

## Reflections on Leadership

Marilyn Allen, Editor at Large

*"Leadership: It is good to remember that the view is always the same unless you are the lead dog..."*

This year promises to be one of change. There is uncertainty all around us. In spite of the circumstances we must in some ways mimic the characteristics of the noble Dragon and act as born leaders as this symbol represents the Chinese emperors. Dragons have big mouths, but their opinions are worth listening to and their advice is usually good.

Leaders have many strong and effective qualities. Leaders are good listeners. They are consistently looking and listening for the area of the conversation where they can come in with helpful information for the other person or persons in the discussion. This is an invaluable skill when dealing with patients and their health issues. As acupuncturists, you must also be looking for the opportunity to speak about the efficacy, growing acceptance and low cost of Oriental Medicine.

We hear much about ethics these days. It is a requirement that an acupuncturist be ethical in their everyday lives, their practice lives and recreational lives. These must all be combined into one life. We cannot lead two lives. There is a necessity that the one life we have creates an authentic and amiable existence for each of us.

There is a necessity that we draw people to us. It is by sharing one by one the magnificence of this medicine that we will gain the rightful place in the world of healthcare that this medicine deserves.

The professional practitioner delivering this medicine must have good grooming and dress well. In fact, it is important that the practitioner dresses better than their best dressed patient. Studies have shown that when one looks good more and better communication and deeds are accomplished.

Leaders respect themselves and others. They listen to others opinions. They are informed on subjects of interest and not so interesting. Leaders gather information, create and have effective communication, which can and does lead to developing effective relationships. These meaningful relationships can unfold into the making of productive teams and organizations. Working together helps create strength in an organization, collective decisions and a reserve of comprehensive knowledge.

Professionalism, honesty, integrity, wisdom, judgment, a balance of confidence, humility, loyalty and trust are essential qualities that reflect the character of a leader. The combination of these qualities and behaviors helps to define a person of leadership. These behaviors must be overlaid with common sense.

A leader is one who always thinks and believes that everyone in the situation, organization or on the team is important. Each voice must be heard, evaluated and made to feel important. Points of view will differ, but this is what contributes to the strength of a team or organization.

The truth of a situation must be found and communicated to the others in the group. It is important to be careful what is said, to whom it is said and how it was communicated. In this era of great electronic communication - be careful and watchful.

In the profession of Oriental Medicine, making a difference in people's lives is most imperative. Knowledge is power and it helps people to grow. As each acupuncturist educated his or her patients they become empowered. In turn they can tell their family and friends about the healing benefits of this medicine. It is the responsibility of the practitioner to give and supply each and every patient with material, both written and spoken, that can be passed along to others. In a manner of speaking we are training and educating the patients and creating a branding for acupuncture and Oriental Medicine. We are developing the character of a great patient.

As a practitioner in this great profession, each has a responsibility to listen and share examples and stories, which will teach us moral lessons that help us reflect on our own lives and then begin to see in things in life in a new way.

You might, ask yourself, how have I been involved in my profession and what have I done to make it stronger and grow in this country? Enthusiasm is the magic ingredient that makes leadership effective and works for the greater good of all.

Now is the time for this profession to grow and continue in the development of leadership because we care about the future of this medicine.

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