

Code of Honor

Developing and implementing a Code of Honor for your team helps it to function as a finely tuned machine. Developed by the team members, the Code defines how team members interact, how they treat one another, responsibility to the team, and how things are handled when a member isn't fully supporting the team. This is powerful stuff. Properly implemented, it virtually eliminates interpersonal conflict and petty personnel issues. It's self-governing. It's self-energizing.

I always find the facilitation of the development of a Code of Honor to be an amazing experience. We call it, "going to the wall," and we don't leave "the wall" until everyone agrees on (and commits to) the Code.

So what types of things are included in a Code of Honor? This depends on the nature of the team and the work being done. There are, however, two elements that we insist be included in any team's Code:

- Willingness to call or be called

This is critical, because it's what gives self-governing 'teeth' to the Code. This element gives any member of the team permission to "call" another team member who either violates or is not living up to the Code. Likewise, each team member is granting permission to the other team members to "call" them should they fall short of the Code.

- Celebrate all wins

We insist on this one because most organizations do far too little celebrating! Remember precept number three? (Just in case you don't, it is, "People come to work wanting to do a good job.") A key part of this is recognition. Celebrating wins is a powerful way to reinforce positive behaviors. It can also be a lot of fun (something else that is sorely lacking in most organizations).

Beyond these, examples of other elements you might see in a Code of Honor include:

- Be on time
- Never abandon a teammate in need
- Mission first, team second, individual third
- Make only agreements that you are willing and intend to keep
- Focus on what works
- Support early, often and unconditionally
- Take personal responsibility. No laying of blame, justification or finger-pointing
- If a problem arises, first look to the system for corrections, and then communicate your solution to the person who can do something about it.

Facilitation of Code development takes some skill. It is not an easy process to go through; however, the rewards for your team are tremendous. If you would like more information on how members of the Practicing Perfection Institute can help you to develop a Code of Honor for your team, [email us](#) with your contact information, or [click here](#) to submit an online inquiry.

For a sample Code of Honor developed by the members of a very successful orthodontic practice, [click here](#).