

## How Would You Be Rated, If ...

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There is a decided difference between what people think of themselves, versus how they are perceived by others. In some cases, the differences are quite startling.

We all tend to have this private view of whom we are and what we stand for. Unfortunately, this perspective may not be shared by the people we know. They may see us completely differently, depending upon how we impact their lives.

Those people who spend the most time with us are the most likely to have a true day-to-day perspective of whom we really are. As we all know, people can hide their true nature for a short time, especially when it is in their best interest.

So, do you think you know who you are?

Do you have the courage to find out?

As a doctor of chiropractic, you have multiple opportunities to get a better perspective of yourself as a doctor. Both your staff and your patients see you in that light.

When was the last time you asked for feedback? Providing regular reviews for your staff is part of running an effective and efficient practice. It is your opportunity to let your team know where they are doing well and where they need improvement. Your input, at regular intervals, provides them with the encouragement to grow and goals for the coming year.

Who reviews you? One thing we try to do in our office is ask the question, "Is there anything I could be doing better as far as you or your department is concerned?" This is a question I ask our department supervisors every time they have a review (usually annually). Their answers give me an indication of where I am doing well and where I need to work harder. It also gives me a chance to get a better perspective on how I am perceived by those with whom I work.

Some of these responses are very encouraging. Some are quite critical.

I learn more from the critical comments than I do from the compliments. The critical comments give me reason to reflect, seek confirmation from others and devise a plan for growth and improvement.

**The Only Way Your Practice Will Grow Is for You to Grow First!**

This is a painful, but true rule of life. If you aren't growing as a doctor of chiropractic, don't expect your practice to grow much.

Here's another rule that you should be aware of: Attitudes roll downhill. Whatever attitude you have with your patients (or a particular patient) is the same attitude your staff is likely to have. If you dislike a patient, they will, too. If you see that patient as difficult, so will they. And while you may be able to put on a happy face when that patient comes in, don't be too surprised when your

staff is less than courteous. They're just following your example.

What about your patients - what do they think about you? Are they impressed with your abilities? Comforted by your manner? Confident in your knowledge? When was the last time you asked?

It may prove a little trickier to get your patients to really tell you how they feel about you. They may be reluctant to be critical (especially just prior to a cervical adjustment!), but if they don't tell you where you need to improve, who will?

When it comes to your staff, you can ask them during staff meetings or when they are receiving their evaluations. You patients will probably feel more comfortable with a form survey (provided by your staff at the end of an office visit) that they can fill out (anonymously) and insert into a slit at the top of a box. You will get the most accurate results if your staff assures your patients that their responses will be mixed in with others and will remain anonymous. You can provide this assurity by letting your office manager tabulate the responses into a report for you.

The real key to all this is your response.

If you invite comments, be ready to thank the people who provide them, even if you don't like and don't agree with what they tell you. Remember, you need to know their thoughts. They are doing you a tremendous favor and taking the chance that you may get mad at them for being honest.

Accept all comments gracefully, with thanks and the assurance that you truly appreciate your patients' input. Their comments are guidelines for improvement, not attacks on your character.

Not all comments are generalizable, but they do let you know how you appear to that particular person. If you hear a trend, you need to pay attention.

Success is about growth. Asking for feedback is the best way to know where you need to grow. We all need improvement.

*DMP Jr.*

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