

## FORWARD

What is nurse power? It is the ability of the nurse to be in command while having a positive influence over others. Nurses have expanded their many roles of power as a part of the nursing profession. Our power has expanded more now as we have learned to practice overt and subtle ways of leadership and management.

Know that there is no a halting place at this point. Advances in health care practice move us forward in a journey where there can be no pause. If we had remained in a mediocre station of subservient behaviors, our intellectual qualities would lie dormant. We cannot rise to be a leading and caring profession without being involved in its many problems, by being touched by its agonies, and inspired by its cause.

This we know--no nurse desires to be or become less powerful. Every nurse wants positive power! Even beyond the significant power of assisting with life and death issues, we seek to demonstrate our abilities through overt powerful behaviors (and even subtle ways) to accomplish health care management and leadership goals. We are now the academically and experientially prepared nurses of today and the future. Now, the velvet glove of nurturing and supporting of others is the basis of our powerful practice that will lead other healthcare providers to more caregiving potential.

However, let us not be naive to the possible hidden motives of others who could threaten our leadership and management success. Some people watch for signs of weakness and are ready to pounce at the first sign of weakness like animals looking for prey. It is not unusual for others to question new-found powerful knowledge and the application of researched findings.

Power is maintained when the leader does not become, "too big for his/her boots." This means that there should be an ability to relate, empathize, and always be concerned for the people who attempt to meet the needs of the organization and patients they serve. Lord Acton expressed his opinion in a letter to Bishop Mandell in 1887—"Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Hence, the sharing with other responsible nurses of this powerful responsibility is a true sign of trust in others. Empathy is a major hallmark of nursing leadership. Be, however, careful and astute about the fact that research has shown that as power increases there is a tendency to decrease empathy—a negative outcome of leadership and management. We become the beacon of light for humanity when we treat others with empathy, caring and compassion--no matter the situation. Continue to be that beacon of light through service to others.

Good intentions expressed by others is not enough to show evidence of a positive leadership or management outcome. Learn to support others as you actually *see and feel* the results of your effective leadership and management. Know carefully *WHY* you do what you do and know when *NOT* to be intellectually and emotionally drawn into a potentially negative situation!

Each document culminates with suggested critical thinking questions. Multiple choice questions are located at the end of selected documents.

Learn the knowledge and techniques found in the following documents and use the power of discernment to lead you toward leadership and management success.

**LIVE TO MAKE A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE & LIVE A LIFE OF MEANING**