How To Be A Positive Leader Through Building High Quality Connections

Jane E. Dutton

Robert L. Kahn Distinguished University Professor of Business Administration and Psychology

October 2, 2014

CENTER FOR POSITIVE ORGANIZATIONS
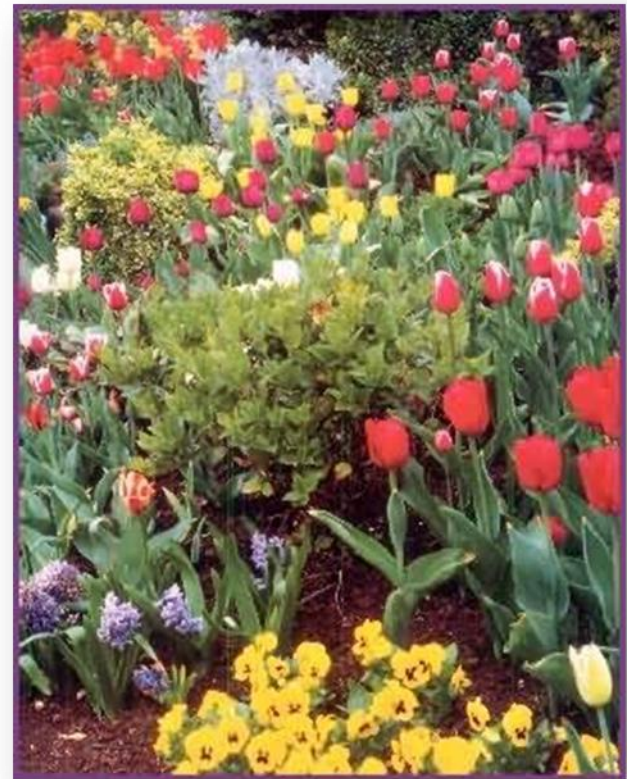
MICHIGAN ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

I Love Winners

Co-founder of Center for Positive Organizations

- We study how leaders create conditions for sustained winning in work organizations

- "Winning in work organizations" means people and the organization are flourishing

What Do I Mean by Flourishing?

Markers of Flourishing

- Growing/Thriving
- Learning
- Creating/Innovating
- Engaged/Committed
- Generous/productive
- Caring/compassionate
- Healthy

2 Core Claims

- More **high quality connections** between people during the day fosters individual, team and collective flourishing

- Positive leaders create more high quality connections for themselves and others

Goals for the Talk

- **Define** and elaborate what HQCs are

- **Convince** why they matter

- **Identify** high impact actions for leaders

Continuum of Connections with Other People

Positively Deviant Interactions

-
Low Quality
Connection

0
Neutral
Connections

+
High Quality
Connections
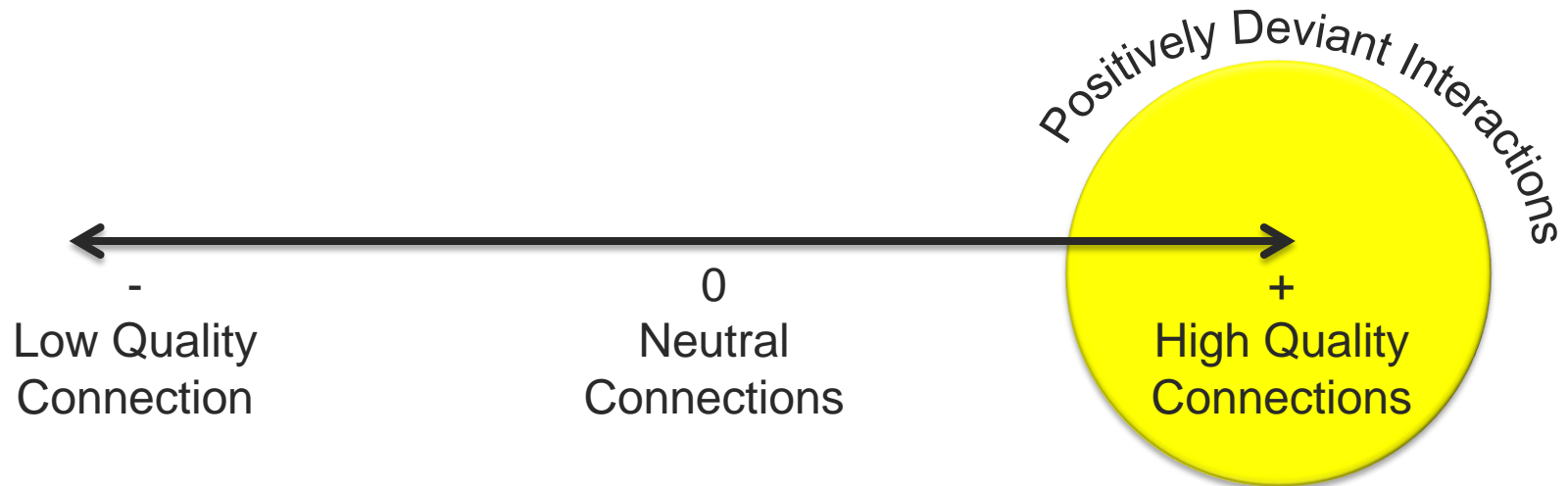
Think over the last 48 hours

Turn to you neighbor

Share a story of a high quality connection (HQC)

What do the HQCs have in common?

So What Do I Mean by a High Quality Connection (HQC)?

HQC= short term interactions in which both people experience

+++ Vitality

+++ Positive regard

+++ Mutuality

Core Assertion

High quality connections **BUILD** strength and capacity in individuals, teams and organizations

3 Compelling Facts about HQCs

- HQCs increase your capacity to think and create (e.g., Carmeli, Dutton & Hardin, 2015)

- HQCs increase physiological health (e.g., Heaphy & Dutton, 2008)

- HQCs increase your capacity to adapt and be resilient (Stephens, Carmeli Heaphy, Spreitzer & Dutton, 2013)
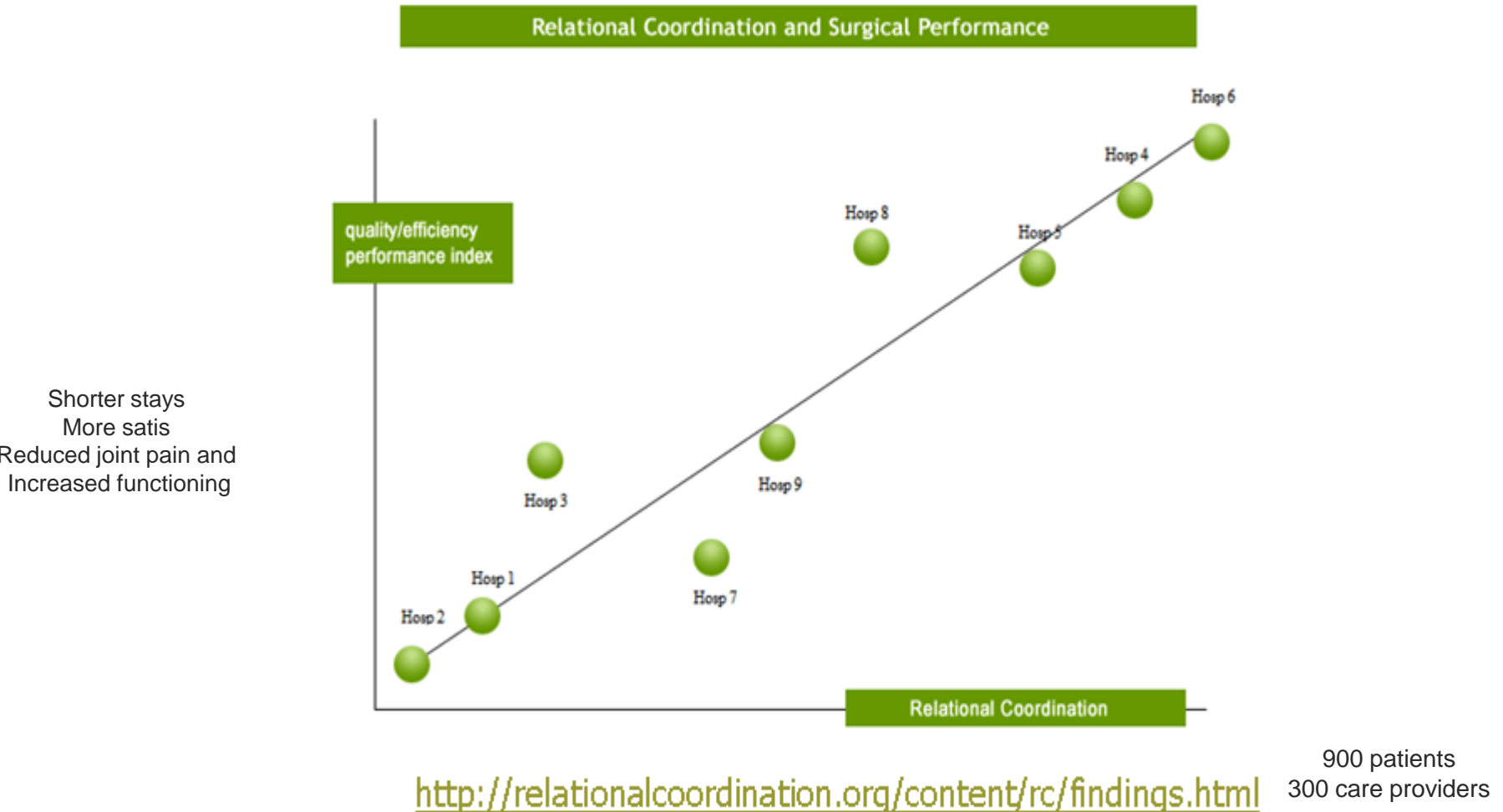
Explanation of HOW HQCs Strengthen

- **Greater emotional carrying capacity (carries more + and – emotions)**
- **Greater tensility (capacity to bend)**
- **Greater openness**

Example at the Unit Level

Relational Coordination and Surgical Performance

quality/efficiency performance index

Hosp 6

Hosp 4

Hosp 8

Hosp 5

Hosp 3

Hosp 9

Hosp 1

Hosp 7

Hosp 2

Relational Coordination

Shorter stays
More satis
Reduced joint pain and
Increased functioning

900 patients
300 care providers

http://relationalcoordination.org/content/rc/findings.html

IF SO POWERFUL, HOW DO WE BUILD HQCS?

HQC-building Challenge!

One minute challenge!

Pair up with a person you do not know.

Decide who will lead. When I say GO

Build a high-quality connection to them.

Take turns.

Reflection: What worked?
(What didn't work?)

4 Pathways to Building HQCs

Respectful Engagement
- Engaging the other in a way that sends a message of value and worth

Playing
- Participating in a game with another where goal is to have fun

HQCs

Task Enabling
- Helping/facilitating another person's successful performance

Trusting
- Conveying to other person that we believe they will meet our expectations and are dependable

As an Individual Leader: HQC Self-Assessment

How often and how well do I send others messages of their value and worth?

- Presence?
- Communicate affirmation?
- Listen?
- Responsive?

Am I an HQC Leader?

How often and how well do I play with others?

- Available for play?
- Engage in real play?

How often and how well do I help others succeed?

- Encourage?
- Provide resources?
- Coach?

How often and how well do I trust others?

- See as reliable, consistent, competent?
- Vulnerable?

HOW TO LEADERS INSTITUTIONALIZE CONDITIONS FOR HQCS?

Increase Task Enabling: IDEO

- Belief that helping has to be inspired not forced (encouraging both help-seeking and help-giving)

- In survey – 89% of employees identified as effective helpers

- **Leadership conviction** (Tom Brown, CEO " The more complex the problem, more help you need")

- **Collective belief** that all projects and people require help

- **Collective value**: Make others successful

- **Brainstorming processes**, design reviews, informal lunches

- **Explicit helping roles** : project teams have senior designers assigned as helpers

- **Slack** in schedules for serendipitous help

Increase Respectful Engagement and Build Trusting: Plante Moran

- **Values and Beliefs**:
  - Golden Rule
  - "Kindness is candor" (Frank Moran)

- **Practices**
  - Hire based on integrity, ability to be trusted, and will always have others' best interests in mind
  - Buddy system from day 1
  - Flexible schedules for all
  - Hire for interpersonal ability and train around "No jerks workplace"

70% of employees cite culture as the reason they chose and stay at Plante Moran

WE CARE

JERKS

From Succession Transition by Bill Hermann and Gordon Kramer

Foster Play: Jackson Community Hospital's Physician's Billing Department

- Physical space/adornment

- Elaborate squirt-gun fights

- Lucy the goose

- Play as enabling "life in connection"

SO WHAT IS YOUR ORGANIZATION'S HQC CAPABILITY?

HQC Scorecard

	Degree of presence in your organization?	How central to strategic success?
Selection practices involve employees and select on relational skills		
Socialization practices that provide multiple, substantive connecting opportunities		
Rewarding based on collective performance		
Rewarding for enabling others		
Frequent formal and informal recognition of contributions		
Formal facilitation of helping and informal norms for helping		
Shared values: 　Teams and teamwork 　Respect and dignity 　Employee development 　Whole person		

Leaving this session……….

■ What is one action you could take to foster more high quality connections in your work organization?
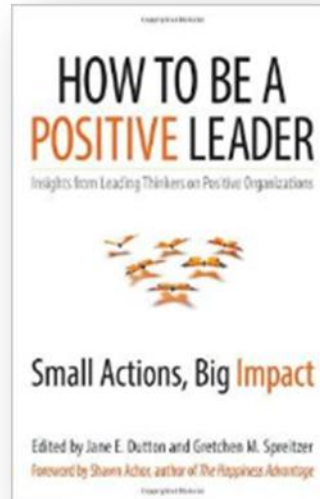
_____

_____

_____

_____

Take-aways

- HQCs are key resources for positive leadership: they strengthen individuals, dyads, teams and whole organizations!

- Organizational and leadership practices and culture enable/disable HQCs

- Questions to ask yourself:

    o Self-competence in building HQCs?
    o Organizational-competence in building HQCs?

Need more information?

References

- Baker , W. and J. Dutton 2007 Positive Social Capital. In J. Dutton and B. Ragins Exploring Positive Relationships at Work: Building a Theoretical and Research Foundation. Lawrence Erlbaum, Inc.,

- Carmeli, A. Brueller and J. Dutton.2009 Linking High-Quality Interpersonal Relationships, Psychological Safety and Learning Behaviors in the Workplace, Systems Research and Behavioral Science, Vol. 26, 81-98,

- Cross, R. and A. Parker 2004 The Hidden Power of Social Networks: Understanding How Work Really Gets Done in Organizations. Harvard Business School Press.

- Dutton, J 2003 Energize your Workplace: How to Build and Sustain High-Quality Connections at Work (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass).

- Dutton, J. and E. Heaphy 2003 "The Power of High Quality Connections" in K. Cameron, J. Dutton and R. Quinn (Eds.) Positive Organizational Scholarship (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler).

- Stephens, J.P., A. Carmeli, E. Heaphy, G. Sprietzer. And J. Dutton 2013 . "Relationship Quality and Virtuousness: Emotional carrying Capacity as a Source of Individual and Team Resilience". Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 49, 1,13-41..

- Stephens, J.P., E. Heaphy and J. Dutton 2011 "High Quality Connections". In In K.Cameron and G. Spreitzer (Eds.), Handbook of Positive Organizational Scholarship. Cambridge: Oxford University Press.

- See my website at http://webuser.bus.umich.edu/janedut/