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Socratic Leadership Jesus' Style

Jesus had a particular style in leading His people. When posed with a direct question, He very often chose the response of posing another question. When His authority was questioned by the chief priests in the temple courts with the question, *"By what authority are you doing these things?"* Jesus replied, *"I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. John's baptism-where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or from men?"* They discussed it among themselves and said *"If we say, 'From heaven,' He will ask, then why didn't you believe Him? But if we say, 'From men'- we are afraid of the people for they all hold that John was a prophet."* So they answered Jesus, *"We don't know."* Then Jesus said, *"Neither will I tell you what authority I am doing these things."* Matthew 21:23-27

If we want to create an environment of leadership modeled by the one set before us by Jesus, we have to follow four steps and create the environment that will develop this ownership. This does not happen by accident. It happens with putting procedures in place for the doctors and CAs that create this environment, and it comes from training. Training to be different, to offer the patients a different experience in your office. Training to develop thinkers, to gain ownership of the chiropractic truths and to experience people who truly care about them. Be the difference.

The lesson for us chiropractors to take from this excerpt from the Bible is that we can all benefit from Jesus' style of leadership. Jesus led people not with His authoritative style - commanding people to action. He led people by drawing out truths in them, and, by their choice, they decided to follow Him. Our suggestion to you is to apply this to your practice. In TLC, we suggest that you take the 1st step, which is to ask dynamic questions of your patients. Our questions need to guide, invite, reveal and open up our patients to engage with chiropractic. Questions like, *"Jon, did you check your posture today?"* *"Mary, have you been checked for subluxations?"* There are specific times when telling patients what they need to do is required in the report of findings. We need to make bold, clear recommendations and there are times to speak directly and clearly, just as there were times in the Bible when Jesus clearly spoke the truth and made direct statements. However, much more of the time, we need to remember to draw out in our patients the truth. Once you teach the patients in your reports, your table talk, your ongoing spinal workshops to know the principles of healing with chiropractic care, patients need continual interactions and experiences with these truths in order to gain ownership of the truths. Remember people do not care about what you know until they know how much you care.

Jesus calls us to be Socratic in our leadership styles. We are teachers as the title doctor reveals. Being a teacher does not mean we are above our patients, and being a doctor does not mean we need to be a dictator. It means we

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need to open up communication with people who care. As a doctor, we must first care. Truly caring about the patient before us is our 2nd step. What truly caring for the patient looks like in practice is evaluating all your procedures with the standard of, *"Does this procedure serve to draw the patient closer to the chiropractic principles and truths, and if so, then continue it."* Caring for the patient in a unique way is exactly where we want to put our emphasis in our practice. If you review your recapture call script, you must determine if your script ensures that you ask the patient, *"Is everything okay? I may have had it down wrong, but we had you on the schedule for your appointment with the doctor at 5 pm today, was that our mistake?"* We care for patients by first asking the question, *"Is everything okay?"* Then by following up and asking if we made a mistake. If we do care, then we will choose the approach of leadership that will cause the patient to be posed with questions, questions that guide and engage the patient with chiropractic truths.

Posing questions instead of giving answers develops thinkers, and this is our 3rd step in Socratic Leadership Jesus' Style. We are called to lead people to the truth. We do not go out to *"get new patients."* We go out to give out truth. Giving truth can only happen when we create an environment of developing thinkers. Thinkers also develop confidence and ownership in the choice of healthcare. For example, when a patient comes in and is complaining about his/her headache, as the doctor, you might pose this question, *"Brad, what do you recall about how long we said in your report that this problem of headaches might take to lessen in symptoms? And what did we talk about that has been causing these headaches and how long has this been developing in your body?"* These types of questions draw out in the patient that they need to be a thinker. They need to process the information that they were given and apply that information in their own particular experience. This truly develops thinkers.

Our 4th and last step in Socratic Leadership Jesus' Style is giving authority over procedures so that the patient and CA can experience true ownership of the chiropractic truths. Ownership is the most common characteristic that doctors come seeking for their team of CAs. *"I wish my team would get it."* *"When will my CAs start to do the procedure, like the recapture calls, because it really matters to them?"* These are all common questions posed. Ownership of the truths comes from our giving the patients and CAs the authority to implement the procedure based upon their knowing the truths and principles. For example, when training on patients' re-reports, one idea is to open with a question like, *"Remember on your last report card how excited you were to see what your scores were on the tests we performed? Well, let's see how you did on this recent exam."* We as the doctors give the authority to our CAs and patients when we know they understand the truth, the why behind the procedure. For patients, that looks like when someone says, *"Doc, I want to come in tomorrow to get checked because I am going on a trip the next day, and I want to make sure that I am checked for subluxations before I leave."* That is what ownership looks like or when a CA says, *"Doc, I am going to write Mrs. Jones a note or call her today because when she left yesterday, she was in a lot of pain, and I want to encourage her to understand that her healing will take time, and she needs reminders to hang in there and not give up on herself."* Once again, that is a great example of true ownership, and that is what we are all seeking.

Jesus taught us by His example. When asked, *"Who are you?"* He replied, *"Who do you say I am?"* He knew any answer He gave would be used against him so instead he posed a question right back. So why are we so challenged to not always give the answers? Why don't we as doctors realize that our role is not to answer the questions posed but to lead our patients to seek their answers?

In TLC, we suggest that in probing our principles, we must always have clear take aways to implement with our patients and teams. So in summary, let's agree to implement these four steps to put Socratic Leadership Jesus' Style in place.

1. Ask dynamic questions of your patients: like *"Jane, what was the one thing you remember from your report that you understood to be causing your headaches?"* Another question could be, *"Mary, after you attended the*

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workshop last night, what was one thing you relearned about subluxations that reminds you how important it is that you get checked for subluxations on a weekly basis?"

2. Truly care about the patient sitting before you. Be sparing with your need to dictate and give more opportunities to be the teacher you were called as a doctor to be. It is much more common for the patient to experience doctors who just tell patients what to do, and there is a huge lacking of the experience of caring. Be the difference in the doctor you are and the patients will appreciate that.

3. Develop thinkers by posing questions. How great is it that by your choice and decision to pose questions, what it inspires in others is to be thinkers? Thinkers that do not need to rely on you but who choose, on their own free will, based upon their own experience with the chiropractic truths, regular chiropractic care.

4. Experience ownership of the chiropractic truths amongst your team of doctors and CAs and also amongst your patients. Ownership is the most common characteristic that doctors come seeking about their team of CAs. "I wish my team would get it." "When will my CAs start to do the procedure, like the recapture calls because it really matters to them?" These are all common questions posed. The ownership that we so seek is right here for our taking. We have to follow these four steps and create the environment that will develop this ownership.

Leading your team and patients Socratically Jesus' style does not happen by accident. It happens with putting procedures in place for the doctors and CAs that create this environment and it comes from training. Training to be different, to offer the patients a different experience in your office, to develop thinkers, to gain ownership of the chiropractic truths and to experience people who truly care about them. Be the difference.

Dr. Jen DePice is a graduate of Life University. She and her husband, CCA member Dr. Dean DePice, founded a chiropractic coaching company called Tlc4superteams. The DePices practice in Willow Grove, PA.