A Tale Of A Budding Manager

I studied (2) years to become a COMT. I worked (60) hours a week at the county hospital eye clinic - County, International, Level I Trauma Center and Burn Center, with the Children’s Hospital attached to us. I was paid $97.50 every (2) weeks as an eye tech intern... and I LOVED IT! The only thing driven more than me....

were the eye residents that were there more hours than I was. I wanted to learn everything I could about eyes... so I volunteered to go on ER runs, inpatient consult runs, “harvesting” runs.... OR add on cases to scrub into....

I read everything I could get my hands on... watched nurses, doctors, and managers deal with their staff - and patients - and made it through my training. Or so I thought!
After all that, I graduated with a solid “B+”. It’s who I always have been… prep school through college through ophthalmic technologist school. Not A…. Not C. Solid B+. I proudly claimed to be ……….

... a “blue collar tech”!

I was very confident in my skills and my role in the office. My comfort level was high…

I worked independently and became someone that sought out problems so that I could fix them!

I boldly went where no tech had ever gone before…!

I took the hardest exams because I could… I had no fear… I looked for challenges, conquered them and then… looked for the next challenge. I was tech “do it all”!
I actually thrived on chaos - and prided myself in keeping my head when all others lost theirs! I gave 110% every day... and was positive others only gave 65%! And to me... that was inexcusable.

I became the tech that the doctors wanted running their schedules and seeing their patients. I was good - I knew it - and everyone else did, too!

And probably... a royal pain in the neck! Worse yet... a pain in the neck that now wanted to run a clinic of my own. I mean - really - it would only make sense what with my organizational skills that would be the next step.
So... off I went... to run a clinic......
I now realize that is the day my education really began.
My expectations of myself were 110%.
Way out on the ledge - with no safety net.

My expectations of my staff were even higher because they were a reflection of me!
I wanted 110% from them as well - total buy in to the "mission statement" of the clinic, policies, procedures and the unspoken rules!

I wanted: integrity, honesty, pride in their work.... everyone working together as a team towards the same goal (the patient), working no matter what sacrifices had to be endured to get the job done...I demanded loyalty and expected my staff to be....

Golden Retrievers !!!
Instead – I got this:

I work for money,

If you want loyalty, get a dog.

Clearly I was devastated… and clueless!

How could my expectations not be the same as theirs?!

My neat managers world became almost too much to shoulder anymore because now I was trying to do it all by myself! So I did what any manager in that position would do… I tried to beat it into them!

I created standards, goals, and I had milestones that had to be reached. I pushed them… I pulled them … I gave them pep talks … I even tried…...
bribery.... but, still
I had a hard time getting
the staff to give me
100%. Yes... I even lowered
my expectations from 110%!
I began to notice that the staff was on edge,
becoming less friendly, and the workplace
became somewhat hostile...to me!

I figured I had to try a different approach or I was going to get eaten alive!

I sat back... and watched these folks do their jobs. No comments... no interference... just watched. I started to “see” my staff for the first time. I had a wide variety of characters working “together”....

Stand back folks

“It’s all good”

Team players

“The Director”
I started to watch the interactions of the crew. They had the most unlikely friendships you could imagine. They helped each other with the jobs. They *advised* each other. When it came to the patient, they put their "clashes" aside and worked to get "the job done".
“Treat a man as he is, he will remain so. Treat a man the way he can be and ought to be, and he will become as he can be and should be.”

Johann Goethe

You need to help them see their potential, nurture them when they fail, and then put the pressure on when they truly can do better. When they are down or in trouble - this is not the time to “dig in”. They need help - and you are the one that will dig them out.

I have 44 women working with me in my office!
Revelation # 1

Stop making your staff live up to your expectations of yourself...they can't do it (half the time – you can't do it either!)

Currently working with me:
- Mothers
- Daughters
- Sisters
- Wives
- Aunts
- Single Mothers
- Significant Grandmothers
- Others

They have lives other than work, and if you pressure them to put their job first – family second...they will leave. They should leave.

FAMILY FIRST... WORK SECOND!

Revelation # 2

Because of this, you need to “get to know” your employees and a little about their lives!

Revelation 2a

- Is a cat considered family when someone is trying to use sick time
- When is an aunt a grandmother in regard to funeral time?
- When is the towel boy for the basketball team considered to be an “all star”?
- “Lance – it is your turn to take the day off with your sick son...I need ya buddy!”
Revelation # 3

Who are your 100% techs and who only has 80% to give?

The tech who is going to catch my attention every time is the one that has 100% to give, and only gives 80%. That's the one you need to keep after.

Revelation 3a

The 80% tech that gives me all of their 80% has no worries. But... I want all of it!

“You are a mother, daughter, wife, sister first - what’s left is MINE !!!”

“Promises I Can’t Keep”

Once I learned that the key to my clinic’s success (and ultimately my success) was directly linked to my approach - my understanding and my belief in the staff - we became a new clinic! But it was ME that had to change.

I still expect 100 % of myself – and there are some of my staff that I expect 100% of as well because they can do it! IF I have a 100% staff person that is dogging it and only giving me 75%...I am irritated and I will call them on the carpet for it.
They know they are not performing at their best - and I don't want to disappoint them by not saying anything!

But... the person that has 80% to give... and gives it consistently is the person you have to watch out for. They are the one that is running frazzled, trying to be everything to everyone, and they are going to implode at some point. *They* are never sick...it is always a child, or a parent to the doctor or a husband's function. *They* come to work on death's door.

**A Tale**

I had a doctor that “hadn’t figured it out yet”. He had not “seen the light” regarding staff management. Soon he became “unloved”. One day I was standing from afar, watching with pride how a group of techs was working together with the back desk scheduler solving a problem.
He walked up to me, and asked what I was smiling at. I responded: "I was just thinking. Those gals are all going to hit menopause at the same time - and they don't like you!"
He nodded his head slowly... and then walked away!

Revelation # 4

This is the one time that it is true - how your office works, flows and survives is all about you. Your expectations of your staff can be the “thing” that allows your office to thrive - or drives it into the ground. and... you are the only one that can control that!

Enjoy it being ALL ABOUT YOU!