

The 5 Key C's of Real Leadership for Your Podiatry Practice!

Leadership 'C' Number One is Commitment – We can all learn new things from almost any scenario, person or event. Well, sales copy-writers have been known to say, “Everyone is walking around umbilical cord in hand, looking for a place to plug it in.” To me this say's people all around us are looking for good solid leaders to follow.

Leadership starts and ends with commitment. Why would anyone want to follow a half-way committed person? Just from this question you can see it wouldn't make sense. A half way committed person waffles It is human nature to favor the bold. Commitment drives energy and this energy somehow becomes infectious – everyone and everything around you somehow recognizes this commitment.

Decision is a sort of cousin to commitment. It's been said that decision is one of the most important success principles found anywhere. To decide means to ‘cut off’ all other options. Commitment requires a clear decision.

Bare with me while I introduce yet another word to further deepen the importance of commitment as a leader. I once heard a speaker say that defiance is the most critical success element of all. Defiance means to have a disposition to resist : willingness to contend or fight, and of course I use this in the context of resisting what you don't want and fighting for what you do want.

Think for a moment, what do these words; commitment, decision, and defiance, have to do with each other, in the context of leadership? I see them as a direct path a bold, dynamic, powerful almost unstoppable force—even charisma.

Real commitment creates vision, clarity, focus. There is purpose in it and it instills a powerful confidence that inspires others to join the leader.

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Here's a great quote on Commitment, supposedly by Goethe, a German Writer

"Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back—always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation), there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance, which no man could have dreamed would have come his way. Whatever you can do, or dream you can do, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it."

Commitment is power. What are you committed to as a leader in your Podiatry practice?

Leadership 'C' Number Two is Communication – The bigger your practice becomes the more important communication becomes. Especially when making an effort to create change or set new priorities, accomplish goals and launch change initiatives. You must have trust, alignment and superior collaboration. Frankly, the natural position within a team is often one where there are suspicions, assumptions, misperceptions and judgment of others' values and motives. This is even true for leaders.

You must build great communication skills and even systems. When communicating a key principle to remember and utilize is, 'no guessing'. Make no assumptions. They will surely come back to bite you. You need understanding of other's communication needs, values and biases. This will allow you to drive trust and communicate more clearly at the interpersonal level. Further, you need organizational communication strategies and systems to keep everyone on the same page, aware of and committed to the leaders vision and strategy.

Leadership 'C' Number Three is Caring - The number one reason good people leave a job is their direct boss. Specifically, it's a result of not feeling appreciated or respected. Or worse, actually feeling disrespected. Respect is the number one need of staff and happens to be the number one development area for leaders.

I often tell doctors that when you are with your patients your mindset is that of a doctor, yes? When you are with your staff your paradigm needs to be one of a leader. You are a leader from a broad stroke perspective. You have the mindset of coach during your day to day interactions.

A coach cares about his team. It's your job to elicit performance and give your team the greatest chance to succeed. Caring allows you to be in their world and understand from their perspective and this helps you to know how to truly help them be their best.

Leadership 'C' Number Four is Core – Core is a blend of four critical elements that must be in place for any leader. They are; Leadership Experience, Industry Knowledge, Access to ones own Talent, and finally, Leadership Competencies.

Leadership 'C' Number Five is Character – Are there leaders with no character? Probably. Though I imagine they won't be leaders for long. It's been said that most leaders are hired for their technical capability and fired for their lack of interpersonal skill. Above in the section on caring we talked about respect. You cannot be a leader if you don't have the respect of your team. No one is perfect. But leadership and credibility go hand in hand. I'm not a preacher, so I'll let these great quotes do the job.

“Knowledge will give you power, but character respect.” Bruce Lee

“Most people say that it is the intellect which makes a great scientist. They are wrong: it is character.” Albert Einstein

“The foundation stones for a balanced success are honesty, character, integrity, faith, love and loyalty.” Zig Ziglar

“When wealth is lost, nothing is lost; when health is lost, something is lost; when character is lost, all is lost.” Billy Graham

This last quote is actually a foundational philosophy, a paradigm of great life wealth, by one of the top leadership philosophers of our modern era, Jay Henderson. It is this:

Take the High Road.