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Align your leadership

By Monica Wofford, CSP

You treat patients almost daily with loving care and hope that they will continue to improve, heal, and return for regular care.

Do you, however, provide the same sort of TLC to your leadership skills, behaviors, and attributes?

That would mean you work on it, practice new techniques, always put the needs of those you work with as a priority, and spend dedicated time being an even more effective leader.

Maybe you don't do all of that, but you should at least begin with the basics.

One thing to consider is your corporate wellness — meaning the wellness of your practice and its ability to last into the future and even become something you leave as a legacy. Your corporate wellness depends largely on how well you lead — now and in the future.

Your ability to lead begins with you. How well are you leading you and is it in alignment with how you lead others and your practice?

The concept of alignment

A direct correlation exists between how well you lead yourself and how well you lead others. Much like you try to align a patient's spine and have all the parts working well and in concert with each other for the betterment of body, mind, and spirit, you also have moving parts in your leadership: being you, leading you, and leading others.

• **Being you.** When you are trying to be your most adored chiropractic college professor, you are not being you. You might be doing a wonderful job of being someone else, but it's still not you. However, in order to be you and share that pure authenticity, you must first know who that is and what you look like.

With authenticity and the ability to be just you, comes a feeling of calm about your actions and behaviors. That is also accompanied by a sense of confidence and a comfort in your own skin. If you feel those things, then you are likely being authentic and being you.

If you consistently question what you are doing and feel a bit lost, then this is an area of focus. If you are consistently edgy or find yourself reacting instead of responding, then it is quite possible that whoever you are “playing on TV” is rather far from the real you. That kind of disconnect can cause some real communication problems and can be rather easily resolved with a bit of awareness about who you are and the permission, from yourself, to be just that.

• **Leading you.** The saying “lead by example” exists for a reason. People who work with you watch how you lead yourself to determine if what you are telling them to do has any credibility. This is why the “do as I say, not as I do” rule is so laughable, yet true.

When you know who you are and are comfortable in your own skin, your actions will match your words. Those you work with pay attention. If you instruct everyone to remember patients' names and treat them with exceptional courtesy, then you must do so as well.

If you snap at patients when they are not on time or at an employee who has done something wrong, then you are not leading you and your actions well. Leading you comes from practice, focus, discipline, development, concern for the needs of others, and a distinct desire for consistency in your words and actions.

Take a close look at your actions. Even ask for an outside objective opinion on how you behave or ask for someone to gently remind you when

you behave outside of what you would prefer in order to maintain consistency. Sometimes leading yourself is merely about awareness and the breaking of bad habits.

• **Leading others.** Before you can lead others, you must first be you and then lead you — it really is that simple. Leading others can be more complex, however, when you look at the multitude of behaviors, actions, and beliefs that truly effective leadership takes.

Leading others is the key to your long-term success, yet often so much more time is spent selecting lobby furniture or buying a new adjusting table or traction gadget than is spent on your leadership skills and development. That is much like spending more time planning a vacation than picking out your retirement plan.

You can lead others regardless of your title, personality, or current skill level. The key is to determine what they need and provide it within parameters you are comfortable with and that will help your business grow.

You are running a business, not a day care center, yet if you find yourself “babysitting,” do not think for a minute that your own leadership or lack thereof, is without blame in that equation. Leading others takes practice and patience, power and persistence, consistency and consequences, love and care, and dedication — as well as action. Leading others isn’t something you just show up to do it’s what makes you want to show up in the first place.

Simply put, leading others begins with you and ends with them. In the middle, there must be an alignment of your actions, beliefs, and behaviors, as well as the alignment of where you are going and whether your current leadership level will take you there.

The future of your practice depends on how well you are aligned and how well you lead. ☺



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