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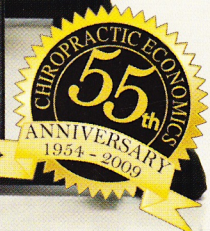
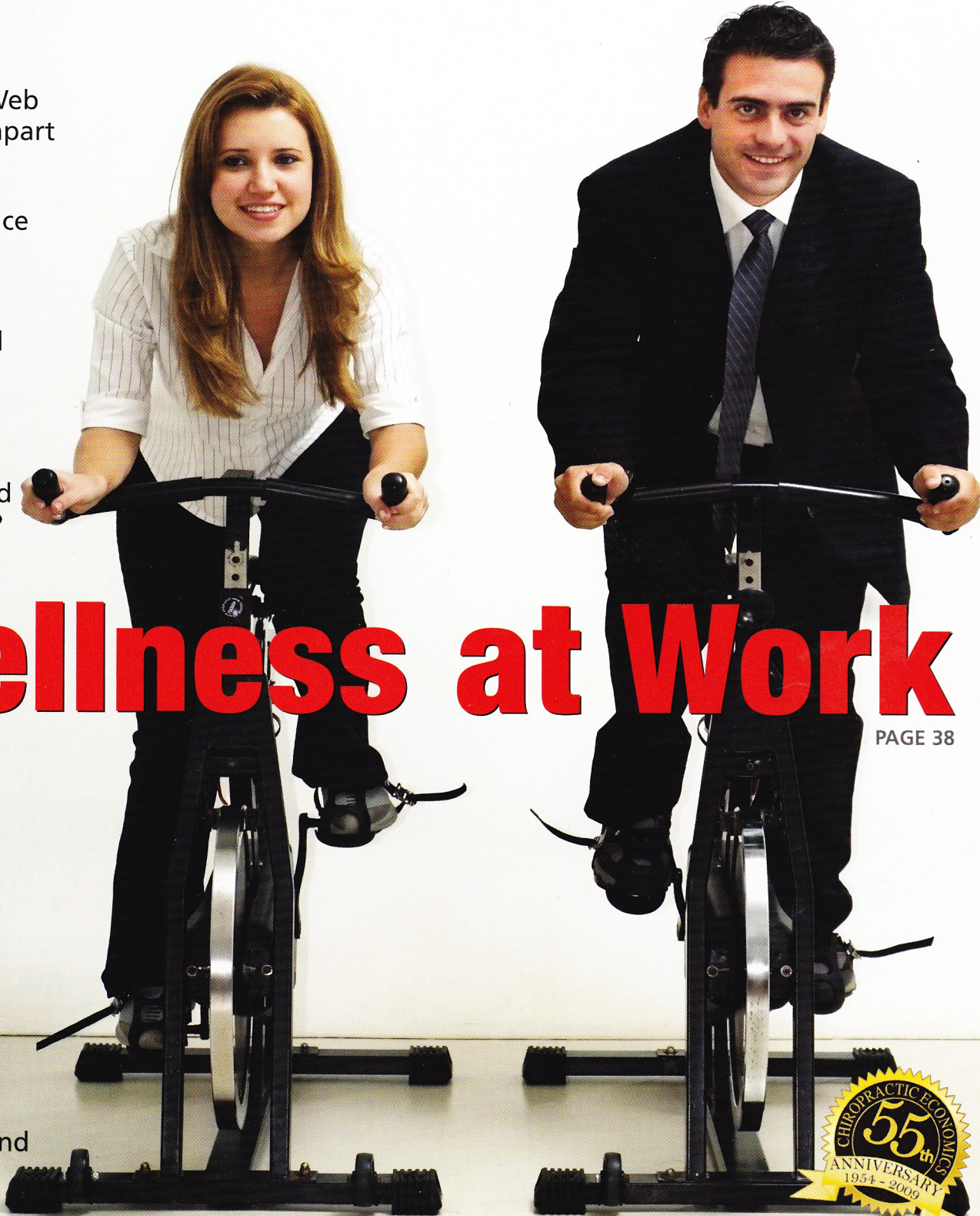
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The great benefit to being you

By Monica Wofford, CSP

Knowing what drives your thoughts, actions, and behaviors is one of the best ways of being able to improve them.

But improvement isn't always necessary. Sometimes you just need to know these things to manage yourself — and you have to know how to do that before you can manage others.

A few tips you can use to get to know yourself and then, of course, manage what you know, include:

- **Paying attention.** It sounds like an easy thing to do; however, paying attention takes practice and persistence. At first it *can* be easy, and then you get in to the habit of doing things the same old way without any forethought or notice.

Keep an eye on how often you interrupt people, how many times you put your office through a “campaign of the week,” or how many times you forget that new direction as fast as you put it in place.

The more often you do this, the less often employees will care about your new direction. If you have the “something shiny” syndrome, pay attention to what you are doing to, in spite of, and in cooperation with the others you work with.

- **Finding out more.** Human beings are fascinating creatures. We are a mix of psychology, physiology, and physicality — among other things.

Each person is at a unique level of development with a unique combination of behaviors, preferences, and wiring. Find out more about who you are, how you are wired, and where it all comes from.

You don't have to get a degree in psychology to figure it out — ask a friend, consult a family member, or maybe even get a coach. The more you know, the more you grow — and the more you grow, the more you can help others to do the same. Isn't that the whole point of being a leader?

- **Talking back.** No longer do you need to take what that voice or “person” in your mind says to be true at face value — take a stand and talk back.

Challenge yourself to spend some time not only talking to yourself in the form of questions to verify what is truth

and what is fiction, but also ask questions of those you work with.

Get their feedback instead of assuming. Get their take and then make decisions on how you will respond, rather than react.

- **Taking back control.** Years ago, Tom Miller, author of *Self Discipline and Emotional Control* made an analogy that compared the conscious to a rider and the subconscious to a horse.


He made mention of the fact that the horse may be bigger, stronger, and able to bully you into doing things, but the rider is more intelligent, savvy, and creative in finding a new solution or method.

If you find yourself always doing things out of reaction, then you are acting with the horse — it's time to take back control and become the rider. Act with conscious intention and learn what yours is so you can use it and control it a bit better.

- **Learning to listen.** It pays to listen. Not only will you be well served by listening to others, but you will find it helps you to listen to yourself.

Listen to what you say and to the responses it elicits. Listen to what others say and the emotions it triggers. Listen to how an emotion can engage without you even realizing it. Listen to how the slightest change in tone of voice can dramatically change the entire sentence. Listening is powerful stuff, and it is only when you listen with clarity that you will hear accurately.

There is great benefit to being you. There is only one of you and the more you know about you the better you will be at working with others. Not everyone else will know themselves, so sometimes you are battling the voice in their head as much as you are yours.

The key is to become aware of who you are, how you act, and how that lands on others. With this newfound awareness and a few simple methods, you will find you're well on your way to not only managing you, but leading, you. 



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