

Infuse your practice with confidence

By Monica Wofford

Why do you want to run your own clinic? Is it for the same reason one clinician was overheard saying, "I love being the leader and calling the shots"?

That same doctor had a note on his computer that read, "Never let your employees see you sweat. It changes the impression of who is in charge!" The note, he claimed, reminded him to not see employees as friends, but rather as human capital.

Ouch. Have you ever been an employee? Or, have you ever thought your leadership or ownership title gave you the confidence to see yourself as above anyone else?

If so, that's a problem. The employees may not have hired you, but they do look to you for guidance — not as a Supreme Being, but as a human mentor.

Some employees have expertise you don't have. Yet, for some people, a title inflates their confidence and becomes the source of identity and self-esteem.

The truth is this: The job of leader is not now, never was, and never will be all about *you*. Leadership is about those you lead, but it takes true confidence to stay out of the title race and avoid the temptation of falling back on it to motivate.

Leaders who have a loyal following of productive people — not human capital — are those who have the confidence to be real while they lead, to "sweat" periodically, and to show vulnerability to the team. Leaders who develop fiercely loyal teams operate from a sense of internally driven confidence that infects everyone around them.

This type of infectious confidence is different from the pseudo confidence you "turn on" when you need it. It's different from the "game face" you wear during a personal crisis that overlaps a staff meeting.

This type of confidence is a combination of knowing who you are and showing it; knowing what you believe and being okay with letting others have their own beliefs;

and knowing what you do is bigger than the nameplate on your desk.

KNOWING WHO YOU ARE

When you meet someone for the first time, you generally ask three questions:

- "What's your name?"
- "What do you do?" and
- "Where do you work?"

The information is used to help make a connection. Unfortunately, the information also labels who you are. Is that all you are — a name and a title?

Surely not. If you really want to connect to a person, you share more personal information. The same applies to connecting with your employees.

Sharing information about who you are can serve to show that all important human side of the "you" that exists outside the office. If you ride horses, tell your employees. If you have a soft spot for chocolate, tell them.

Whatever it is, share to your comfort level and realize that who you are is more than a title and a practice owner. It is your background, heritage, and hobbies; it is a style and a set of behaviors.

Sharing personal information will affect how you are perceived by others.

KNOWING WHAT YOU BELIEVE

Your beliefs come across in your leadership style. Typically, beliefs fall into three categories:

1. Beliefs about the way we are supposed to look and behave;
2. Beliefs about the way others are supposed to look and behave; and
3. Beliefs about the way the world is supposed to look and behave.

Each of these beliefs shades your opinions, colors your message, and comes through to your employees.

For example: You may believe punctuality is critical to relationships and being late is disrespectful and shows a lack of commitment. However, some cultures do not place

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the same value on punctuality as people do in North America.

If an employee from such a culture comes to work late, addressing the issue by saying, "How could you be so late and so unconcerned?" could create a problem.

Check your beliefs before you impose them on a group with different ones. Share them where appropriate to avoid miscommunication, and be confident enough in your own beliefs and boundaries that you avoid seeing others as difficult.

The truth is they are often merely different.

KNOWING WHAT YOU DO AND WHY


Whatever you do, do it with gusto and love it — or find something else. If you don't have a passion for what you do, your employees will know it. And if you don't have passion for what you do, how can you expect them to have it?

As a leader, unless you have an infectious confidence about what you

do and why you do it, you will transfer your lack of those feelings to all who look to you for guidance. This will not only make your job more difficult, it will also give you a plethora of morale and attitude issues to handle.

Learn who you are and what your style is. Be clear about what you believe, what you do, and why you do it. Great leaders are those who have a clear vision of these three things.

When you are clear, others catch on and you become contagious. You do want employees to catch on to you and enjoy the experience of working with you, don't you? ☺

 Monica Wofford is a nationally known trainer, author, and coach. The author of *Contagious Leadership* and *Contagious Customer Service*, she inspires audiences to produce results. She can be reached at 866-382-0121 or through her Web site, www.monicawofford.com.

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Quick Tip

A simple networking tip

Networking is a great way to increase your patient roles. If you are not comfortable with networking, it may be because you act like the Lone Ranger — someone who thinks it is easier to do things for himself instead of asking for help.

Stop being the Lone Ranger. You will find a whole new world of networking relationships and opportunities when you start asking for help, information, support, and ideas.

— Donna Fisher and Sandy Vilas
Power Networking
(MountainHarbour Publications)

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