

# April 13 Ijournal

## How Does a Tennis Ball Know You Will Follow Through on Your Swing?

### **Workplace Anxiety; Impacts on the Team**

Sometimes leaders miss the cues that anxiety or stress is heightened. Anxiety in the workplace is associated with: elevated fatigue; increased stress; irritability; memory, attention or concentration problems; increased worrying and anxious thoughts; moodiness, agitation, restlessness, irritability; feeling overwhelmed; neglecting certain responsibilities.

These signs can show up collectively in a team, and there are clues or symptoms leaders can observe to help them determine how healthy or unhealthy their organizations are.

#### 1. Turf protection

- Do people take sides with other people instead of taking stands on issues? Do they stay focused on the issues at hand, or let personalities get in the way?
- Do they form coalitions or cliques that create an us/them mentality?
- Is there a lot of blaming of other people or departments?
- Do people assert their territory to the detriment of the organization as a whole? Do they make decisions that are solely in their own self interest rather than for the greater success of the entire organization?
- Are backstabbing and turf wars a way of life?

#### 2. Silent agreement or disagreement

- Do groups tend to come to rapid agreement with very little discussion or dissent?
- Do people tend to avoid conflict by avoiding each other?

#### 3. Lack of strategic alignment

- Does leadership send out conflicting instructions and mixed messages? Are organizational objectives contradictory or unclear?
- Is high productivity emphasized as the key to organizational well-being...or is the theme of most conversations "we are all so busy, under so much pressure, or overworked?"

If you observe these behaviors in your team, the **April 13 show** is filled with suggestions and strategies for getting back on track.

#### Overall:

- Start the conversations about the elephant in the room. Talk openly about the reality in the general economy as well as the facts that affect your organization.
- Take a pulse check of general anxiety or worry in your organization. Encourage people to use the EAP if you have one.
- Be very clear about objectives, working agreements and expectations.
- Notice if your staff is acting out of character in terms of work quality, responsiveness or relationships. Engage in courageous conversations.