The Tao of Lifestyle Growth: Part Four

By Kai Hillberry

Tao or Dao is a Chinese word signifying the way, path, route or road. Masterpiece will be oﬀering a four-part blog series on “The Tao of Lifestyle Growth,” discussing coaching and its role in senior living. The topics will include kaizen, artful listening, communication and engagement.

# Engagement

How do you deﬁne that buzz word “engagement”? We all know the textbook deﬁnition…simply the act of participating or being involved but on a deeper level, what does that really mean? How do you make engagement meaningful and have the greatest impact on the wellbeing of individuals working and living in the community?

The engagement approach I am talking about today is the type that makes people feel they are valued, appreciated, and would be missed if they were gone. This brings me to the term “mattering”, the shared need for all human beings to feel important and valuable to themselves and others. It was introduced by Rosenberg in 1981 and continues to be proven as an essential aspect of wellbeing.

A recent NCBI (National Center for Biotechnology Information) review article from their Nature Public Health Emergency Collection discusses the eﬀect mattering has on one’s physical and mental health. The article states “it is vitally important to promote positive protective factors and competencies that heighten their resilience and engagement and involvement. We agree with Rosenberg and McCullough’s contention that mattering is vital for everyone, but it may be especially vital for older people.” The perception of not mattering can lead to increased feeling of isolation and loneliness in older adults which is magniﬁed during a pandemic. It also reports that the feeling of insigniﬁcance at work causes turnover, disengagement, and mental health issues.

It is an essential time to develop a mattering approach for residents and team members alike. As you know this will require a shift in thinking and process, but the research and the beneﬁts are too strong to ignore! Creating a “doing with” instead of a “doing for” environment starts with using what you learned in the Tao of Lifestyle Growth series. Kaizen is the best method and below are steps to a create an individualized approach to a cohesive community where everyone is valued and adding value.

1. Create an engagement questionnaire to initially gather everyone’s interests, passions, and human capital (the skills, knowledge, and experience possessed by an individual viewed in terms of their value to an organization). **Sample statements for the questionnaire:**

* My interests include:
* I am passionate about:
* I would love to learn:
* A skill, talent, or knowledge I would like to share is:
* I would like to support the community’s growth by:

1. Build a "Champion Team"; a group of team members from diﬀerent departments and residents that are role models and promoters of all aspects of wellbeing. This team will create and lead a sustainable plan to meaningful engagement. Use the engagement questionnaire to see who is interested.
2. Create a training plan to ensure everyone on the champion team has the coaching skills in their toolbox - artful listening and asking powerful questions!
3. Schedule coaching conversations. Using kaizen and the engagement questionnaire as a guide, champion team members have conversations to encourage meaningful engagement and increase the perception of mattering.
4. Leaders develop a system that allocates team members to share their human capital and support beyond their daily tasks on a consistent basis.
5. Build a process to follow up on next steps and to have meaningful connection with others on a regular basis.

When a person realizes that they are a vital part of something bigger than themselves and needed in the community it has a positive impact on their vitality. Creating a foundation of mattering will support a healthy longevity for team members and residents in the community!

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# Discussion Questions:

1. How would you encourage a prospect to investigate programs or classes of interest?
2. What does “mattering” look like at your community?
3. After reading more about engagement, what ideas do you have to enhance conversations we have with prospects and residents?
4. What is your biggest takeaway from the Tao of Lifestyle Growth series?
5. What is one tip you are going to use this week to continue to grow your communication with prospects?

# Sample questions for the sales team to use with prospects:

1. What is important to you?
2. What makes that important to you?
3. What skills and talents would you like to share?
4. What is something you have wanted to learn but maybe didn’t have the time to focus on?
5. How would you like to be involved with the community to continue to make it better?
6. Our community believes in your growth and wants to support all prospects in being a part of and contributing to the community. What would that look like for you?