

Red Cross worker had accidentally left the requisition for her check inside her case file and closed it up. So just before the hearing began, the Red Cross hurriedly handed her \$27,000, which made the organization look bungling.

Healy's testimony, a lame duck's defense of an institution that had just thrown her out, was almost painful to watch. Smiling through clenched teeth, she tried to explain why the Liberty Fund was never meant solely for victims of Sept. 11. She talked about why she thought the Red Cross needed to be girding itself for future terrorist acts. But her logic did not pierce the emotion in the room.

During the hearing, the Red Cross began receiving an onslaught of angry e-mail messages. Some 1,500 arrived between 6:30 p.m. and 8 a.m. the following day. A man named Philip wrote: "I am thoroughly disgusted and disappointed over your failing the families of victims from Sept. 11. I'll never contribute another penny or drop of blood."

To McLaughlin and Decker, it was becoming clearer by the day that the Red Cross had to do something. It could not simply lament that it was being misunderstood. It could not just say: "Trust us. We're the disaster professionals." That trust was shattered.

So the Red Cross backpedaled away from controversy as fast as it could. In a stunning reversal, McLaughlin and Decker held a news conference in Washington on Nov. 14—carried live by CNN—to say that it would spend the entire Liberty Fund to care for the victims of the Sept. 11 attacks, their families and the rescue workers. "With this action, we hope to restore the faith of our donors and the trust of the American public," McLaughlin declared.

Two weeks earlier, McLaughlin had told me that Healy's concept for the fund was "just right." In fact, the Red Cross could have stuck by it, if it were not for its desire to repent. A senior official explained it to me rather crudely, insisting it was "moronic" to use the whole Liberty Fund as "an A.T.M. machine for the victims' families." Almost half of the fund was pledged by corporations, he said, and the corporations may well have agreed to redirect their money toward, say, a blood reserve. This would have allowed the Red Cross to respect the public's desire to support the victims, and only the victims, while sticking to its plan.

But the Red Cross needed to quell the furor and so chose a concrete, sentimental response rather than what might well have been a wiser policy.

It also decided—after many angry e-mail messages from American Jews—to continue to withhold its dues from the international federation and reaffirm its commitment to Israel's equivalent of the Red Cross. ("They didn't want to make Healy a martyr is what we heard," an official in Geneva said.)

Those actions took the public pressure off the American Red Cross, and as McLaughlin and Decker had hoped, the organization faded from the spotlight. What will happen inside remains to be seen. Clearly, the American Red Cross's problems transcend Healy and will outlive her unless the stresses of Sept. 11 succeed in shocking the organization through a real transformation.

McLaughlin and Decker are ambitious about reform, along the same lines that Healy was, although they hope to accomplish more by using gentler tactics. Still, Decker, who expects to serve from six months to a year as interim C.E.O., is talking tough. "People will be held accountable for performing," Decker says. "If we have to change some culture here, that's what's going to have to happen. People can vote with their feet if they don't like it."

McLaughlin, for his part, said he does not want to recruit a replacement for Healy until he restructures the governance system that keeps undermining Red Cross presidents. He cannot slim down the board unless he goes to Congress and asks it to revise the Red Cross charter, which is cumbersome. So he will seek to make the powerful executive committee more representative of the board at large—that is, to reduce its dominance by Red Cross insiders. He also wants to establish qualifications for board members so that loyalty to the Red Cross alone, while honorable, is not enough.

Inside the Red Cross, these are fighting words. And McLaughlin and Decker are not Red Cross lifers. There is no telling what kind of resistance they will encounter and how they will handle it.

Back in Ohio, Healy's moods shift as she tries to understand how she went from commanding a historic relief effort to overseeing her suburban household. When she is her usual confident self, she declares that it is common for boards and presidents to clash. But when she is blue, an uncharacteristic state for Bernadine Healy, she laments that she was all wrong for the Red Cross and that she failed at something very important. "So much potential for greatness," she says, her voice trailing off. And though she is talking about the organization, it sounds for one moment as if she is talking about herself.

Chapter 11 Review Questions

1. In your own words, can you describe the Wise concept of “public service culture”? What does the author mean by that term? What assumptions about human nature does her motivational concept rest on? Do you believe these are valid assumptions?
2. Why does Wise argue that public service motivation is found more often in government than business or elsewhere? Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?
3. Regarding the foregoing case study, “Who Brought Bernadine Healy Down?”, describe the various cross-pressures and multiple responsibilities that Healy faced. Why do these persisting cross-pressures and responsibilities make it so difficult to frame a clear, consistent motivational system in government or nonprofits?
4. Are public sector motives rooted in rational, norm-based, affective categories, as Wise’s essay theorizes? Why or why not?
5. Given the difficult realities of the contemporary working environment of public administration today, how would you develop and implement an effective “public service culture” for a government agency? Assess some of the strengths and weaknesses of this system that you envisioned, as well as the difficulties in establishing it.
6. Select any one of the prior cases in this text and examine carefully the motivations of one or more of the public officials. How do these motives compare and contrast with those discussed in Case 11—are they the same or fundamentally different? Explain why.

Key Terms

public service motives
public service culture
rational motives
norm-based motives
affective motives
normative orientation

rule-following behavior
self-interested motives
normative values
engagement
professional management

Suggestions for Further Reading

Public personnel administration is a field of enormous complexity, specialization, and rapid change, and, therefore, looking at current basic introductory texts offers a good overview: N. Joseph Cayer, *Public Personnel Administration in the U.S.*, 4th ed. (New York: St. Martin’s, 2005); Dennis Dresang, *Public Personnel Management and Public Policy*, 4th ed. (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 2001); Steven W. Hays and Richard C. Kearney, *Public Personnel Administration*, 4th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.:

Prentice Hall, 2002); Lloyd G. Nigro, *The New Public Personnel Administration*, 6th ed. (Itasca, Ill.: F. E. Peacock Publishers, Inc., 2006); Carolyn Ban, *Public Personnel Management*, 4th ed. (New York: Longman, 2005); Evan M. Berman, James Bowman, and Jonathan West, *Human Resource Management in Public Service*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2005); Donald Klinger and John Nalbandian, *Public Personnel Management*, 5th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2002); Norma Riccucci,

Public Personnel Management, 4th ed. (New York: Longman, 2006); and Dennis D. Riley, *Public Personnel Administration*, 2nd ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 2001). To supplement these introductions, students should further examine the basic framing documents of public personnel, such as the Civil Service Act of 1883, the Hatch Act, the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, as well as several others contained in Frederick C. Mosher, ed., *Basic Documents of American Public Administration: 1776–1950* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1976), and Richard J. Stillman II, ed., *Basic Documents of American Public Administration: Since 1950* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982).

For the best history of the American civil service system, see Paul Van Riper, *History of U.S. Civil Service* (New York: Harper & Row, 1958). For an insightful view of personnel practices at the local level, read Frank J. Thompson, *Personnel Policy in the City: The Politics of Jobs in Oakland* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975); and for a view of its operation at the federal level, see Frederick C. Mosher, *Democracy and the Public Service*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982); Patricia W. Ingraham, *The Foundation of Merit: Service in American Democracy* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins Press, 1995); Paul Light, *The New Public Service* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1999); or Hugh Heclo, *A Government of Strangers: Executive Politics in Washington* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1977). Articles contained in the “classics” series on personnel give readers a useful overview of the scope, diversity, and complexity of this field, especially in Frank J. Thompson, ed., *Classics of Public Personnel Policy*, 2nd ed. (Monterey, Calif.: Brooks/Cole, 1990) as well as other contemporary sets of readings in Patricia W. Ingraham and Barbara Romzek, eds., *Rethinking Public Personnel Systems* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994); and for recent international comparisons, read Jos Raadschelders, Theo Toonen, and Fritz Van der Meer, eds., *The Civil Service in the 21st Century* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007).

Excellent sources for further readings on personnel motivation are also found in chapters 6 and 7 in Hal G. Rainey, *Understanding and Managing Pub-*

lic Organizations, 4th ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009). For three recent thoughtful essays, read Gene Brewer et al., “Individual Conceptions of Public Service,” *Public Administration Review* 60 (May/June 2000); Sue Frank and Gregory Lewis, “Who Wants to Work for the Government?” *Public Administration Review* 62 (July/August 2002); Laurance O’Toole and Kenneth Meier, “Public Management, Personnel Stability, and Organizational Performance” *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* (January 2003); and the Academic-Practitioner Exchange, “What Does Merit Mean?” *Public Administration Review* 66 (July/August 2006), pp. 484–504 and in the same issue, “Motivating Employees in the New Governance Era,” by James Perry, Debra Presch and Laurie Paarlberg, pp. 505–514.

Other current writings on personnel motivation include Linda Holbeche, *Motivating People in Lean Organizations* (Woburn, Mass.: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1998); Barbara Glanz, *Handle with Care: Motivating and Retaining Employees* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002); Janet and Robert Denhardt, *Creating a Culture of Innovation* (Arlington, VA.: Pricewaterhouse Coopers Endowment for the Business of Government, 2001).

At the federal level, the Volcker Commission Report for a federal review of this topic, *Leadership for America* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1990), or for the local level, Frank J. Thompson, ed., *Revitalizing State and Local Government* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993), as well as the entire 2008 Special Issue of *Public Administration Review*, entitled “The Winter Commission Report Revisited,” (November/December 2008), provide numerous specific ideas for improving public service motivation throughout government. Norma M. Riccucci’s *Unsung Heroes* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1995) offers good examples of what motivates outstanding federal executives.

One would also do well to skim current issues of *Public Administration Review*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Public Personnel Administration*, *The Bureaucrat*, and *Public Management* for recent and fast-changing trends in the field of personnel. One should also visit the government management Web site at www.govleaders.org to sample the numerous problems.