

USE THIS INFORMATION WITH NEW OR EMERGING LEADERS
TO EXAMINE THE CORE ELEMENTS OF PRESENTATION LEADERSHIP.

Presentation Leadership Reflection Three: Nano Nagle & Everyday Leadership

Nano Nagle did not lead an international company or a high-powered board, yet her impact transcended her own lifetime leaving a leadership path for others to follow.

Indeed it is certain that Nano did not see herself as a leader. She would have had no time to ponder her own leadership style or philosophy she was focussed on what God was calling her to do.

So, what made her leadership so remarkable?

What can Nano Nagle offer for leaders in a very different and complex world?

Bernadette Flanagan pbvm presents a number of leadership principles for those in Presentation ministries. She prefaces her Presentation Leadership Framework on the evolution of leadership theory from a focus on hierarchical models and behaviour traits to a focus on authenticity, service to others and transformational impact.

Nano Nagle's leadership sits in the post hierarchical, contemplative, and transformative school where leadership is aligned closely to the inner qualities of exceptional leaders. Flanagan situates Nano's leadership in "four foundational spiritual practices: presence, compassion, wisdom and creativity."³

PRESENCE

Whatever the circumstances in which one encounters or ministers to another, presence can impact "physical, emotional and spiritual energy"⁴ enhancing self-esteem and personal agency. Nano Nagle was present to the vulnerable and dispossessed poor of Cork City. Attending to, affirming, listening to and being with the other is a profound interpersonal blessing which can change lives. Nano Nagle knew this and her presence in the slums of Cork made a difference to each person she met. This style of leadership is transformational. Like the leaven in the scriptural parable, each period of presence with another, each act of kindness, each comforting word, infuse goodness into the world.

CONSIDER PRESENCE AS AN ELEMENT OF YOUR LEADERSHIP

- Describe a time when your presence made a difference to another.
- Who is calling out for your presence at this time?
- What are the barriers to a ministry of presence in your place?
- How can you strengthen the practice of presence and the power of relationship in your Presentation ministry?

HEART-COMPASSION

Situating heart-compassion in contemporary understandings of neuroscience and the way that the human heart can impact perception, Flanagan pbvm asserts that inner experiences are critical to our ability to navigate life's ups and downs and our overall well-being.⁵ Nano Nagle's ministry to Cork's poor came from the heart and spoke directly to the hearts of those she helped. Presentation leaders are called to do the same; to lead with the heart - with kindness, love, mercy and forgiveness.

CONSIDER HEART-COMPASSION AS AN ELEMENT OF YOUR LEADERSHIP

- How is heart-compassion at the centre of your leadership practice?
- Who is calling out for your kindness?
- Describe a time when your forgiveness made a big difference to another?
- How can you strengthen the practice of heart-compassion in your Presentation ministry

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WISDOM

Flanagan pbvm establishes wisdom as a core element of Presentation leadership. For Nano Nagle, wisdom came from contemplation and the ability to discern the best way forward in her ministry. She also sought advice from others: from her trusted Uncle Joseph Nagle, her friend Teresa Mulally, from Fathers Moylan and Doran and her Franciscan adviser Father Callinan. Nano Nagle was also open to the wisdom of the streets, attentive to the light and darkness of her experiences and aware of the prevailing ideas of her time. For Nano, therefore, wisdom was communal. Current leadership theory suggests that:

... the aliveness of an organisation – its flexibility, creative potential and learning capability – resides in its informal communities of practice... (which are) self-generating social networks, referring to the common context of meaning rather than to the pattern of organization through which meaning is generated.⁶

A Presentation charism gives shared meaning which drives a ministry into new ways of relating. Consider what wisdom resides your community of Presentation practice?

CONSIDER WISDOM AS AN ELEMENT OF YOUR LEADERSHIP

- Nano was wise in her choice of companions and mentors. Who are the people you look to for advice?
- When obstacles stood in Nano's way, she found a way around them. When have you practised this leadership trait?
- What wisdom have you gained from working in community?

CREATIVITY

Hart describes creativity as the "... focusing of energy, the engagement of the circumstances of life, committing and moving forward despite odds and uncertainty."⁷ Nano Nagle's life is a study of creativity, a journey of change, challenge, loss, financial insecurity, change of direction, anxious decisions and struggle. Her leadership surmounted these challenges, forging a new path and a new approach to the poverty which surrounded her and a new religious institute in dangerous times. It was not an easy journey; there were times when Nano's energies flagged but she was always flexible and creative in her response to the difficulties she met.

CONSIDER CREATIVITY AS AN ELEMENT OF YOUR LEADERSHIP

- What challenges have you faced in your leadership journey?
- Describe a time when you showed creativity in response to times of change or uncertainty?
- How do you encourage creativity in those you lead?