

# Infuse your practice with confidence

By Monica Wofford

**W**hy 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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