

Barbara L. Summers, PhD, tells a story about Leading Self

Dr. Summers served as head Chief Nursing Officer and Head of the Division of Nursing from 2003- 2015, when she retired from the institution. In an interview conducted in 2014 she talks about how she learned that she wasn't practicing a key leadership skill, listening.



Learning to Listen

I remember getting feedback from my boss, David Callendar, that he had observed in meetings when he and I would be meeting with individuals who could be particularly challenging, that my tendency was, instead of listening intently to what they were saying and trying to understand the underlying message, I was immediately formulating my response to what they were saying, and so it interfered with my ability to truly understand what was at the root of it. And once he pointed that out to me, that opportunity for me to become more self-aware, his holding that mirror up to me was invaluable, because then I really began to practice actively listening and taking that part of my mind that wants to have an immediate response and letting that rest. So I benefited from that.

About This Content

This interview clip was taken from an in-depth interview conducted for the Making Cancer History Voices Oral History Project. This ongoing project currently contains almost 400 interview hours with MD Anderson institution builders.

The transcript has been edited from the original.

The content is available for all uses.

To explore the full interview go to: <http://mdanderson.libguides.com/SummersB>

About the speaker:

Barbara L. Summers, PhD served as Chief Nursing Officer and Head of the Division of Nursing from 2003 until 2015, when she retired.

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