

TROJAN

T O D A Y

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The Benefits of Being Proactive

BY DAVID E. NELSON

My wife and I are the proud grandparents of our fourth grandchild. Her parents live in Montana, one of the most beautiful places I have ever visited. We just returned from a wonderful week hanging out with little Molly Ann. She seems very calm and centered, and, in my eyes, already enlightened. We could not be more pleased with this latest member of the human family.

In conversations with our son, I realized since they live outside the city, they are on well water and therefore do not have the benefit of fluoride in their water. I know there are other fluoride treatments, but this fact prompted me to reflect on the dental industry and its commitment to health maintenance. The use of fluoride in drinking water is endorsed by over 90% of the country's health organizations, but only about half of the U.S. population receives the maximum benefit of community water fluoridation and the use of fluoride products.

"Being proactive, rather than reactive, can result in a variety of cost-saving and face-saving outcomes. It can also dramatically improve the joy and value in your life."

You, the oral health segment of medicine who have been in the forefront of advocating for prevention and nurturing healthy communities, are to be commended for that leadership. You have taught the rest of us it is better and often less expensive to prevent a health problem than to solve one. That principle can provide sound wisdom in other areas of life as well. Stephen Covey, in his bestseller, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, invites us to "begin with the end in mind."

Think of the many benefits of operating your professional and personal life with that conviction. Being proactive, rather than reactive, can result in a variety of cost-saving and face-saving outcomes. It can also dramatically improve the joy and value in your life. I will share my current list of top ten ways to be proactive. I invite you to add to my list ... or better yet to create your own.



1. Begin every day by affirming your personal and professional vision. I hope all of you have developed a vision statement that gives you meaning and inspires you. Each morning, as I dress, I remind myself of my personal vision statement.

I am a human being.
I will never be a victim.
I will never be an oppressor.
I will never be a bystander.
I am a human being.
I live fully.
I learn much.
I laugh often.
I love well.
I lead myself and others.
I am a human being.

2. Begin every week by planning the balance in your life. Make certain you are keeping your personal and professional lives in balance. Am I practicing extreme self-care so I can be fully present to my family, my staff, my patients, and others? It is important to have harmony between engaged and disengaged times. Are you nurturing your body, mind, and spirit?

3. Begin every month by revisiting your life goals. Am I on track in my evolution as a wonderful human being? Remember: It's your life; don't miss it. Each time you turn the calendar, remind yourself of the vision you have of your future. Our destiny

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Three Steps to Making Dentistry Affordable

BY PENNY REED LIMOLI & ANGIE SKINNER

Is dentistry expensive? You bet! So is a new car. Do you ever wonder why people with perfectly good cars go out every day and buy more expensive ones? To a casual observer, this seems like erratic or foolish behavior. And what is the underlying reason? It's pretty simple, really. They want new cars. Auto dealers are masters at understanding how to appeal to the wants (versus needs) of potential customers and at finding ways for their customers to pay for the vehicles they want.



Determine where the resistance to price begins in your practice

Would you like to know the secret to making dentistry affordable? We'll give it to you in its simplest form: Find out what your patients really want and help them find a way to pay for it. It's that simple. And if you are groaning because you've heard this message before, that's only because it's the truest axiom ever. Many dental professionals (maybe you?) are making it way too hard for patients to say yes.

We can't send you out to get this done without help. So, here are the details:

1. Determine where the resistance to price begins in your practice.

At your next staff meeting, ask your entire team, "What is the highest dollar treatment plan you're comfortable discussing with a patient?" Have each team member and doctor write their response on a small piece of paper and fold it in half. Next, have everyone pass their sheets of paper to one individual and have that individual read the numbers aloud. Most likely, the answers will range from a few thousand to thirty or forty thousand dollars.

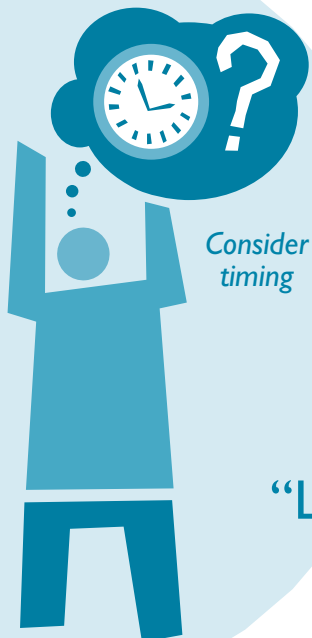
Remember, a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. It starts with the individual dentist and the overall mindset of the practice. Everyone on your team must believe no case is too expensive if the patient really wants to have the work done and the dentist approves of the treatment plan. No case is too expensive, no matter what the cost.

2. Consider timing.

Some patients may not be ready to take the plunge and get what they want, right now. Think of the patient who is asking questions now as the one who will get the work done in their own time and refer to you for years to come. Pushing a patient is never the right thing to do; in fact, telling or bullying a patient to say yes leads to cancelled appointments and patients leaving your practice. Learn to ask questions and overcome objections. We define objection as merely a question a patient needs to answer for themselves in order to say yes.

3. Consider payment.

While it rates a zero on the excitement scale, financing is simply the means to your end. The treatment plan is presented and the patient says, "That's so expensive, there is no way I can pay for it all!" If you've discovered the only barrier to preventing your patient from having treatment done now is a financial one, you're ready to begin the financial arrangement conversation.



Consider timing

**“Lack of money is no obstacle.
Lack of an idea is an obstacle.”**

– Ken Hakuta, author

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Let's use the analogy of the low-end luxury car at \$40,000. The idea of spending that amount of money in one whack can be daunting! Most people wouldn't dream of paying cash for a car that costs that amount. Think back to your last car purchase. The financial manager meets with and speaks to the customer not in terms of interest rates, length of agreement, buying or leasing, but monthly payments. In other words, \$676 per month sounds much more palatable than the full deal! Change your conversation with the patient. Start with, "If you were to have this procedure done now, what is the monthly amount you will be able to invest?" By utilizing tools like Care Credit, you'll have a multitude of monthly payment options for your patients to choose from.

There has never been a more exciting time to make dentistry affordable. 



Angie Skinner and Penny Reed Limoli are co-founders of Dental Genius™, a practice management and marketing firm specializing in the business of dentistry. In addition to consulting services, they offer a free email newsletter and teleforums for distance learning. **FMI:** 866.33COACH, www.dentalgenius.com, or info@dentalgenius.com.

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is determined not by some outside force or past experience, but by the decisions we make each day. We create the world we live in by our language and our behavior.

4. Begin every year by reflecting more on the future than on the past. What are the successes on which I will build in the coming year? How can I do even more of what I love? Designing an even better future is fun and empowering.

5. Begin every meeting fully prepared. If the meeting is important enough to attend, it is important enough to attend fully prepared to facilitate or participate. Too many meetings stumble along when participants are not prepared. Too often the first five minutes are spent complaining about who is late or not in attendance. Every meeting tells a story. What is the story this meeting will tell?

6. Begin every encounter aware each person is unique and presents a new opportunity for you. Treat each customer, client, friend, or other as they would want to be treated. Recognize and celebrate the good inside of you, as you honor and acknowledge the good in each person you encounter.


7. End every day with gratitude. Many people suggest the quality of one's life rises in direct relationship to the gratitude in that life. Keep a gratitude journal. Speak words of appreciation to your life partner, your children, and others.

8. End every week with some celebration. As you look back at the completed week, there are always stories of success to share. People and organizations move in the direction of the stories they tell. Make certain you continue to tell stories that capture the good about your life.

9. End every month by listing discoveries. The only wasted day is a day during which you have not claimed some learning. Sometimes those lessons are filled with great joy. Sometimes they are filled with tears. But always there is new insight to claim and add to your personal wisdom. Use a journal to record your discoveries.

10. End your life with rejoicing. A Lakota friend of mine tells of the cultural belief that when a child is born, the community rejoices and the infant cries. The goal is to live your life so when you die, the community cries and you rejoice.

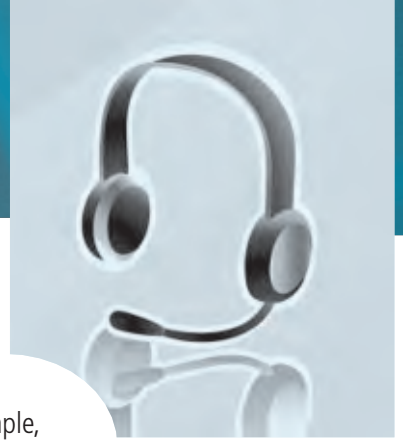
"Recognize and celebrate the good inside of you, as you honor and acknowledge the good in each person you encounter."

There is always more power and energy in creating and following an attractive vision of the future than in continuing to try to fix the past. I want happiness and health for my new granddaughter Molly Ann, as I want happiness and health for all members of the human family. I want for each of you to have the courage to live your lives on your terms and as a gift to the universe. 

Dr. David Nelson is an "Appreciative Inquiry Coach." **FMI:** Contact his company, *The Human Agenda*, www.humanagenda.com, 816.452.3853, or david@humanagenda.com.

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SERVICE SAVVY



Payer ID Numbers: What Do They Mean and Where Do I Get Them?

Are you aware each insurance company has its own assigned payer identification number? For example, the identification number for Metropolitan is 65978. Metropolitan has many addresses to which you can mail your claims. However, an address is not used for electronic claims. The payer identification number will direct your claim to Metropolitan.

Another example is Delta Dental. Delta Dental has many offices across the United States. When selecting the payer identification number for Delta Dental, you identify the "state" to which you would mail your claims. For instance, if you were to mail a claim to Delta Dental of New Jersey, the payer identification number would be 22189. But if you were to mail the claim to Delta Dental of California, the payer identification number would be 77777. We recommend you check with your e-claims vendor to obtain any unique payer ID numbers required.

You are in complete control of where your claims go by assigning the correct payer identification numbers. For a complete listing of payer identification numbers:

1. Go to: www.trojanonline.com
2. Click: Services
3. Click: DrDirect Electronic Claims Service
4. Click: Payers List

You can now view or print the payer list for your records. 

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TROJAN CLOSING: May 26, Memorial Day

MEETING PLACE

Nation's Capital Dental Meeting

April 24–26, 2008

Washington Convention Center

Washington, DC

Booth #1017

CA Dental Association

Spring Scientific Session

May 2–4, 2008

Anaheim, CA

Booth #1520

Trojan's mission

is to employ exceptional people,
give superior service, and provide
a positive work environment.

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