Efficacy, the power to produce an effect, has been the goal of an ongoing quest throughout the history of occupational therapy. Over time, this pursuit has been manifested in different ways and in varying dimensions reflecting world events and priorities as well as the internal condition of the profession and its collective resources for coping. The search for verification of our power to produce intended results, to influence decisions, and to shape our world must be never-ending. It is this incentive that nurtures and sustains vitality. Threats to our efficacy lurk in misdirecting our journey, limiting our vision, and becoming individually or collectively wedded to what is comfortable, what is risk free and predictable. Essential to our vitality, then, is ongoing scrutiny of where we are, where we need to be, and how we are going about reaching such objectives.

Efficacy can be assessed from several perspectives, including political dimensions, economic determinants, technology, bodies of knowledge, or the social-interpersonal realms. The focus of this paper is the personal-interpersonal perspective. This choice is based on the belief that in the last analysis, our pursuit of effectiveness will succeed only in relation to the nature and quality of our leadership values and behaviors and their attendant personal and interpersonal skills.

Efficacy and Leadership Behaviors

Leadership behaviors are closely related to one's values, attitudes, and expectations about self, about others, and about the nature of one's world. Understanding and developing the skills of leadership requires bringing into awareness, confronting, and clarifying many of our beliefs and expectations. Effective leadership encompasses the creative and healthy use of self and in that context has been described as the empowerment of both self and others so that goals and intentions are translated into reality (Beck & Hillmar, 1986; Bennis & Nanus, 1985). This is transformative leadership, in the sense of enabling others to lead. In essence, leadership is making things happen by means of the wise use of one's power, making it possible for others to do what needs to be done, having a vision, and empowering self and others to bring that vision into reality.

Obviously, a critical variable in understanding and practicing leadership is being able to look at and come to understand power. This ability requires discerning what power means to each of us, what power each of us has, and how we use that power. Typically, we have more power than we are aware of or wish to acknowledge, and we use that power, with or without awareness, to get what we want. Sometimes we call it manipulation, sometimes seduction, sometimes con, and sometimes being a good occupational therapist and using self therapeutically. Nevertheless, to openly speak of one's power frequently generates a high level of discomfort. Power tends to be viewed as a negative and potentially destructive force that conflicts with traditional feminine values (McClelland, 1975). This negative view of power is, in part, related to our thinking of power as synonymous with control. The two, although related, are different.

Power is the capability of accomplishing something; it is the force that enables achievement of a desired outcome (Beck & Hillmar, 1986). Power was explained by Bennis and Nanus (1985) as the basic energy needed to initiate and sustain action. They suggested that power is the reciprocal of leadership. In contrast, control has been defined as exercising direction and restraint over others with a focus on dominating and achieving mastery over them (Funkhouser, 1986). A person with power makes things happen, a person in control influences what others do. If we are to nurture leadership behaviors in each of us, then we need to work toward understanding what power and control mean to us individually and generating an awareness of what power each of us now has. Furthermore, we need to learn and practice ways of using that power to empower self and others.

Rubin and Berlew (1984) described persons who feel powerful and who be-
lieve they can make a difference as those who

- are more concerned with achieving results than avoiding mistakes
- do what needs doing rather than waiting for others to take action
- accept the risks required to achieve innovative results
- look for opportunities to contribute even outside their defined areas of responsibility
- use a wide range of contacts and resources to get the job done
- expect to influence peers and superiors as well as subordinates and
- communicate directly and forcefully.

The capacity to empower self and others is greatly shaped by our values and beliefs about our self and others. Carl Rogers said, "The degree to which we can create relationships that facilitate the growth of others is in relation to our own growth" (1961, p. 269). Pursuit of such growth, increased self-awareness and understanding, the evolution of a positive self-regard, and the development of an interpersonal intelligence are all essential elements of leadership and critical dimensions of efficacy. This ongoing learning process involves confronting and clarifying values and beliefs, scrutinizing our expectations, increasing awareness of our feelings and behaviors, assessing and clarifying our relationships with others, acknowledging and perfecting our competencies, and recognizing and managing our limitations (Beck & Hillmar, 1986; Bennis & Nanus, 1985, Fidler, 1990).

Personal Competence and Values

We hold any number of values and attitudes that lock us into positions of powerlessness. Our nonempowering beliefs create roadblocks in our quest for efficacy by limiting opportunity for learning and discovery about self, about others, and about our world. Our mindsets, or mental models, as Senge (1990) has called them, are deeply held beliefs or images of how the world operates, our tried and true ways of thinking and of making decisions. They are what I have referred to many times as our bag of predictables, our "what will happen ifs." These mindsets are active in that they shape what we perceive and how we behave. Furthermore, because they are most frequently out of our awareness, they are not available to scrutiny, and thus they remain unchanged and unmanaged. Unexamined beliefs lock us in, as individual occupational therapists and as an organization, to a range of actions circumscribed by what is familiar, comfortable, and safe. Argus remarked (cited in Senge, 1990) that we trap ourselves in defensive routines that insulate our mindsets, our beliefs, from examination; therefore a circular, reinforcing process is generated. Our personal growth and quest for efficacy will not move forward so long as we hold unempowering beliefs and these will not change so long as they remain unexamined.

A commitment to personal growth, however, can alter our perspectives. For example, Senge (1990) has suggested that when we pursue self-understanding, failure is seen simply as a shortfall. It is viewed as evidence of the gap between our vision of where we want to be and our current reality. He believes that failure is an opportunity for learning about strategies that did not work. Failure, if there is such a thing (Fidler, 1990), is a necessary part of learning, of discovery and growth. Bennis and Nanus (1985) have reminded us that the 95 top leaders whom they researched held intriguing notions about failure. The word was simply not in the vocabulary of these leaders. They spoke of goofs, getting off the track, glitches, and shortfalls, but never of failure. Our mental models and associated fears about failure lock us into avoiding risks and not taking chances. We are thus left with holding on to and accommodating to the status quo. Somerset Maugham is credited with a statement that I believe should become our watchword, "Only mediocrity are always at their best" (cited in Senge, 1990, p. 153). This declaration should be stamped on our T-shirts and taped to our mirrors. We need to repeat it over and over to ourselves, especially when we find ourselves shying away from uncertainty. Then, perhaps, the next time we goof or experience a glich, we can stand up and be counted as among those who are not mediocre!

Closely related to our view of failure are the attitudes and expectations that shape our degree of comfort in looking beyond today and seeing a variety of possibilities. We learn early in life to narrow our vision and limit our awareness of alternatives for a host of cultural, social, and personal reasons (Fidler, 1990). We need to work seriously at increasing our awareness of options, let alone freeing ourselves to act on them. Confronting and clarifying some of our traditional mindsets and values will nurture the capacity for vision. The quest for self-understanding enables a greater freedom to see alternatives, consider options, come to know what one wants, and pursue that vision.

The empowerment of self, in summary, is an incremental process of learning how to use one's personal and professional resources more fully. According to Beck and Hillmar (1986), it involves pursuing self-growth, coming to know the self better each day, increasing one's competencies, knowing, using, and developing the power that one has; becoming more aware of what is happening, paying close attention to things and events in one's immediate situation; knowing what one wants and going after it; speaking out to identify one's position; and practicing positive confrontation.

Interpersonal Competence and Beliefs

Development of an interpersonal intelligence is the other side of the social-interpersonal coin. It means exploration and discovery of the reciprocal dimensions of a dyad. It means enhancing one's awareness and sensitivity to the feelings, values, and agenda of the other. It encompasses the learning of ways of empowering others, of facilitating exchange and enabling interdependent thinking. Interpersonal competence involves coming to understand the true meaning of collaboration and growing toward increasing levels of one's collaborative skills. It encompasses the melding of the empowerment of self and others. The quest for understanding others, for developing an interpersonal intelligence, is a dimension of the pursuit of self-awareness and a positive self-regard. The coin is indeed two-sided. Senge (1990) has reminded us that
without interpersonal skill, learning and development is fundamentally adaptive, not generative.

So long as we believe that our views are facts rather than assumptions, we close the door on reciprocal exchange. We need to learn to hear the other and to practice facilitative dialogue. Senge (1990) has proposed that such a process involves learning inquiry skills as well as skills of advocacy. According to Senge, inquiry skills employ supportive questioning of another’s point of view with the intent of coming to understand how the other arrived at his or her assumption, whereas skills of advocacy are focused on clearly and explicitly stating one’s own perspective and rationale. The point, of course, is to understand one another, not to sell an opinion.

The productive balance of inquiry and advocacy in an interpersonal encounter requires

- learning how to make one’s own reasoning and rationale explicit, explaining the development of one’s point of view
- encouraging others to critically explore one’s perspective
- encouraging and supporting others to offer different points of view and to explain their ideas
- actively inquiring, without judgment, into the other’s point of view
- always reflecting on the exchange process, asking oneself, what is happening? What is there about this situation, about me, about the other that is generating the feeling, tone, and the nature of this exchange? (Beck & Hillmar, 1986; Senge, 1990)

Obviously, the development of an interpersonal competency requires learning and practice in facilitative dialogue. A dialogue goes beyond any one person’s understanding; it is a system of communication that explores issues and concerns from many points of view. It is open communication; it is, as Senge suggested, “a free exploration that brings to the surface the full depth of an individual’s experiences and thoughts and yet moves beyond their views” (1990, p. 240). It is the process of collective thought. How rich our educational experiences would be, how enabling, for patient and staff member, if each of us were truly skilled in dialogue!

Building comfort with and skill in productive confrontation is a critical dimension of leadership and interpersonal competence. For many of us, confrontation is a frightening prospect and as such it is to be avoided at all costs. This mental image speaks to our fears of rejection and our need to be liked and accepted into relationships. Furthermore, I suspect, it relates to a sense of powerlessness and questionable self-regard. Confrontation seems to bring to the fore our doubts regarding the efficacy of our perspectives and opinions as well as our right to have an opinion or express a point of view. An added dimension for understanding this phenomenon and other beliefs that we hold is contained in the remarkable study of Brown and Gilligan (1992). This study offers startling evidence of how the acculturation process of young girls results in outspokenness giving way to caution, candidness to the avoidance of controversy, and knowledge of self to uncertainty and compliance with authority.

As we develop an interpersonal intelligence and a more positive self-regard, we can begin to view and practice confrontation as a set of positive behaviors that clarify a relationship and expectations between one’s self and another and that reflect a legitimacy of interests and perspectives. Positive confrontation says “I care enough about you and about me to want to address this issue.” It says “I believe we are both capable of change and growth, and that if we can openly and supportively address these issues, each of us will gain from the exchange.”

The Power to Produce Results
In a study of successful leaders, Michael (1982) identified the five most characteristic competencies of such individuals. These included

- acknowledging and sharing uncertainty: Embracing the indefiniteness of inquiry, being comfortable with the open question, the unknown, accepting the unpredictable element in ventures
- embracing error: Accepting that a goof, a misjudgment, is always possible and, when it happens, learning from the mistake and using that new learning to get on with one’s business
- responding to the future: Learning from the past but not being bound by it. Having a vision well beyond tomorrow and empowering self and others to translate the vision into reality
- becoming interpersonally competent
- gaining self-knowledge

This journey, this quest for efficacy is certainly not the quick fix that at times we seem to be looking for. Senge (1990) advised us that personal mastery, the development of self-knowledge and interpersonal competence, is not something one possesses. Rather, it is a process, with the journey being the reward. It seems reasonable to expect that a serious commitment to such pursuit might quell the anxious, defensive nature of our search in occupational therapy for identity and credibility. It might diminish our seemingly pervasive need to look more like another than like ourselves. Certainly it can be expected to empower us to increasingly be able to influence decisions, shape our world, and verify the effectiveness of authentic occupational therapy. Leadership is heading into the wind, says Theodore Friend (cited in Bennis & Nanus, 1985), “heading into the wind with such knowledge of oneself and such collaborative skill as to move others to follow” (p. 44).

If indeed those values and behaviors that characterize leadership are critical variables in our quest for efficacy, then the challenge to each of us is clear. It is especially so for those of us who create learning environments for the growth and development of students and young practitioners. We must enable such learning and growth by example and by providing the freedom and useful support for a continual search for self-knowledge and interpersonal competence. Such a mandate means that our first concern must be with our own personal and interpersonal learning and growth. For we cannot offer to others what we do not possess. We are reminded (Filler, 1990) that without respect for self, without self-understanding, we have neither understanding nor respect to give to others.
Acknowledgments

This article was adapted from addresses delivered at the 72nd Annual Conference of the American Occupational Therapy Association, Houston, Texas, March 1992, and the Pinning Ceremony, Department of Occupational Therapy, University of Illinois, June 1992.

References


