

## Practice Success Stories - 2

In previous articles I have described how the majority of people initiate their problem solving in one of the four Conative Characteristics

- Fact Finder – Gathering and sharing of information – Specifiers.
- Follow Through – Sorting and Storing Information – Classifiers.
- Quick Start – Dealing with risk and uncertainty – Improvisers.
- Implementation – Handling space and intangibles – Builders.

One of the questions that I am asked is what happens if someone doesn't initiate action in a particular way and it's this case that I will explore this time.

Keith is a practice owner in a rural town, he has taken until his late thirties to become a practice owner and is transitioning from the previous owner. He and the old owner, Larry, have effectively swapped positions. Larry had promised that he would reduce his days at the practice over a period of months but he is starting to give excuses and postponing his plans. Keith is finding this very frustrating and feels like he should be taking the bull by the horns but when he broaches the subject with Larry he comes across as being aggressive and the two of them, having enjoyed a good personal and working relationship to date, are hardly speaking.

There is a practice manager who has been with the practice for several years. She has a background of running her ex-husband's business and is very confident in her approach to running the business. Keith is somewhat in awe of her and tends to defer to her.

So we have a new principal desperately wanting to put his mark on the business but tending to "beat himself up" because he felt that he ought to be more dynamic, he wanted to feel like he was an entrepreneur, that he was a trailblazer and leading from the front.

Unfortunately some poor coaching previously had re-enforced these feelings of inadequacy so poor Keith was battling with his demons. He attributed his perceived lack of progress to a weakness in himself.

Keith's Kolbe score is 5:6:4:5, this means that all his measures are in the mid-range and he is classified as a "Mediator™". It is not an Action Mode but rather an ability to accommodate to all of the others. A Mediator easily switches among the Action Modes, moving from one mode to the next as needs arise.

A Mediator is willing to:

- Accommodate all other modes
- Adapt to changing needs
- Gain cooperation by mediating
- Commit to group progress
- Provide backup support

A Mediator's contributions include:

- Having the ability to act as a facilitator among people with various insitences
- Being a team player
- Being adaptable – thriving when cross-trained for many roles
- Being able to lead by consensus
- Being able to empower and delegate

In common with many of my clients who have taken their Kolbe A™ there was a huge moment of clarity when Keith's scores were explained to him. Another name for Mediator is Facilitator and Keith realised that he had been his most successful and happy when he was

not in a starring role but rather when he was acting as the glue that held people with different insitencies together. He naturally liked to work in environments with individuals who had a lot of instinctive diversity. Keith's flair for leadership came from bringing consensus to those around him. Without a particular way of getting the job done, the Mediator is a crucial bridge between polarized conative factions on the team. He actually resists taking a starring role as he thinks it is superficial and stops him contributing.

So much for theory, with all this awareness Keith was able to resurrect the amicable relationship with Larry that they had enjoyed for many years and was able to help and support Larry through his move to new challenges.

Whether the "Kolbe aware" Keith changed in his attitude to the practice manager I am not sure, but she moved on within 12 months or so. Instead of this being the crisis that it would once have been, he was able to appoint a successor that was his choice and this has been a success.

The team that he has built, and continues to build, is a far happier crew than it was. Keith is at one with his role of Facilitator – Conciliator and no longer feels that he has to be the "dynamic, thrusting entrepreneur" (whatever that may be) that he had previously imagined was the only way to be a success. Now at one and happy to trust his instincts his efforts are bearing fruit and he has one of the best practices with the best team for miles around.

"Success – the freedom to be yourself" Kathy Kolbe