

ME DESTROYS WE

| BY JUDY KAY MAUSOLF



I have the privilege of working with dental teams nationwide through my team building Culture Camps! Each camp is customized to meet the unique and specific needs of the practice and can vary greatly from one office to the next. However, every Culture Camp kicks off with a leadership team meeting. I start with them because everything begins and ends with leadership. What leaders do, allow or accept cultivates the workplace culture. If a leadership team is not aligned and cohesive it will be difficult for the team to be so.

I spend the first evening getting to know and building a relationship with the leadership team. We discuss their goals and obstacles with the practice, team and each other. I refer to the leadership team as the “we team”, because leaders need to think as “we” instead of as “me”. “We thinking” cultivates alignment and cohesion. When leaders are aligned and cohesive they communicate and work together better, which produces a happier, healthier and higher-performing practice culture.

“ME DESTROYS WE!”

One of the pitfalls I observe, especially in high-performing practices, is discord in the leadership team. Often, the more successful a practice is the more strife there seems to be between the leadership. Success often inflames egos. It is dangerous when we allow success to go to our head. When it does, our ego takes over and we feel entitled. Entitlement changes our mindset from we to me.

“Me” creates an exaggerated pride, overwhelming self-confidence and contempt for others.

Taken to extreme, it can become the acquired personality disorder “hubris syndrome”. Scientific research defines this condition as a “disorder of the possession of power, particularly power which has been associated with overwhelming success, held for a period of years”.

There is a difference between a healthy ego and an unhealthy one. Healthy egos are good and needed to succeed. When meeting and assessing the leadership team, I look for signs of an unhealthy ego that may undermine alignment, cohesiveness and even greater success.

Here are some of the most common sabotaging beliefs that pose a risk to your team. Consider your thinking (if it aligns with any of these concerns) and see if you might need to readjust your viewpoint:

- I am the owner doctor, and I can do what I want.
- I am entitled to do what I want because I am the biggest producer.
- I only support my decisions because I have the most knowledge.
- I can never show when I am unsure or don't know the answer; it will make me look stupid.
- I can't admit to mistakes; it will make me look weak.
- I will deflect and criticize others when I am challenged in order to not lose face.

An unhealthy ego narrows our perception and corrupts our behavior, often causing us to act against our core values. When we believe we are the only one responsible for our success, we tend to be disrespectful, selfish and unkind. After all, we don't need anyone else, and others are replaceable! This is especially true in challenging situations. An unhealthy ego is like a wall that blocks us from learning from our failures. Our past success left unchecked can sabotage our future success!

An unhealthy ego looks for information that confirms what it wants to believe. It makes us

believe we are always right. We only see and hear things our way. We become susceptible like the emperor in the folktale, "The Emperor's New Clothes!"

The result is that we alienate the people we lead, the workplace culture and ultimately our patients. I love the quote, "Ego is a three-letter word that can destroy a big twelve-letter word called 'relationship'!" We have all heard about great bands who had amazing success only to break up because of unhealthy egos. They became a "Me" instead of a "We". Their ego created a "Me" entitlement that ended their relationship and sabotaged their future success as a band!

MEET THE AUTHOR



ASCA SPEAKER

Judy Kay Mausolf is a speaker, author and dental culture specialist with expertise in helping others become happier and more successful! She coaches dentists and their teams on how to become stronger leaders, communicate more effectively, and deliver service with more focus and passion.

She is a past president of the National Speakers Association (Minnesota Chapter), Director of Sponsoring Partners for the Speaking Consulting Network and a member of the National Speakers Association and Academy of Dental Management Consultants. She is also recognized as a leader in consulting by Dentistry Today. Judy has authored three books: "TA-DAH", "Delivering W.O.W. Service" and "Rise & Shine!" and is a contributing author for many dental magazines. She also publishes a monthly newsletter entitled "Show Your Shine".

Judy Kay lives in MN with her awesome husband Steve who makes her special coffee every morning!



Healthy egos are good and needed to succeed. They are confident and decisive. However, a healthy ego will know that there is more than one way to do things.

ME DESTROYS WE CONTINUED | PAGE 14

JOIN AADOM'S TEXT MESSAGE COMMUNITY!



**SIGN UP
FOR MOBILE ALERTS**
& YOU'LL BE THE FIRST
TO KNOW ABOUT UPCOMING
EVENTS, NEWS & PROMOS!

DENTALMANAGERS.COM/CONTACT

...ME DESTROYS WE CONTINUED

They know they aren't always right. They encourage open dialogue and are open to feedback. They will support what is in the best interests of the practice, patients and team (also referring doctors if they are a specialty practice).

Behaviors of a healthy leadership ego are someone who is/can:

- Be determined to make a difference.
- Know their why (sense of purpose).
- Self-confident and secure.
- Aware of their weaknesses and are comfortable in their skin.
- Reflect instead of deflect.
- Approachable, open and honest.
- Able to keep things in perspective.
- Will admit when they are wrong.
- Allow themselves to be vulnerable.
- Genuine and not pretend to be something they are not.
- Tolerant of people who have different views.
- Willing to listen and accept feedback.
- Empower others to step up.

No one is perfect, and our ego will get the best of us at times. Being open to feedback from our co-leaders, team members and using a coach who can observe and advise are great ways to become a more aligned and cohesive "We"! ■

