"Are you my leader?"

Written by, Phebe Blitz, RDH, MS

Do you see yourself as a leader? Many of us don’t, but in fact, everyone is a leader. We lead our selves, our families, our work teams, and some of us choose to be leaders in our profession. The question is not whether or not we are leaders. The question is, “how well do we lead?” Are we leading consciously or unconsciously? Good leaders lead consciously, which means they are aware of their thoughts and choose their actions rather than reacting to a situation.

I’ve worked with many clinicians and educators who don’t see themselves as leaders. This shortchanges the patients and the students they work with as well as the organizations they work in. Leaders continually develop themselves by being mindful of their thoughts and actions.

There is an energy in leadership. It has 7 levels. We all have all the levels within us and we seem to favor one level most of the time. You can probably identify all the levels and recognize them in yourself and others. Within the seven levels, there are two types: catabolic (breaking down) and anabolic (building up).

Level One and two are catabolic. Levels 3-7 are more anabolic with Level 7 having the most anabolic energy. Each energy level has a core thought, a core feeling or emotion and a likely action or result. As you read through the descriptions, see if you can recognize that energy in yourself and notice how it feels. Remember, we all have all the levels within us.

Level One: Victim energy, you have probably experienced this yourself at times. Feeling like there is nothing you can do about a situation. This results in apathy and lethargy. I’ve seen patients who believe they just have bad teeth, and nothing can be done about it. I’ve seen hygienist stuck in a job they don’t like, feeling like they have no options. This is characteristic of level one energy. The prevailing perspective is “I lose”

Level Two: The core thought here is conflict, feeling anger, acting defensively. Blaming others is characteristic. Everything is right or wrong, good or bad. The prevailing perspective is “I win so you lose.”

Level Three: This is the first level of anabolic energy. It is characterized by responsibility, feelings of forgiveness and results in cooperation. People at this level are masters of rationalization. They tolerate and compromise. The prevailing perspective is “I win and I hope you win too”

Level Four: This level has moderate anabolic energy. Its core thought is concern for others, its feeling is compassion and the action is service. I believe people with level four energy are attracted to the dental hygiene profession. The prevailing perspective of level four energy is
“You win” Collaboration, teamwork and loyalty are words associated with level four energy. This is a high level of energy which can lead to great success.

Level Five: Thoughts are reconciliation, feelings of peace with a result of acceptance. People with level five energy see everything as an opportunity. They focus on the big picture or wide view. They are calm and powerful. They believe that they are in control and can choose their life experience. Their perspective is “we all win, or no one wins.”

Level Six: This is a high to very high level of energy. The core thought is synthesis. The feeling is joy and the result is wisdom. There is a sense of connection with everyone and everything. Intuition lives in level six. The prevailing perspective is “We always win.”

Level Seven: This is the highest level of energy. It is characterized by Nonjudgment, absolute passion and results in creation. No humans resonate at this level completely, but with practice, everyone can access it. The prevailing perspective is “Winning and Losing are illusions.”

Each level of energy has advantages and disadvantages. The average level of world leaders is 2.4. (Now you know why there is so much conflict in the world!) How do you raise your level of energy? As you begin to observe your thought patterns and become more familiar with the levels of energy, you can remind yourself to be compassionate or look at the big picture in order to raise yourself to a higher level. We all have energy blocks: limiting beliefs, assumptions, interpretations, and that little (but powerful) voice inside our heads telling us we are not good enough. As we become more observant of our thoughts, we can recognize our limiting beliefs and see a more anabolic picture.

As our profession is transforming, it is critical to develop our leadership skills.