



100% Love:

Building the culture of Wasco County to re-energize how we serve our citizens and each other

In January of 2016, most of the senior management team spent three intense days at Washington Family Ranch for a strategic leadership session. The purpose of the planning session was:

To create the time and space for county leaders and managers to re-envision how county government can serve the citizens of Wasco County. The Wasco County team is poised to work together in ways that were previously not possible, giving us the opportunity to truly rethink our vision, policies and practices in serving the broad spectrum of people who live here, and in the process reshape how they view Wasco County Government.

The retreat had three key intentions: *Create a Compelling Vision, Develop a Clear Strategy*, and the most important in terms of culture, *Commit to Thrive*.

Commit to Thrive - *Recognize that each person on the county team has unique skills to contribute to the success of our efforts. Create excitement for stepping fully into our roles and responsibilities, and build a culture where employees, vendors and constituents become partners in building a prosperous Wasco County.*

After much debate, discussion, questions, arguments, agreements, laughter, tears and yes – even hugs, the team came to consensus on the culture we'd like to consciously build at Wasco County. Many of our departments have already been doing pieces of the culture outlined on the following pages. This document is an acknowledgement of the positive efforts already happening, as well as a challenge to build culture mindfully. One that we believe will retain and attract the best and brightest talent from the county and beyond, energized by what's possible in serving the citizens today; a culture that will leave the legacy of a prosperous Wasco County tomorrow. What makes this discussion special is that this culture was born out of the ashes of controversy and disagreement.

What's the story behind 100% Love?

Following a particularly negative interaction with another entity on a project, the County Clerk and the County Administrator were reviewing the meeting and how difficult it had been. For the Clerk it was the first project where it became apparent that some citizens don't like county government, no matter how we try to help. The Administrator jokingly said, "Welcome to county government. 50% of the people love you, and 50% of the people love to hate you." To which the Clerk replied "Yes, but that's still 100% LOVE!" Then the Executive Assistant to the Commissioners chimed in and said, "Truthfully, it's more like 20% love us, 20% love to hate us, and 60% are indifferent."

The 100% Love statement really began to grow and take shape over the next couple of weeks. It started out as a tongue-in-cheek remark, but upon further reflection it began to emerge as a concept with much deeper meaning. It grew into a way of thinking about all aspects of what we do. The questions started to be asked: what could 100% Love mean to me as an individual and as a team/department? What could it mean as a County, and to our citizens? This concept began to resonate with some of the management staff as we began to talk about it and look for examples of 100% Love. What came out of this thinking was a critical question: could the concept of 100% Love be the guide for how we serve ourselves and our citizens, recognizing that the goal is to move some of the people who "love to hate us" into the "indifferent" category, and move some of the "indifferent" citizens into "love to love us" category? And more importantly, use the 100% Love concept as our guiding principle for serving people, regardless of whether they love us or hate us?

The 100% Love concept immediately started showing up in actions in the courthouse. The Assessors office created the Christmas door decoration for the Administrative team, who were too swamped to decorate their own door (despite it being a favorite activity). The Clerk's office and Assessor's office traded spaces in the courthouse so that the 14-person Assessor's team could have more room. This effort involved multiple people – Facilities, IT, help from youth offenders doing community service, the Commissioners and other managers. It is amazing how often the 100% Love concept shows up when you look for it. In essence, the concept started to get legs and show up in all aspects of the work environment and our actions. From that point on an emerging culture began to show itself and has since permeated our organization. It is reflected in our actions, our approach to doing business and to our overall being. It is this culture, based on the 100% Love concept that is most important to the organization. This culture, should you choose to participate in it, is a guiding principle for everything at Wasco County. Through everyone's commitment, dedication, and unwavering focus we can create the momentum that will carry the County forward.

What does 100% Love look like?

As an individual

100% Love at the individual level defines our actions. It asks us to provide that extra effort to make sure those who we are dealing with walk away from the interaction feeling a little bit better or a bit more satisfied with the service they received. It means taking the extra step you wouldn't normally do to ensure a positive reaction. It is in alignment with our value of doing the right thing even when nobody is watching. We recognize the efforts of our co-workers and we tell their stories. We identify and share examples of 100% Love, and we tell the Story.

As a team

100% Love means making sure that our teammates are successful. When they are struggling or overloaded we pitch in to help. When they don't understand, we are there to explain. If we are to be successful as an organization and as a team, then we must support each team's success through our own actions. We hire the right people, with the right traits and the right attitude to fit into this culture. We teach our culture as part of the welcoming/onboarding process when they start. We identify, share and celebrate examples. And we continue to tell the Story.

As an organization

100% Love as an organization ensures that we support the success of every other department. If someone is shorthanded we make time to help out. We work to cross-train through participation in cross-functional teams. We work to ensure the success of organizational initiatives, we celebrate our successes and we unflinchingly examine our failures. We seek out partnerships in the community and we promote the County (both entity and geographic area) whenever possible. We identify and share examples of 100% Love and we tell the Story.

100% Love: The Big Picture

The County values all employees, employees value each other, and we all serve citizens to the best of our abilities whether our actions are fully appreciated or not.

- Actions in addition to words
- Recognize that employee contributions *make all the difference* in the County
- Honest presentation of information
- An attitude of "It's not just about the money"
- Show appreciation of staff and respect for citizens

Building this culture is a journey. It takes time, perseverance and practice!

What are the characteristics of a 100% Love culture?

- Healthy
- Open
- Progressive vision – far thinking and ready to dream big
- Value diverse opinions
- Tremendous strengths
- Special
- Empowering
- Great team – best ever
- Open to risk
- Shared values
- Everyone has a voice and is respected
- Always growing – open to new ideas
- Excited – element of magic
- Enjoy and have fun
- Have each others backs

What additional characteristics do you believe our culture should embrace? This will be an ongoing conversation in our organization as we move forward on this journey.

How do we build a culture based on 100% Love?

Building a culture requires a commitment from each person, each team, and the County as a whole to embody the values discussed in this document. It means bringing the words on paper to life in a visible and tangible way.

Healing the trauma of the past

For the past six years, Wasco County has been through a fair share of trauma, including budget cuts, salary compensation changes, layoffs and litigation. Before we can move forward with a culture of 100% Love, there is some healing that needs to take place. And, even when the healing has happened, there will always be situations when “the love fails,” and a tool will be needed for all of us to work out our differences and seek reconciliation through mutual forgiveness.

When trauma happens, the typical responses – whether as an individual or an organization – are “fight, flight or freeze.” When this occurs, it keeps individuals or organizations from making decisions that allow them to move forward – it keeps them in an emotional state versus a cognitive state.

Part of moving out of the emotional state is to recognize where you are on the “Trauma Triangle” – a scenario where people have take on one of three roles that they might be unaware they have even adopted (the following descriptions/sections are from “Transcending The Victim-Rescuer-Persecutor Triangle,” *originally published in The Holman House Healing Centre Journal & a Greek Magazine, © 1995-2009 Michael Bradford*).

1. **The Victim** - Victims honestly believe they have no power and that nothing positive will ever happen for them. Their focus is on the past and negativity. They spend endless hours talking about their problems, their bad luck and how they have been hurt. They are depressed and wallow in self-pity. Their suffering is their identity. Things are never right and there is never enough. They feel helpless, hopeless, reacting rather than responding in a healthy way to the world. They always need something more before they are willing to take responsibility for their life, to take any action, to change or to heal - more love, more attention, more time or more information. They tend to be confused, living in constant fear of making a mistake or looking foolish. They always have an excuse for inaction. Apathy, depression and anger are typical symptoms. Even when something good starts to happen, they will tell you "I know it won't last" and, as they predicted, it soon ends in failure. After spending time with a victim you feel worn out, depleted and depressed from their negativity. You may feel as if your energy has been drained from you. Regardless of how much time, information, energy or support you provide Victims with, they seldom change. It is important to remember that people only change when they are ready to take full responsibility for all of their thoughts, words, actions and creations - till then, there is little positive momentum!
2. **The Rescuer** - Rescuers believe they have all the answers and know the right solutions for others. Although their own lives are often in shambles, they spend hours, days, weeks or even years attempting to change, control and to get love from others. Rescuers frequently wear a false cloak of power and superiority, always appearing to be confident and in control. Rescuers love to take care of and direct the lives of other people. Through controlling and changing others, Rescuers attempt to gain a sense of identity as well as to gain love, attention and respect. They pretend to know more than other people and frequently have an answer for everything, even though they have little, if any, actual knowledge or experience regarding the subject. A Rescuer, on the surface, looks like the "good guy/woman" and is often depicted in movies as the "hero" wearing a white hat and riding a white horse. Rescuers are personified and glorified as saviors or white knights saving others from distress and evil. Without someone, something or a cause to Rescue, these people are lost and jobless! They don't realize they need to rescue themselves!
3. **The Persecutor** - Persecutors blame others for their upsets. Here both Victims and Rescuers, become Persecutors, venting their frustration, anger and resentment at others, blaming others for their negative feelings. Rather than taking personal responsibility and walking away from the person who they accuse of irritating them, they stay locked into the destructive patterns, antagonizing and attacking the "source of their frustration." The Victim is angry with the Rescuer, claiming they push too hard, demand too much, bring up pain, pressure them to change, etc." The Rescuer is angry with the

Victim for not appreciating, not understanding or not changing fast enough, making comments such as "if only you had taken my advice, if only you would listen, change and do what I say ... etc." Persecutors punish others through destructive actions such as dominating, controlling, nagging, belittling, shaming, blaming and humiliating. A Persecutor needs to disengage, to focus on taking care of themselves and getting their own life in order!

Getting Off The Triangle - The first step is to ask, "What is my motivation for acting the way I do? Am I consciously acting out of choice and giving freely, or are my actions designed to change, control or get love from others? Do I give and do things freely, with love, or do I have expectations? The minute we expect things in return from people, we are being dysfunctional.

The key to getting off the triangle is to change from external referencing (the unhealthy and dangerous pattern of looking outside of ourselves for answers, solutions, love, our identity and happiness) and to start internal referencing. To accomplish this a person must stop looking outside and be willing to become still, quiet their mind and to go deep inside to get in touch with their authentic self, to receive their answers and solutions. Healthy relationships include honor, respect, sharing and communicating. To accomplish this a person must be willing to energetically stay present, to tell the truth as best they can, to be independent, and to take absolute and total responsibility for every aspect of their life, including their time, happiness and success.

The management team recognizes that for people to "tell the truth as best they can," they need to feel safe. If that "safety net" does not yet exist for you to feel comfortable talking about the trauma you have experienced, it is our hope that you can one day have a conversation with your supervisor that includes these two questions:

What happened? Who do you need to have understand what happened?

As a team, one way to build a safe environment is to hold a "Community Meeting" at the start of each meeting. Each person goes around the room and answers these three questions:

How are you feeling? What's your goal for this meeting? Who in this room can you ask for help?

You might not need to start off each meeting with this approach, but if you notice that things are going "sideways" or getting off track due to an individual's non-verbal language, this is a good tool to take a step back and see how everyone is doing.

In specific instances where a trauma has occurred between two people, there are tools available to help with conflict resolution. Talk with your manager or a member of the management team to help you with these situations.

Actions that build culture

- Transparent and open with each other
- Create rituals and symbols – for instance, making the heart symbol with your hands, wearing the 100% Love button, and coming up with new ways to symbolize 100% Love
- Celebrate and acknowledge each other and our successes
- Find one way every day to say “thank you”
- Develop and create a “tool box” for creating success
- Use personal reminders for self and department
- Be intentional
- Fair and honest communication, respectful and loving
- Have events and activities i.e. door decorating, bigger and broader than day to day

Living Out Core Values of Wasco County

An organization’s culture is only as strong as the people who bring it to life. Having the right people, who believe in and live out the core values of the organization, is the first and most critical step.

✓ **Embody the 100% Love culture**

- Equity and fairness in all things
- Keep an open mind and be open to change
- Kindness and compassion for people who live in our community
- Love what you do and have fun doing it
- Build a strong team
- Excellence in service

✓ **Relationships are primary**

- Relationships come first, whether individuals or organizations
- Be a good neighbor
- Use honest and active communication
- Say what you mean, with 100% Love

✓ **Do the right thing, even when no one is watching**

- Provide open access and transparency
- Accountable for actions and decisions
- Be impeccable stewards of our resources
- Strive to be the best performing rural county government

Have the “right people on the bus”

In Jim Collins’ book, *Good to Great*, he states:

*“The executives who ignited the transformations from good to great did not first figure out where to drive the bus and then get people to take it there. No they **first** got the right people on the bus (and the wrong people off the bus) and **then** figured out where to drive it. They said, in essence, “Look, I don’t really know where we should take this bus. But I know this much: If we get the right people on the bus, the right people in the right seats, and the wrong people off the bus, then we’ll figure out how to take it someplace great.”*

The County will look to employ and retain people who want to “be on the bus.” In the hiring process and during reviews, we’ll discuss the qualities of someone we believe will embody our 100% Love culture:

- Positive
- Passionate
- Supportive
- Empathetic
- Truly listen and hear
- Understand
- Technical excellence
- Top of game
- Willing to do what is needed
- Stimulating
- Offer a different perspective
- Solution oriented
- Open minded
- Confidential
- Hard working
- Common sense
- Creative
- Trustworthy
- Loyal
- Honest
- Agile
- Fun

With all people we employ, we will “open the door” to the new culture and support them to walk through it. This means making an investment to support employees through additional tools/skills, coaching, accountability, honest and kind communication, performance reviews, follow through, and building trust. For employees who decide our culture is not “the right bus” for them, we will help them transition to another organization that is a better fit for them.

Have the “right people in the right seats”

A second key step of building culture is to make sure people are in the right seats on the bus – that they are a good fit with what is required and can excel at their job. It’s expected that our management team will:

- Know how many seats we have
- Know what the roles and responsibilities are for each seat (the function)
- Know what is required for performance
- Determine if each person in a particular role:
 - Understands their role
 - Wants to be in that role

- Has the capacity to fulfill the role
- Is willing to be accountable for the role

How do we live out 100% Love on a daily basis?

As we integrate culture throughout the organization, here are just a few of the ideas management came up with:

- Include employees in cross discipline teams
- Host brown bag lunches where teams can learn about each other's duties and meet the people you work with
- Storytelling
- Share and engage, inquire and include
- Have staff tell the 100% Love story
- Create an onboarding/new employee introduction process, that could include ideas like a "buddy system" or "big brother/big sister" approach
- Heal differences with those who feel left out/left behind
- Build significant events and or opportunities that reinforce our culture
- Walk the walk, as we talk the talk

TEAM ACTIVITY

As a group, have a discussion about what our current culture is, and what contributes to that culture. Write it down. *(Please collect responses for further discussion).*

What needs to happen within your department in order for your team to be able to embrace and move toward this new culture? *(Please collect responses for further discussion).*

Solicit ideas from your department about how Wasco County should go about building this new culture. *(Please collect responses for further discussion).*

Appendix A: Culture-building Tools and Activities

The following activities and tools have been compiled to assist with building the 100% Love culture. If you or your team has activities and tools to include, please email your suggestions to the County Clerk (lisag@co.wasco.or.us).

Tools for dealing with trauma

Talking through incidents between employees:

If an incident has happened between employees that is causing tension or conflict, have the employees use these questions to assist talking through it (can be direct, or mediated through a neutral party):

What happened? Who do you need to have understand what happened?

Community Meeting Tool

As a team, one way to build a safe environment is to hold a “Community Meeting” at the start of each meeting. Each person goes around the room and answers these three questions:

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Tools for acknowledging 100% Love actions

“Wow, I Noticed...” Notepads

The Administrative office has printed up sticky pads that state “Wow! I noticed...” at the top. When you see someone doing an action that shows 100% Love, write it down on the sticky, sign your name to it, and give it to that co-worker to hold onto.

The County will eventually have a community board where these sticky notes can be posted for wider recognition.

Story To Tell

When an event/action gets noticed, send the story to the County Clerk so it can be added to this document (and eventually used in communications, like the web site).

Team Activity Ideas

- Have a leg-wrestling fundraiser
- Have a fun contest wearing the sumo wrestler suits
- Do more cross-team coffee get-togethers
- Host a “speed dating” session where employees spend 5 minutes learning about the person across the table and then move on to the next employee
- Do a county-wide team event like Hood to Coast or a 5k
- Create a Wasco County 100% Love Cookbook as a fundraiser
- Have a department “After Hours/Happy Hour” event where one team is the host and other employees can come by to meet them and learn about what they do



Appendix B: 100% Love Stories

Here are stories that illustrate how 100% Love shows up in our culture. If you have a story to share, email it to the County Clerk (lisag@co.wasco.or.us).

The Original 100% Love Story

Following a particularly negative interaction with another entity on a project, the County Clerk and the County Administrator were reviewing the meeting and how difficult it had been. For the Clerk it was the first project where it became apparent that some citizens don't like county government, no matter how we try to help. The Administrator jokingly said, "Welcome to county government. 50% of the people love you, and 50% of the people love to hate you." To which the Clerk replied "Yes, but that's still 100% LOVE!" Then the Executive Assistant to the Commissioners chimed in and said, "Truthfully, it's more like 20% love us, 20% love to hate us, and 60% are indifferent."

The 100% Love statement really began to grow and take shape over the next couple of weeks. It started out as a tongue-in-cheek remark, but upon further reflection it began to emerge as a concept with much deeper meaning. It grew into a way of thinking about all aspects of what we do. The questions started to be asked: what could 100% Love mean to me as an individual and as a team/department? What could it mean as a County, and to our citizens? This concept began to resonate with some of the management staff as we began to talk about it and look for examples of 100% Love. What came out of this thinking was a critical question: could the concept of 100% Love be the guide for how we serve ourselves and our citizens, recognizing that the goal is to move some of the people who "love to hate us" into the "indifferent" category, and move some of the "indifferent" citizens into "love to love us" category? And more importantly, use the 100% Love concept as our guiding principle for serving people, regardless of whether they love us or hate us?

The Christmas Door

During Christmas of 2015, the Administrative team was too swamped to decorate their own door (despite it being a favorite activity). When the Assessor's office heard that they weren't going to be able to decorate, they created a design and decorated the door like a giant penguin. The Administrative team was able to enjoy the love throughout the holiday season due to the thoughtfulness of the Assessor's team!

Trading Spaces

In January of 2016, the Clerk's office and Assessor's office traded spaces in the courthouse so that the 14-person Assessor's team could have more room. This effort involved multiple people – Facilities, IT, help from youth offenders doing community service, the Commissioners and other managers. Spaces were painted, furniture was moved – an entire crew worked over the weekend to get the offices

moved and set up again on Monday so citizens could be served. On Monday morning, a “key exchange” ceremony was held to recognize the efforts of all involved and acknowledge the willingness of employees to embrace change.

The Deputy and the Mailbox

A deputy from the Sheriff’s office was called out to a citizen’s house where the woman’s mailbox had been destroyed. The woman was quite distraught – her husband had died one month prior and she was experiencing emotional trauma. After calling in the right resources to help the woman, the deputy decided the next day to go check on her and see how she was doing. On his way out to visit, he stopped by the hardware store and bought supplies (with his own money) to replace her mailbox and took care of it when he got there!

