I don’t mean to get too Shakespearean or philosophical with my headline, but I would like to open this month’s column with a few things for us to ponder.

You may know I have a passion for leadership and mentorship. I’ve found that self-reflection has helped me grow as both a leader and a mentor, and that starts with asking ourselves a few questions. For instance, how have you helped lead others, and how have you encouraged them to lead? Do you listen before speaking? Do you share what you know to help make a difference? Ultimately, how have you worked to empower your entire veterinary team to reach their fullest potential so that they may best serve your patients, clients, and your business?

These are just a few of the elements of effective leadership that can help people align their collective efforts to best execute your strategy and continually renew your business or organization.

The veterinary profession needs leaders, and the AVMA is here to help you continue building your leadership skills. That’s why I invite you to attend the AVMA’s 2024 Veterinary Leadership Conference, which will be held Jan. 4-6 in Chicago.

The conference will offer more than 20 hours of leadership programming covering such topics as mentorship, building emotional intelligence, overcoming perfectionism, achieving a better work-life balance, and improving your communication skills. This year’s keynote speaker, Richard Boyatzis, is a leading expert in leadership development and emotional intelligence. His research on human behavior has revolutionized management education and helped spawn a new industry of competency consultants, researchers, academics, and executive coaches.

The VLC is a unique conference, as the entire focus is on professional development, leadership, and building connections with colleagues. It’s an incredible opportunity to expand your network, explore leadership opportunities, and grow as a veterinary professional beyond your clinical expertise. Everyone I meet at the conference has a true desire to learn, lead, grow, and support each other in the work we all do.

One of the most important things I have learned at the VLC is how to develop and foster relationships in every part of my life. Building successful relationships both professionally and personally is a key component of our success and our wellbeing.

As your national veterinary organization, the AVMA works collectively with our more than 100,000 members to navigate our path into the future. At the VLC, leaders from our state veterinary associations, our allied groups, industry partners, and emerging leaders all come together to connect, learn, and guide the future of our profession. I hope to see you there!

For more information, and to register, please visit avma.org/VLC.

Rena Carlson, DVM

I want to hear from you. Please reach out to me with your comments, questions and concerns at presidentscolumn@avma.org.