because you assume what facts are best for the other person
Transparency protects you from your own stupidity

• When you provide the rationale for a decision, you allow others to check your reasoning process and point out errors
• Having others evaluate your data can prevent mistakes caused by your subconscious biases
• Transparency enhances team learning from mistakes and disarms fault-finding
• Admitting your own error frees your team’s creativity because they will not be afraid of making a mistake - candor is contagious!
• Transparency of data means remove the right to be offended
Revolutionary Transparency

• Ask for input in framing the question BEFORE data is even gathered
• Then frame the question to gather data such that it takes into account that input
• How you frame the question alters the response and changes what data you gather - termed Framing Bias
• Doctors were asked to choose between treatments that had an 80% chance of cure or a 20% chance of death

They overwhelming chose the 80% cure, even though the outcomes were equal, and the distribution should have been random.
Accountability
Accountability...

• Takes ownership of your words and deeds
  • No one made you swear at the nurse, those words came from your own mouth, not someone else’s

• Is essential for Integrity - you do what you promised to do because you own your words

• Lends weight to your words
  • If you want to be believed in any discussion, if you want your opinion to be counted, be scrupulous about making sure you stand behind every word

• Means you keep your spoken as well as written, and unspoken as well as spoken promises - call schedules, hallway conversations, proformas, offer letters, strategic plans are all promises

• Take ownership of any problem seen, even if it is not your responsibility

• Means you own the problem until it is solved
  • Every Ritz employee is told to ask each guest they encounter if there is anything the guest needs, and then to stop what they are doing and either fulfill the need themselves or find someone who can
Entitlement is the opposite of Accountability

- Entitlement comes when you think you earned your job because of past accomplishments or intrinsic skills, not for current productivity
- Entitlement means that someone else is always to blame for failure and not yourself
- You start emphasizing fault-finding over creative problem solving
- The message becomes, “I am not to blame, but I sure as hell will find out who is!”
- This can lead the team to finger-pointing, and improving the process that led to failure takes a back seat to maintaining power
- Promotions go to anyone who is adept at escaping blame, instead of to someone who accepts responsibility for failure and innovates a plan to improve
- Entitlement is a temptation in academic medicine
Accountability is essential for problem solving

- The 5 steps in problem-solving:
  1. Acknowledge reality - Entitlement denies any problem exists, accountability acknowledges and owns the problem
  2. Accept accountability - This defines who should be on the problem-solving team
  3. Obtain diverse input - Accountable leaders do not fear diverse ideas or what data will show; They care less about looking bad than about solving the problem
  4. Promote creative solutions - The accountable leader is willing to risk their reputation for a significant advance
  5. Implement a solution - Talk is cheap, the accountable leader makes sure to follow through not just on implementation but on assessment of success
Innovation
Innovation starts with caring...

I have a great idea for a start-up company.

All I need is a seed investor and an engineer to do all the work.

I believe the economic term for what you have is “nothing.”

Outcomes matter...!
Innovation requires all the other principles...

• Humility to accept that the current direction is wrong
• Courage to implement a costly decision
• Feeling responsible for your work (the motivation to improve)
• Implement an equitable meritocracy of ideas instead of position or pedigree
• Holding the authority to change work flow (but being accountable and owning the outcomes of any of changes)
• Being open to diverse ideas from ANY source
• Transparently accepting input from everyone that a work flow change affects before any decision is made
“There were no more great writers in Elizabethan England than today, they were just wasted less,” TS Elliot

Innovation requires equity in order to listen to ideas from every quarter, and weight them equally. It requires diversity to have every quarter present to receive ideas from. It requires humility to listen to ideas from someone different and with less status than you. It requires courage to implement those ideas when they cost you status or resources.
Innovation is hard because it must start inside us

• The social and political environment is constantly changing
• The team is constantly changing
• Technology is constantly changing
• The one thing that stays constant is...us!
• Our personality characteristics rarely change - our past behavior and past decisions are by far the best predictor of our future behavior and decisions
  • The least adaptable thing in the entire UT Health is my personality!
• By far the most difficult innovation is inside our own character
• Yet this is the most important place for innovation, because we all know we are flawed, and that we have all made mistakes that harmed someone
What you think you say may not be what they hear!

Discourse using or abusing the Sanguis Anima
The Sanguis Anima defines how we communicate

- Speak to others like you are talking to your mother
- Always ask “How can I help you” to start any conversation
- Smile, never roll your eyes, never be demeaning
- Ask questions, and do not make totalizing statements
  - Not, “You always do that!”
  - Rather, “Can you think of a reason why we should not do it this way?”
- Never raise your voice, never swear, never grab someone’s arm to make a point
- Respond to every email or text question
  - Yes, No, or I don’t know and I will get back to you
- Do not gossip or insult, because we cannot ever know the whole story
- Do not tell small untruths to make yourself look better
- Only make promises you will keep, and keep every promise
The only discussion that will truly change someone’s mind uses the Sanguis Anima

• To change someone’s mind we must first change their heart
• Confirmation Bias studies show that otherwise they will discount any data you share
• The only way to change their heart is to appeal to a principle they hold more important than the position they hold
• The Sanguis Anima provides the language by which we can communicate real change

• Before we can speak about strategic goals, tactics to reach these goals, and metrics, we need to learn a common language!
The most important immediate tasks -

1. LCME
2. Creating a seamless Epic between UHS and UTH
3. Create more UHS in-patient capacity
4. Fill Neurosurgery and Epidemiology/Biostats Chairs, and GME Vice Dean
5. Start recruitment for OBGYN and Pediatric Chairs
6. Start the Accountable Care Organization for UTH
7. Build primary care teamlets around the city – whoever controls primary care controls referrals
8. Rebuild early phase clinical trials here
9. Rebuild NIH funding, and renovate older labs
Sanguis Anima
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