



The Power of Influence in Building Others

By Lyn Carman

Leadership Series – Part 3 of 4 – Influence

To date in this series on Leadership we have covered 2 of the 4 Core skills: Self Awareness and Communication. In this article we discuss the 3rd in this 4 ... Influence

Ever heard the saying, "We have a responsibility to influence the people in our lives to be the best possible people they can be: Therefore encourage one another and build each other up"? It's a cool idea that reminds us of how much impact we can have on each other's lives.

To recap the definition of leadership I particularly like: To influence, inspire and help others become their best selves, building their skills and achieving goals along the way. Think about it – whether we're leading a team at work, helping a friend, or just being there for our family, we're all influencers in some way. It's not about having a fancy title; it's about making a positive difference.

In my work with dental professionals, I often hear – "I have nothing to offer, what do I have that is of value to others?" "I'm not a leader!"

Sometimes we might feel like we don't have much to offer in terms of influence. Maybe we're not the loudest in the room or the ones in charge. But that's not what influence is all about. It's not about being the boss or having the most followers on social media.

This belief that we have nothing to influence others, often stems from self-doubt, misconceptions, and limited awareness of our own abilities. By expanding the understanding of influence, celebrating small victories, and fostering self-confidence, we can begin to see our ability to make a positive impact on those around us.

Leadership is not merely about holding a position of authority; it's about creating a positive impact on those around us. At the core of effective leadership lies the fundamental skill of influence. As leaders, we have a responsibility to harness this skill to inspire and guide individuals toward becoming the best versions of themselves. So, let's explore the essential role of influence in leadership and how it fits with the concept of building others up.

Influence is the ability to affect the thoughts, emotions, and actions of others. Whether you're leading a team, mentoring a colleague, or guiding family members, the power to influence is a vital tool that can drive positive change. Through influence, we can inspire others to adopt new perspectives, embrace challenges, and work towards common goals. Remember, influence is not about manipulating or controlling others; it's about inspiring and guiding them towards positive outcomes.

Great, so what are some impactful ways we can influence? – I'm sure you are already doing many on this list. Perhaps it's a good time to become aware of those you might need to do more of or even reflect on the leadership in your workplace and how it impacts the team.

- **Lead by Example:** Show through your actions the qualities you value and want to inspire in others.
- **Effective Communication:** Engage in clear and meaningful conversations that foster understanding and connection.
- **Empathy:** Understand others' perspectives and emotions to build trust and influence.
- **Support and Guidance:** Offer assistance, advice, and mentorship to empower others.
- **Share Knowledge:** Share your expertise and insights to empower and educate others.
- **Acknowledge and Appreciate:** Recognise contributions and create a positive atmosphere of value.
- **Provide Feedback:** Offer guidance for improvement in a helpful manner.
- **Encourage Creativity:** Foster innovative thinking by valuing unique ideas.
- **Set High Standards:** Strive for excellence and inspire others to do the same.
- **Stay Positive:** Maintain an optimistic attitude that encourages resilience in others.
- **Build Relationships:** Develop genuine connections based on trust and rapport.
- **Respect Differences:** Embrace diversity and value differing opinions and backgrounds.
- **Celebrate Wins:** Acknowledge achievements and boost morale through celebration.
- **Promote Collaboration:** Encourage teamwork and cooperation for collective success.
- **Lead with Integrity:** Uphold ethical principles to establish credibility and meaningful influence.

As oral health professionals we all carry the responsibility to uplift and inspire those we lead. This responsibility is not just a task; it's a privilege that comes with the potential to transform lives. When we encourage and build others up, we create an environment where people feel valued, supported, and motivated to excel. This is where the true essence of leadership shines – not in the authority we wield, but in the positive impact we make on individuals.

A leader's influence transcends short-term results; it contributes to the establishment of a culture of growth. When leaders consistently uplift their team members, it creates a ripple effect that reaches far beyond individual interactions. Team members learn to support one another, leading to a collaborative and harmonious environment where everyone's strengths are acknowledged and nurtured. And even more than this, the ripples flow outward to our communities, to our patients and the experience they have when they choose us to care for them.

Influence is not just a tool in a leader's toolbox; it's the cornerstone of effective leadership. Our responsibility as leaders is not limited to achieving objectives or maintaining authority. It's about recognising the potential within those we lead and guiding them to become the best possible versions of themselves. By embracing the power of influence and adhering to the principle of encouraging and building each other up, we can create a world where leadership is defined by the positive impact it leaves on individuals and the broader community.

Workplace harmony and culture is dependent on good leadership, share this knowledge with your team and take action as a leader in your space – influence your team.

I look forward to sharing the final in this series next issue – Part 4 of 4 – Learning Agility – Learn to Lead

"You're braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think."

