



great service begins with a look inside

by Joan Fox

Talk is cheap. We've all heard that line. Our experiences as we grow into adulthood make us skeptics in some ways. We hear people espouse their beliefs and find out later they were not living them. "Do as I say and not as I do," becomes what we are accustomed to or at least expect in some fashion.

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Working with many organizations over the years, I've found that in some ways this skepticism has found its way to how employees view management as well as the leadership of the organiza-

tion. They are looking for and finding cracks in the armor, incongruities with what management says and what management does. Some use this as a reason (it's really an excuse) for why they will not "buy into" initiatives for organizational improvement or as in our case, customer service improvement.

But I don't buy it. You can always find a perfectly good excuse to not do something you don't want to do. It is easy to blame—easy to say something won't work—easy to say you'll start giving better patient service when your manager starts treating you better or when the provider

stops raising his voice at you—easy to point out someone else's faults.

I'm not condoning disrespectful behaviors of co-workers. But we must get to a place where we clearly understand that we are each in charge of our own attitude and behaviors. Others around us may have poor opinions about their job, their manager, the organization, the patients and their co-workers. This does not dictate that we must follow.

Heroes are people who show great strength of character in spite of challenging circumstances. We admire them and follow them. The prevailing myth about heroes is that they are rare. I don't believe that to be true. Your co-workers who have decided to be kind, pleasant and helpful in spite of difficult circumstances are everyday heroes. You pass heroes in your hallways every day. You say "hi" to them and go to lunch with them. They are the ones who are always respectful to co-workers and patients, no matter what.

Yes, the workplace would be a wonderful place to spend thirty years of our lives if everyone was positive and uplifting. If that does not describe your current surroundings, it can still be a wonderful place to spend thirty years. But it's up to you. It really is.

