

# Turbo Leadership Systems

# The **TURBO** **Charger**

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## LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP

Issue 901

## Empathy or Sympathy

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*Everyone has a right to be exceedingly good at something.*

*Larry W. Dennis, Sr. is available for private, in-company leadership development programs.*

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LEADERSHIP SYSTEMS

### Mole hills or mountains



This past December, while Donna Lee was in recovery from double by-pass open heart surgery, I was on the phone with my brother Bill and sister-in-law Judy. I was trying to tell them about the outpouring of love and support I had felt for Donna Lee as she was recovering. There had been "Coast-To-Coast" prayer and support. I broke down in tears and couldn't talk. Judy laughed, "You don't have to talk; you'll write about it."

I didn't think it would be possible to write about my overwhelming feelings and I'm still not sure it is. I realized now, people wanted to express their love and support to Donna Lee, she wasn't available, so they told to me. So, I got the blessing of this high-charged voltage of love and compassion. It was almost more than I could handle. It's like I was wired for 110 and got a high voltage 220 charge!

Zach, the nurse in Donna Lee's recovery room, works a 12-hour shift, from 11:00 AM to 11:00 PM. Donna Lee will be moved from his patient recovery wing before he returns to work tomorrow. He has a new patient every day! Can you imagine? Each day another frightened patient is placed in his hands. This is the critical period of recovery from one of the most radical surgeries the body can endure. It's routine to Zach. He must keep professional objectivity, or he could lose immediate effectiveness, and risks long-term burn out.



As I have tried to process this outpouring compassion, I've had to face the awful truth, that sometimes I can be too unilateral. It's not because I don't understand, or care about what others are feeling. It's because I look at them and know that they are bigger than their doubts, stronger than their fear, more capable than they give themselves credit. I can see the mountain they think they're facing is no larger than a mole hill. I marvel that they can't see their strengths. It's not enough for me to see they've succeeded through greater difficulties in the past and been successful.



I must know for them, this is a mole hill, and at the same time have genuine empathy.

This is the challenge for everyone called to leadership. You have others to shepherd, bring to the place where they can operate autonomously, with complete effectiveness. You must remember what it was like for you when you started out, how unsure, nervous you were. Show empathy and

understanding as you communicate your belief and trust in them. Helping them meet the high standards required for excellence.

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