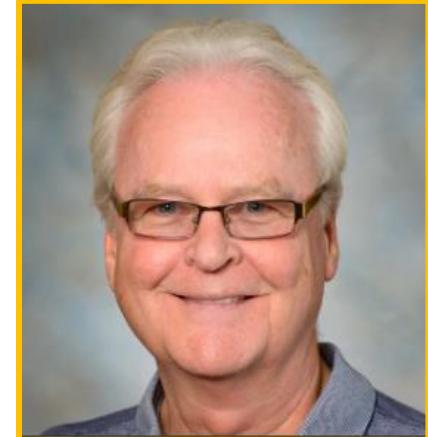


Historical Resources Center: Heritage Services

Walter Baile, MD, tells a story Leading Teams

Psychiatrist Walter Baile was the founding Director of the Interpersonal Communication and Relationship Enhancement (I*CARE) program in the Department of Faculty and Academic Development. In an interview conducted in 2016, he explains how important it is for physicians to take opportunities to praise team members.



Motivating Teams

People haven't been trained to think 'team'.... So they asked me to get involved and I followed some of the doctors around and ... I noticed in the morning that these doctors got together with their team. On the team was a midlevel practitioner. One or two midlevel practitioners. A pharmacist. A floor nurse. And I thought, my God, this is an opportunity to solicit these people's expertise and also give them praise for their work. That's what you got to be thinking of. How do you get your people to work? A lot of the midlevel practitioners were doing some of the dirty work of telling patients the really bad news. You've got to give people credit for that. You've got to encourage them. You got to say, "How's that going?"

Physicians are team leaders in many, many settings. Other people look up to them. And they have a lot of power. I said that when we went on rounds today I saw a clinician do the absolutely perfect visit.... I said, "You know, I saw you with your team today. And I think there were some opportunities to involve them in the discussion, get their opinions, and when appropriate tell them what a good job they're doing." I said, "I think that'll go a long way to getting people behind you."

People will work hard for someone who they feel appreciates their work. I don't know if you've had unappreciative bosses ever. But it's a killer. That's why I left one department. I had someone who never ever said, "You're doing a great job. What do you need from me?" In academic medicine is we put people in leadership positions who haven't got a clue about how to lead. They're there because they have CV and grants. And then they mess things up. And then we pay for it with disgruntled faculty and someone we have to remove from their position because they're not a good leader. It's a crazy crazy system.

About This Content

This interview clip was taken from an in-depth interview conducted for the Making Cancer History Voices Oral History Project. This ongoing project currently contains almost 500 interview hours with MD Anderson institution builders.

The transcript has been edited from the original.

The content is available for public use.

Interview link: <https://mdanderson.libguides.com/BaileW>

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Interview Subject's name, Date of Session, Historical Resources Center, Research Medical Library, The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center.

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