

SUMMER 2025

INFLUENCE

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FOR DENTAL PROFESSIONALS

**DR. ROBERT
STANLEY
DISRUPTS
DENTAL
A CANDID
INTERVIEW**

INNOVATION
TECHNOLOGY
& THE FUTURE
OF ADVANCED
DENTISTRY

**SECRETS OF
THE MOST
INFLUENTIAL
DENTAL
PROFESSIONALS**

WHAT SETS
THEM APART &
HOW YOU CAN
ELEVATE YOUR
IMPACT

**BUILDING
ELITE TEAMS
IN DENTISTRY**

LEADERSHIP,
CULTURE & THE ART
OF CREATING
HIGH-PERFORMANCE
PRACTICES

*O'Connor
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Special Thanks

From the entire editorial team at INFLUENCE élvé, thank you to the remarkable dental professionals, contributors, photographers, partners, and visionaries who make this movement possible. Your commitment to elevating others through leadership, influence, service, innovation, and kindness is what fuels the future of dentistry—and this magazine.

We're honored to spotlight those who not only rise, but lift others as they do.

Interested in contributing? Submit your story idea or editorial inquiry to influentialdentalus@gmail.com

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Sanjay Mali

Devonport, Tasmania. Australia

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ABOUT INFLUENCE ÉLEVÉ MAGAZINE

FOR DENTAL PROFESSIONALS



**Redefining
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Those Who
Elevate Others.**



INFLUENCE élevé is the premier magazine celebrating the most influential dental professionals and companies who are not only rising to new heights but lifting the entire industry with them.

Focused on leadership, innovation, mindset, and purposeful impact, INFLUENCE élevé spotlights those shaping the future of dentistry through collaboration, contribution, and the elevation of others. Through inspiring stories, thought leadership, and strategic insights, the magazine honors those who redefine success — not only by what they achieve, but by how they empower others to step fully into their potential.

At its core, INFLUENCE élevé *for Dental Professionals* is a movement — where legacy, leadership, mindset,

and elevation meet to ignite growth, fulfillment, and lasting influence across the dental profession and beyond.

INFLUENCE élevé is where legacy, leadership, and elevation meet.

When we lift others with intention, we don't just raise individuals—we elevate entire industries. Highlighting others, honoring mindset, and sharing what matters turns potential into legacy.



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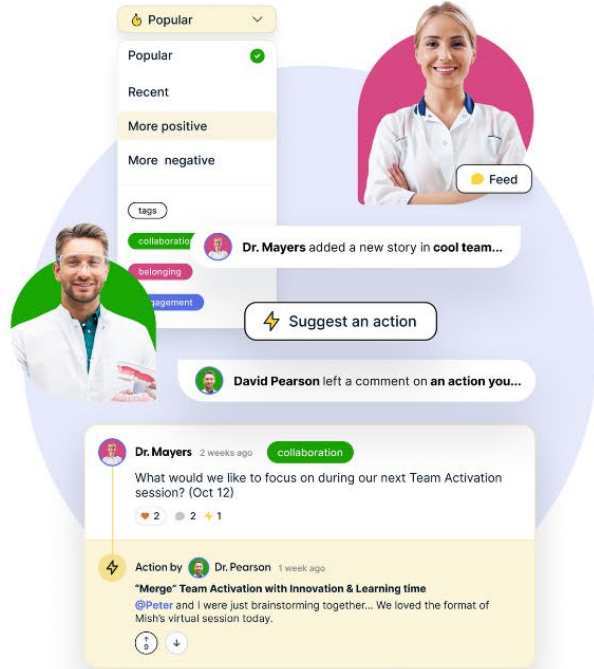
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The Biohacking Revolution: Transforming Dental Practices into Wellness Hubs

By Jay Khorsandi DDS

The modern dental office stands at a unique crossroads. While we've mastered the art of restoring smiles, we're now discovering our unprecedented opportunity to optimize entire lives. As practitioners, we're uniquely positioned to become the frontline guardians of not just oral health, but systemic wellness and longevity.

BEYOND TRADITIONAL CARE: THE TECH-ENHANCED APPROACH

Biohacking, the practice of using science and technology to optimize human performance, is revolutionizing how we approach patient care. In my two decades of clinical experience, I've witnessed firsthand how combining traditional dental expertise with cutting-edge wellness technology can unlock profound improvements in sleep quality, cognitive function, and overall vitality.

Consider this: every patient who enters your practice spends 6-8 hours nightly with their airway, jaw position, and oral environment directly influencing their sleep architecture. By

integrating biohacking tools and monitoring devices, we can transform routine dental visits into comprehensive wellness assessments with measurable outcomes.

PRACTICAL TECH INTEGRATION STRATEGIES

Start by incorporating sleep tracking recommendations into your patient care protocol. Devices like WHOOP, Oura rings, and Apple Watches provide detailed sleep architecture data, heart rate variability, and recovery metrics. When patients begin wearing these trackers, they gain unprecedented insight into how dental treatments (whether TMJ therapy, sleep appliances, or post-



surgical recovery) directly impact their sleep quality and daytime performance.

Blue light blocking glasses represent another powerful, affordable intervention. Many patients suffer from circadian rhythm disruption due to evening screen exposure, which affects both sleep quality and oral health through increased cortisol and inflammation. Recommending blue blockers for evening use often produces immediate improvements in sleep onset and morning energy levels that patients can track quantitatively.

Temperature and environmental optimization tools add another layer of intervention. Cooling mattress pads like EightSleep and BedJet, smart thermostats like Nest programmed for optimal sleep temperature (65-68°F), and air purifiers with HEPA filtration can significantly improve sleep depth. Changes are clearly visible in their wearable data. Clean air is particularly crucial for patients prone to mouth breathing, as improved air quality reduces nasal congestion and promotes healthier nasal breathing patterns that benefit both sleep quality and oral health.

MEASURING SUCCESS THROUGH DATA

The beauty of integrating these biohacking tools lies in the objective feedback they provide. Patients can see their sleep scores improve after receiving a properly fitted night guard or calibrated sleep appliance. Heart rate variability improvements (a proxy for stress levels) following periodontal therapy or post-root canal treatment provide tangible evidence of reduced systemic inflammation.

This data-driven approach transforms patient relationships. Instead of relying solely on subjective reports of “feeling better,” patients witness concrete biomarker improvements on their devices, creating powerful motivation for treatment compliance and long-term wellness investments.

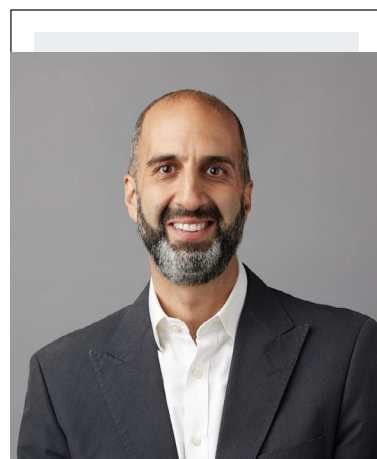
THE FUTURE OF DENTAL WELLNESS

The practices that thrive in the coming decades will be those that embrace this tech-enhanced role. By incorporating biohacking devices and monitoring tools into treatment protocols, we’re positioning ourselves as essential partners in our patients’ journey toward optimal health and longevity.

The question isn’t whether this transformation will happen, but whether we’ll lead it or follow it.



By incorporating biohacking devices and monitoring tools into treatment protocols, we’re positioning ourselves as essential partners in our patients’ journey toward optimal health and longevity.



Dr. Jay Khorsandi is Clinical Director of Orthodontic Aligner Solutions at Dentsply Sirona, co-founder of The Smilist DSO, and host of the “Best Night Ever!” podcast focusing on sleep optimization and biohacking.

3 BENEFITS OF FULL-ARCH COLLABORATIVE TRAINING BETWEEN SURGICAL SPECIALISTS AND GPs

When general practitioners (GPs) and surgical specialists train together in full-arch implant dentistry, the results are game-changing. This collaborative clinical training boosts confidence, improves patient care, and increases full-arch case volume. Here are three reasons why:

1

GP'S GAIN CONFIDENCE AND COMPETENCE

Restoring full-arch implants can be intimidating for GPs without hands-on experience. Training courses like TeethXpress provide the clinical know-how and chairside exposure needed to build confidence. With improved skills, GPs hold better treatment conversations and feel equipped to co-manage complex cases. As prosthodontist Dr. Michael Drone noted, "Solid CE is foundational to introducing new procedures into dental practices."

2

GP'S IDENTIFY MORE CANDIDATES

Once trained, GPs begin to see longstanding denture or patchwork cases with new eyes. Where once only repairs were offered, now they recognize ideal candidates for full-arch implant solutions. As the primary point of contact for many patients, GPs trained in full arch are positioned well to educate patients and guide them toward life-changing treatment options.

3

GP'S REFER MORE—AND BETTER—CASES

Training enhances the quality and frequency of referrals. With a clearer understanding of surgical needs, GPs send more informed patients to their surgical colleagues. This improves workflow efficiency and patient outcomes, while freeing up surgical time for advanced procedures. "In 15 years of offering [TeethXpress full-arch implant courses](#), we can say with confidence that surgical specialists who attend these courses with two to four of their top single-unit implant referring GPs benefit the most," said Lana Shoultz, VP of Integrated Marketing, for [BioHorizons](#). "These surgical specialists experience an immediate stream of new full-arch implant surgical consultations. For this reason, several surgeons have attended TeethXpress courses multiple times with different sets of GPs."



Collaborative training empowers GPs, benefits specialists, and elevates patient care. TeethXpress full-arch courses are a proven way to fuel this growth. Through this synergy, the world of dental implantology advances and brings the best possible care to those in need.

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BUILDING ELITE TEAMS IN DENTISTRY

LEADERSHIP, CULTURE & THE ART OF CREATING HIGH-PERFORMANCE PRACTICES

By Julieanne O'Connor, Co-host "Influential Dental" podcast, Bestselling Author, Influence Coach for High-Achieving Dentists & CEOs, Elite Dental Team Trainer, KOL Development Coach

In today's fast-paced dental landscape, clinical excellence alone is no longer enough. The most successful and sustainable practices are powered by elite teams—unified, resilient, and committed professionals who not only deliver results but also elevate the experience for both patients and providers.

But why? Who? And how does anyone get others to support their vision at an elite level—without dangling a massive paycheck?

LEADERSHIP ISN'T A TITLE. IT'S A SHARED STANDARD.

The foundation of any high-performance dental practice begins with leadership. But here's the catch—leadership isn't

about titles or making all the decisions. It's about *turning leadership over* to the team. It's about empowering every person to realize they already have the capacity to lead—within their role, within the culture, and within their life.

LEADERSHIP IS A CULTURE, NOT A ROLE

Elite teams aren't built by one visionary leader—they're cultivated through a shared mindset. The best dental leaders don't micromanage or control from the top. They lead by example, empower others, and create space for everyone to lead boldly in their lane.

In truly elite practices, leadership is distributed. From the treatment coordinator



to the hygienist to the front desk, every team member knows their voice matters. Ownership becomes natural because the culture itself invites it.

CLARITY IS THE CORNERSTONE

Elite teams thrive when they know the why, how, and what of the mission. When roles are clear, goals are transparent, and expectations are co-created—not handed down—performance elevates. Confusion erodes confidence. Clarity creates momentum. When people understand what excellence looks like and how their unique contribution supports it, they rise to meet that standard.

TRUST AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

You cannot build an elite team without trust—and trust is born in an environment where people feel safe. Safe to speak up. Safe to ask. Safe to be human.

In high-performing practices, psychological safety is treated as essential infrastructure. Mistakes are learning opportunities. Feedback is frequent and kind. Voices are invited, not filtered. This creates a place where innovation and morale thrive—even under pressure.

COMMUNICATION: THE LIFEBLOOD OF TEAM PERFORMANCE

Elite teams communicate with intention. Daily huddles, structured check-ins, and clear review systems keep everyone aligned. But elite communication also requires emotional intelligence—where tone, timing, and listening matter just as much as content.

In high-trust cultures, feedback flows both ways. Appreciation



Elite isn't a place—it's a paradox. The more power you let go of, the more powerful your team becomes. It's not about control—it's about trust, vibe, and how you show up. When everyone leads, everything rises. Your ideas land louder, your coffee tastes stronger, and life starts leveling up—at work, at home, in your mindset, your relationships... everywhere."

—Julianne-ism @spellingit @influentialdental



and celebrated. That front desk hero who calmed a panicked patient? That's culture in action. That deserves a spotlight.

And purpose? That's the ultimate driver. Elite teams know they're not just fixing teeth—they're restoring lives. When people feel connected to a higher mission, the work transforms into meaning. When team members know that those around them genuinely care about their personal goals, everyone goes further—together.

is woven into the daily rhythm—not saved for annual reviews. Conflict doesn't fester—it's addressed, resolved, and learned from.

HIRE FOR CULTURE, TRAIN FOR SKILL

The best teams are built on shared values. Skills can be taught—alignment cannot. Hiring people who resonate with your purpose and energy lays the groundwork for a culture that sticks. Once aligned, grow your people. Invest in their confidence. Offer CE, mentorship, leadership training. Let them shadow high performers and stretch into new roles. Growth keeps your team engaged—and engagement is the secret sauce of elite performance.

THE POWER OF RECOGNITION AND PURPOSE

Paychecks pay bills. But recognition and purpose feed the soul. In elite teams, gratitude is practiced out loud. Wins—big or small—are seen

PREVENTING BURNOUT: HIGH PERFORMANCE WITHOUT THE CRASH

Elite doesn't mean exhausted. High-functioning practices don't glorify burnout. They design for sustainability. That means smart workflows, respect for boundaries, and team-wide commitment to well-being. Dentists who model healthy leadership—who protect their own energy and encourage others to do the same—give permission for everyone to prioritize longevity. A well-cared-for team is one that sticks, thrives, and gives their best.

CREATING A LEGACY OF EXCELLENCE

Building an elite team isn't a one-time initiative. It's a way of being. A daily decision to raise the bar, not just clinically, but culturally. It's setting a tone that says: *We don't do average here.* When you empower leadership at every level, you're not just creating a high-performance practice. You're creating a legacy. One that lives in your team, your patients, and your community for years to come.

READY TO LEVEL UP YOUR TEAM—OR YOUR INFLUENCE?

Whether you're looking to build an elite dental team or step into the spotlight as a Key Opinion Leader, the path starts here.

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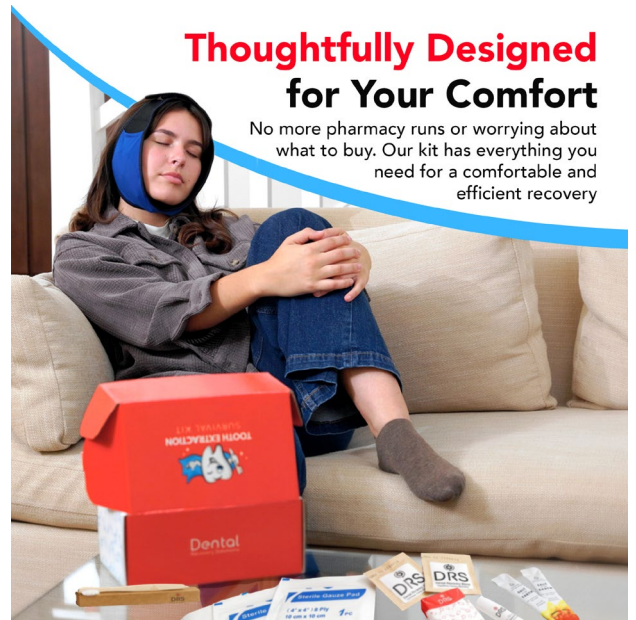
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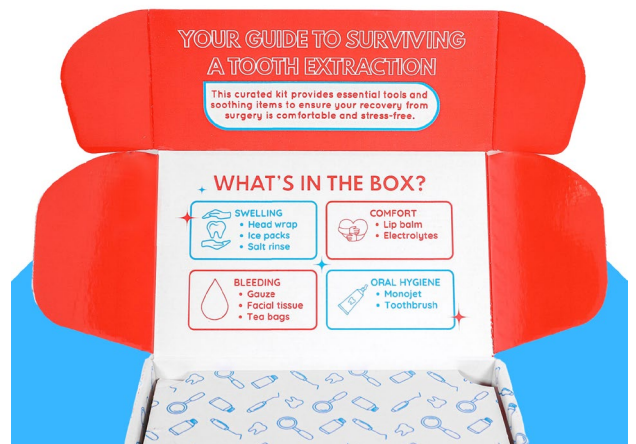


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RISING TOGETHER: THE POWER OF COLLABORATION IN DENTISTRY

By INFLUENCE élève Editorial Team

Featuring

Julieanne O'Connor & Michael Keeter

In every industry, there are people who quietly hold up the walls for everyone else. They don't need the spotlight. They don't ask for recognition. They simply show up, lift others, and help build something bigger than themselves. In the world of dentistry, Julieanne O'Connor and Michael Keeter are two such forces—and when they came together, that force multiplied.

Their story isn't about overnight success. It's about the kind of friendship that is built over years of showing up, sharing values, and believing that the dental industry is at its best when collaboration and generosity lead the way. Theirs is a story of *intentional elevation*.

“

We always wanted to help others. That was our bond from the beginning.”

Julieanne and Michael met years ago at a dental event where conversation quickly went from business to purpose. Both were immersed in the space of influence and coaching, helping high-level professionals elevate not just their practices, but their mindsets. What started as a chance connection became a long-term alliance rooted in mutual respect and shared mission.

“When you meet someone who genuinely wants others to win,” says Julieanne, “you hold onto them. Michael and I had an instant alignment in values.”

Their professional paths were parallel in many ways—advising doctors, guiding high-level executives, and training dental teams to function at elite levels. Over time, they became not only collaborators but champions of each other's success.

But even the most grounded leaders face moments that shake their foundation.

Without divulging details, they recount a time when both found themselves, separately, at the receiving end of negativity—situations where they felt disheartened by a lack of support from those they had uplifted. It was painful, but it was also a defining moment.

“We didn't let it make us bitter,” Michael shares. “Instead, we asked how we could create more environments where *no one* has to feel that way. That's when we knew collaboration wasn't optional—it was essential.”

They leaned in. Hard.



“

Lifting others isn't optional—it's non-negotiable. When hearts align around purpose, collaboration becomes the catalyst for transformation.

— Michael Keeter
& Julieanne O'Connor

What came next was a full-circle moment. As they intentionally began building initiatives that would encourage **true collaboration** and **impact-driven leadership**, they noticed something beautiful: people showed up. Other professionals, many of whom had experienced similar challenges, came forward ready to unite, uplift, and grow together.

It wasn't just about the business. It was about **belonging**.

Their work evolved. Today, they lead transformative experiences inside dental organizations, helping entire teams operate at a higher frequency. Through coaching, events, and elite team mastery programs, they foster environments where generosity and excellence thrive hand-in-hand.

Leading with Intention: 5 Collaboration Mindsets

Julianne and Michael's blueprint for collaboration includes these simple but powerful principles:

1. **Assume Positive Intent**
Especially when things get tough, lean into curiosity before judgment.
2. **Be the First to Give**
Whether it's knowledge, time, or energy—lead with generosity.
3. **Stay Curious, Not Competitive**
There's room for everyone. When one person rises, we all rise.
4. **Celebrate Others Loudly**
Public recognition builds connection. Give credit. Often.
5. **Design Joy into the Process**
Collaboration should be fun. Infuse laughter, lightness, and heart.

"We want people to succeed and feel supported. That's the whole point."

Through their **KOL and Thought Leader Development programs**, they now help professionals at all stages tap into their influence with purpose. Whether someone is new to speaking, seeking to build a stronger brand, or aiming to inspire their teams, they provide frameworks for authentic elevation.

And it works. Practices are seeing deeper team engagement, improved communication, and the kind of energy that draws patients in. It's culture at its finest.

"Dental practices that prioritize mindset and collaboration aren't just more successful—they're more joyful," Julianne says.

The duo's magnetic presence is part passion, part strategy, and all heart. Their mutual support and laughter-filled partnership is a model for what's possible when leadership is shared.

Their message? **You don't have to do it alone.**

There's room for all of us at the table. And the view is so much better when we rise together.



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Lori Lea Photography,
"Julianne and Michael
pictured sharing ideas on how
to level up, 2025."

INFLUENCE élève is the premier magazine for visionary leaders in dentistry. Featuring the changemakers, collaborators, and influencers shaping the future of the profession, we spotlight stories that lift the industry one smile at a time.



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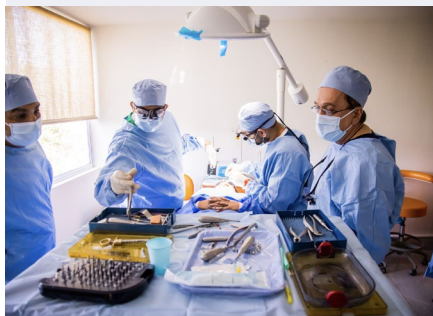


DR. LOUIE AL-FARAJE

PROVIDING FREE IMPLANT TREATMENT THROUGH LIVE-PATIENT TRAINING



In 2001, Dr. Louie Al-Faraje established the California Implant Institute (CII) in San Diego, California, to provide quality continuing education courses in dental implants and related topics to practicing dentists from all over the world.



California Implant Institute is a global institute with a large number of international students. During the last 23 years, more than 4000 oral health professionals from 40+ countries have attended our programs.

In 2012, CII introduced their live-patient basic to intermediate training program, which provides advanced, state-of-the-art training in oral implantology procedures in their facilities in Rosarito, Mexico, located just 28 miles south of the US border. Beginning in 2015, a program providing the All-on-4 treatment concept has also been offered.

These 2 programs are offered multiple times throughout the year. Expert clinicians guide practicing dentists through the procedures of extractions, bone grafting, and implant placement to provide them with the knowledge and confidence to perform this treatment safely and effectively for their own patients.

Because this training is funded by the tuition fees paid by the dentists enrolled in the program, CII is able to provide this high-quality and normally very expensive treatment to patients at no cost. This program has allowed hundreds of patients

from all over the United States to receive the dental care they need but could not otherwise afford. Patient testimonials describe the experience as naturally a bit nerve-racking in the beginning but in the end life-changing, allowing them to eat foods they had given up enjoying and to rediscover the smiles they thought they had lost forever. Some even described the experience as fun and like a “vacation” due to the beautiful location.

Potential patients are screened before being accepted into the program to make sure they are good candidates for dental implant treatment, and individualized plans are made according to the patient’s particular situation. Patients are carefully informed of all the steps and any risks that might be involved. Many patients have to go through several phases of treatment to allow healing and must get their own CT scans to be admitted to the program. Patients arrive in San Diego and are shuttled to the facilities in Mexico, which are located on the beach in a gated community, offering gorgeous views and a relaxing setting. The reason that the program takes place in Mexico is because the State of California does not allow dentists with licenses



from other states to practice there; changing the location has allowed practitioners from all over the nation and the world to advance their training and provide needed, quality treatment to patients in the program and their own patients back home.

Dr. Louie Al-Faraje and the other members of the CII faculty are overjoyed to be able to offer this win-win scenario in which they have been able to provide not only essential training to practicing dentists but also millions of dollars’ worth of free dental implants. Perhaps more importantly, they have been able to give renewed confidence, self-esteem, and quality of life to people in a range of situations, from the elderly to veterans to people young and old who simply cannot afford the cost of replacing their failing teeth with implants.



More information on these programs can be obtained at: www.implanteducation.net Please browse our current course offerings and feel free to contact us at: 858.496.0574 or team@implanteducation.net





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The Smile Engineer aka The Dental Contrarian: A CONVERSATION WITH DR. ROBERT STANLEY

Known to many as “The Smile Engineer,” Dr. Robert Stanley has never been one to follow the crowd. With a background in engineering, a fierce commitment to logic, and a mind wired for problem-solving, Dr. Stanley has redefined what’s possible in modern dentistry. In this candid conversation, we explore the principles that drive his clinical innovation, the mindset behind his contrarian thinking, and what he’s most excited about in the future of oral health.

Q: What do you believe has been the key to your success in both business and clinical innovation?

Dr. Stanley: Discipline—without a doubt. When I was younger, I probably would’ve been classified as ADHD. I couldn’t sit still, got bored easily, and caused plenty of trouble in class. I was the opposite of disciplined. But I learned that effort beats raw talent every time. In university, I realized that even if you’re not the brightest in the room, you can win through sheer effort. That effort, that consistency—that’s discipline. It’s like from *Forrest Gump*: “Just keep running.” You don’t need to be extraordinary—you just need to keep going.

Q: As someone who’s disrupted traditional models in dentistry, what mindset or approach do you credit for your ability to challenge the status quo?

Dr. Stanley: Must be the Irish in me! [laughs] Honestly, I’ve never been able to just accept things as they are. That comes from my engineering

background. Engineers are trained to solve problems that aren’t straightforward—professors would throw us curveballs on purpose, jumping from step 1 to 3 and making us figure out the missing piece. That’s how the real world works. And in dentistry, I can’t help but question the logic. People regurgitate what they were told without questioning the *premise*. But what if the premise is flawed? That’s where my contrarian ideas come from.

Q: How has your engineering background shaped your approach to dentistry and patient care?

Dr. Stanley: Engineering taught me to optimize solutions, not just implement them. In dentistry, we often focus on *can* we do something—but we forget to ask *should* we? For example, I’ve seen beautiful, expensive restorations that probably never should’ve been done because they weren’t built for longevity. Just because something is possible doesn’t make it optimal. We need to think in terms of **form, function, and longevity**. What’s the best solution long-term,

not just what’s trending? That’s how we serve patients best.

Q: What advice would you give to dentists looking to grow beyond the clinical chair?

Dr. Stanley: Treat every single person like family—your team, your patients, colleagues, even strangers. When you treat people like family, good things happen. Business, leadership, and patient relationships all thrive when people feel truly cared for.

Q: Who have been your biggest influences or mentors in dentistry and life?

Dr. Stanley: There’s no single person—*everyone* I’ve ever met has taught me something. I never stop learning. And sometimes the lesson comes from the most unexpected place. Keep your mind open. When you see greatness, copy it, reproduce it, and make it part of your life.

Q: What are you most excited about in your own future—and in the future of dentistry?

Dr. Stanley: I’m excited about my new book, *The 4 Pillars of*



That day, for no particular reason, I decided to go for a little run. So I ran to the end of the road... and when I got there, I thought maybe I'd run to the end of town. And when I got there... I just kept on going.

— Forrest Gump

Implant Dentistry (working title). It's something I truly believe will be used for years to come. It's designed to help dentists enhance patient outcomes and reduce risk in a way that's never been expressed before in any didactic format.

As for the future of dentistry— I'm watching the development of **organic tooth replacement**. Imagine being able to *grow* a third set of teeth. That's where we're headed, and it's going to change everything.



Dr. Robert Stanley continues to innovate and inspire through the **Stanley Institute**, where he trains clinicians to apply logical, lasting, patient-centered care. Follow his work on Instagram at [@smileengineer](#) or learn more at [StanleyInstitute.com](#).



WHERE CLINICAL MASTERY MEETS RANCHSIDE RENEWAL



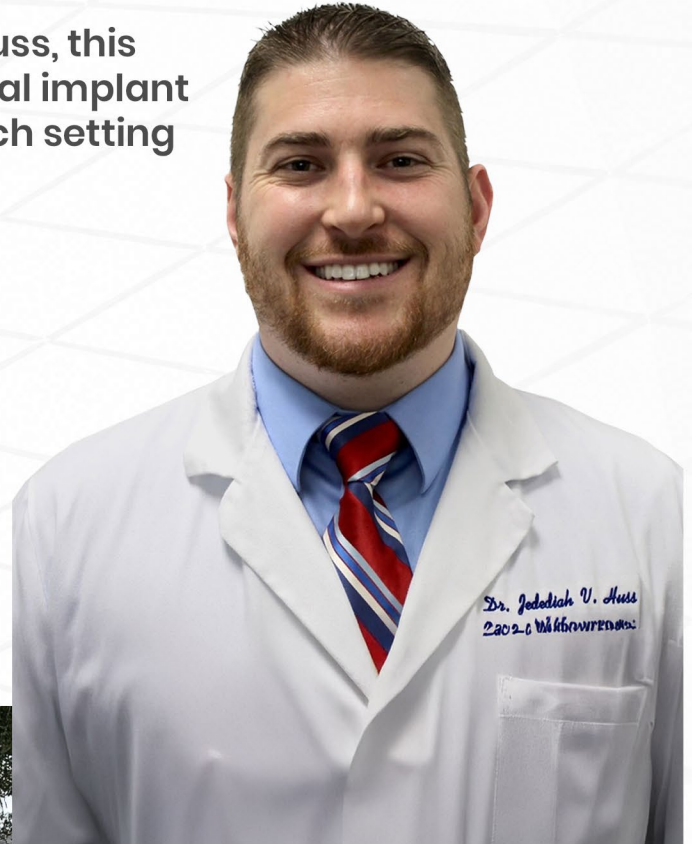
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DSOs, DEBT & DECISIONS

HOW NEW DENTISTS CAN TAKE CONTROL OF THEIR CAREER PATH

By Kim Larson, Co-Founder & COO, Group Dentistry Now

Navigating the Next Step: DSOs, Debt, and Career Decisions

When you are handed a DMD or DDS degree, you will have acquired well-honed clinical skills, a wealth of dental knowledge, and most likely a great deal of debt. However, what may not have been acquired are the business management skills needed to be a successful business owner, team leader and people manager.

The Demands of Dental Practice Ownership

The business acumen required to run a successful dental practice can be overwhelming, especially since most dental students have an education based in science, not financial management, insurance negotiations, marketing, IT, or human resources.

The business side of dentistry is often done after patient hours. Dentists entering the field, including growing numbers of women, often want a work-life balance that business ownership doesn't necessarily provide.

Younger dentists are leaving dental school more deeply in debt than in the past, sometimes carrying half a million dollars in student loans. This debt, coupled

with startup costs including securing real estate, hiring staff, and buying expensive equipment, prevents many from opening their own practices.

A Practical Path Forward

Many graduates will work for a dental support organization at some point in their career.

Upon graduation, well over 30% of all dental school graduates will join a DSO or multi-location group practice, and that number grows yearly. Working for a DSO upon graduation can assist the recent graduate in building clinical skills and confidence, but also allows them to expedite paying down loans and accumulating capital.

However, DSOs are not just training grounds for new graduates. In fact, a significant percentage of new recruits are experienced dentists.

DSO 101

DSO is an acronym that can stand for either dental support organization or dental service organization. Whether the 'S' stands for support or service, the meaning is the same.

A DSO is typically a stand-alone, legal entity built specifically

to handle the non-clinical functions of the dental offices which it manages. These non-clinical functions include human resources, accounting, legal, marketing, risk management, compliance, recruiting, payroll, IT, procurement, and other non-clinical services.

When a dentist decides to work for a DSO, one of the major draws is that the dentist can focus on the clinical side of dentistry while leaving the administrative side to a team of business experts.

You go to dental school to change people's lives through the art of dentistry, not necessarily become a CEO (chief everything officer), skilled in insurance, procurement, equipment maintenance/repair, payroll, HR, marketing, and other business practices which are a necessary part of a healthy dental office.

The right DSO can be a great place to start your dental career and fine-tune your clinical skills without the sometimes overwhelming distraction of figuring out and managing the business side of dentistry. It can remain your home for the duration of your career, or you

can gain experience and leave to start your own practice.

The Surge Towards DSOs is Gaining Momentum.

Research conducted by the ADA Health Policy Institute (HPI) shows there is a decline in traditional solo practices as dentists increasingly opt for group practices, a trend expected to persist. According to the ADA Health Policy Institute, 13% of dentists nationwide were affiliated with a dental support organization in 2022, an increase from 10.4% of dentists in 2019 and 8.8% in 2017. For dentists less than 10 years out of dental school the rate is much higher, according to HPI.

ADEA studies have revealed that the percentage of dental school seniors planning to join a DSO rose from 12% percent in 2015, and 30% in 2020, to 34% in 2023.

Aren't All DSOs the Same?

Regardless of what you may have heard (good or bad) about working for a DSO, it is important to remember that each group or dental support organization is different. Each has its own culture, its own unique business model, and its own opportunities and challenges.

There is an industry expression, "When you've seen **one** DSO, you've

seen **one** DSO." They can vary in many ways, including:

- Geographic footprint
- Career path and opportunities
- Ownership structure
- Access to technology and products
- Company culture and camaraderie
- Doctor compensation models – salary, pay for production, student loan repayment
- Potential ownership opportunities
- Mentorship, education, and training programs
- Charitable causes and philanthropic efforts
- Paths to leadership - career opportunities beyond the chair
- The type of dentistry performed
- Payor fee-for-service, Medicaid, capitated, mix
- Mission
- Business growth and exit strategies

With 2,000+ DSOs to Choose From, How do You Decide?

Much like each solo practice operates differently, each DSO also operates differently. According to The Association of Dental Support Organizations, there are thousands of DSOs to choose from and their numbers are growing.

You might be more familiar with the larger DSOs—after all, they often have more recruiters and

greater visibility through campus sponsorships and events. But don't let that limit your search. There are hundreds of other groups out there, each with different models, cultures, and opportunities. Bigger doesn't always mean better—though for you, it might. With thousands of options to explore, take the time to do your research, talk to dentists already working in group practices, and think about what truly matters to you. Do you want ownership? Prefer a clock-in, clock-out lifestyle? Whether you're looking for autonomy, mentorship, or long-term equity, there's a group out there that's the right fit for your goals.

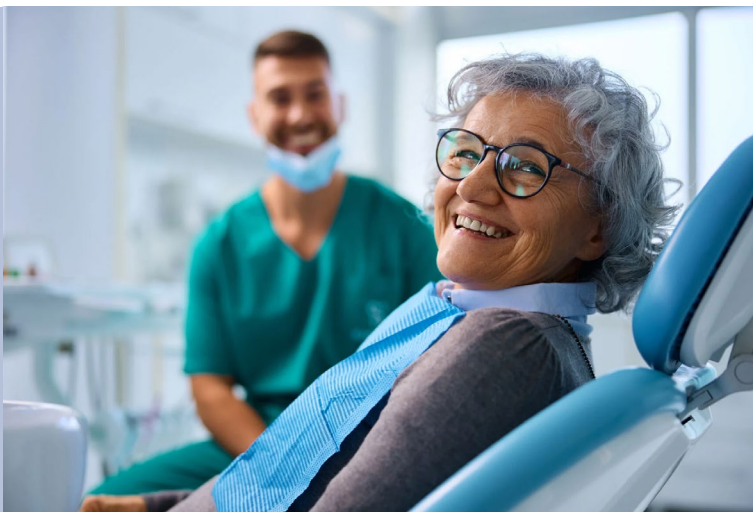
Since DSOs come in all shapes and sizes: private group practice, emerging, mid-market, regional and national; all offering different cultures and support philosophies, it is important to understand how you align with their culture, philosophy, and value system. Opportunities abound. You need to make sure that you choose the right DSO, and not necessarily the first DSO with whom you speak or the one that has free cocktails and dinner at a campus recruitment event.

Flip the Script: You Should Be Interviewing Them Too

It is valuable to attend DSO campus events and become



You have worked hard. You're finally a dentist. And now your options are limitless.



familiar with recruiters and their DSO's culture. Talk to every DSO that comes to your campus. Go prepared and ask them the tough questions. Do they fit into your life plan? Do they meet your requirements? Do you share values and a common life philosophy? You also need to perform your due diligence online. Visit and join some of the many social media groups specifically geared for dentists on Facebook and LinkedIn. Use these groups to find other dentists who have worked for a DSO you may be considering and get their opinion and experience. But don't just rely on one person's opinion.

Gather information to make an informed decision. Research other smaller, emerging, or mid-market DSOs that may be more regional in nature and offer unique benefits or opportunities in order to compete with the larger DSOs. Online resources like GroupDentistryNow.com's free newsletter and podcast, will help you navigate the abundance of opportunities and give you more information to help you make the best decision.

Interview DSOs and ask the tough questions like:

- What are the student debt repayment opportunities?
- How are patient treatment plans determined, managed, and executed?
- What is the DSO's business model and how does a new dentist fit into it?
- Are there opportunities to buy into the DSO or own a percentage of a practice(s)?
- What type of charitable and philanthropic work or community outreach does your DSO do?
- What does the work-life balance look like? Work hours flexibility?
- Are there advancement opportunities beyond the chair?
- What is the DSO's growth strategy?
- Who owns the DSO and how does that influence operations?

- Besides being patient-centric, offering clinical autonomy, and centralized administrative functions, what differentiates the DSO from other DSOs?
- What type of training is offered? Continuing education or leadership opportunities?
- Is there a mentorship program? If so, get the group's promise in writing and hold them to it!

Avoid the Trap of Overpromised Support

Many dental groups and DSOs make bold promises about training, mentorship, and continuing education as part of their recruitment pitch—but not all follow through. This lack of follow-through is a persistent issue in the industry. Unfortunately, this gap between promise and delivery is something DSOs don't like to talk about, yet it remains one of the most common frustrations among partnering dentists.

While training and mentorship opportunities are often highlighted as key benefits, they can quickly become vague or nonexistent once you're on board. That's why it's critical to do your homework in advance and ensure any professional development commitments are clearly outlined in your contract. Get the promises in writing and advocate for yourself.

Yes, Debt Is Real—But So is Your Power to Choose

It may be true that newly graduating dentists have incurred more debt than ever before in history. However, the good news is that there are more debt repayment options and countless career paths to explore and follow.

You have worked hard. You're finally a dentist. And now your options are limitless.

Remember this key takeaway: You are in control of your journey—don't hesitate to negotiate for what you need to thrive. This is your path, and you have the power to shape it in a way that's uniquely right for you.



About the author:
Kim Larson,
Co-Founder & COO,
Group Dentistry
Now

In 2014, recognizing a discernible void in the digital publication landscape dedicated to the Dental Support Organization (DSO) and group practice domain, Kim Larson founded *Group Dentistry Now* (GDN) and JoinDSO. Over the past decade, her unwavering focus on the DSO space has garnered significant attention and a substantial following within the DSO and dental industry circles. Follow her on LinkedIn. To learn more about dental groups and DSOs, subscribe to the **DSO Weekly Newsletter** at www.GroupDentistryNow.com and **The Group Dentistry Now Show: The Voice of the DSO Industry** podcast on your favorite listening app.

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IP & TOOLS

LITTLE MOMENTS: SNEAKY SELF-CARE FOR BUSY DENTAL PROFESSIONALS

By Ashley Abaie, DMD

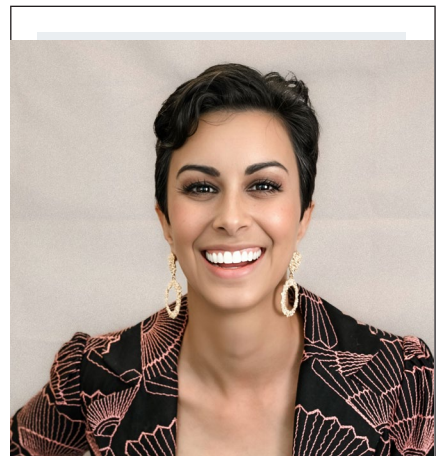


If you're like me, you're busy. So busy. Managing your practice, patients, staff, home life, children, grocery shopping, and trying to have friends and stay in shape. It's a lot. All the time. There's a lot of lovely advice on the internet these days about self-care and "taking time for yourself." But how do you take time when there is none to be taken?

Enter sneaky self-care: stealing moments that no one will miss. We all know stretching is good for our dentally abused bodies, but we might not have an hour to go to yoga. But what are you doing while you're on that phone call with an insurance company or a patient who loves to talk? What if you stretched your calves under your desk during that time? Or did trunk twists in your chair? These little moments can bring us back to our bodies, ease our aches and pains and help center us. And they don't take any time, money or special equipment.

What about breathing? Again, we all know the phrase "take a moment to breathe" but when is that moment? What if we don't have one? Again, sneaky self-care. What if we built that breath, just one breath, into little moments of our day, especially transition times. What if every time you put down the etch and picked up the bond you took a nice deep breath through your nose, and let it out of your mouth. Or right before you pick up the phone every time it rings? And before you get out of the car to pick the kids up from school or walk in the house? These little moments and these little breaths, will help relax our hyped-up nervous systems, lower our blood pressure, make us healthier and happier.

What are some other ways you could steal tiny moments to take care of yourself? It's a fun game that I play with myself and maybe you could join in too. Looking forward to hearing all the ideas you come up with!



Ashley Abaie, DMD is the clinical director of Exceptional Dental Arts Dental Laboratory based in Tempe, Arizona and the author of *Coming Free*. To learn more about her and her work, visit comingfree.com and exceptionaldentalarts.com



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THE POWER OF BELIEVING BIGGER:

MY JOURNEY AS A DENTIST, MOTHER, PILOT, AND ATHLETE

By Dr. Bobbi Stanley, DDS, MAGD, DICOI, FLVI

I love dentistry — but that’s not why I became a dentist. Of course, I wanted a career that was fulfilling. A career where I could help people and make a difference. A career where I could grow and become better with time. However, I also knew I wanted my life to be more than just a career. I wanted to be a wife and a mother. I wanted to do things outside of my profession — things that would fulfill my need for accomplishment and excitement.

When I first started my career in dentistry over 32 years ago, I knew I wanted to make a difference. What I didn’t realize was just how many roles I would grow into over the years: not just as a dentist and business owner, but as a mother of four, a grandmother of two, a pilot, and even an Ironman triathlete.

All of this didn’t happen by accident. There was a plan, a purpose, a list. Today, as the owner of Stanley Dentistry and co-founder of the Stanley Institute, I live every day committed to excellence — not only in how I serve my patients, but in how I live my life. And if there’s one message I want to share with other dental professionals, it’s this: You are capable of far more than you think.

THE EARLY YEARS: BUILDING A FOUNDATION

Starting out, dentistry was still a male-dominated field. I was told by my dental school professors that it would be impossible to own a dental practice and raise a family. Owning a practice while raising children required grit, long hours, and a commitment to a vision bigger than any obstacle. But impossible? Nah.

Somehow in my early years, I learned how to turn a “no” into a “watch me.” It wasn’t easy. But every challenge strengthened my resolve to build something that could positively impact not only my patients but also my family and community.

With this mentality, I was determined to open a fee-for-service dental practice from scratch. I wanted to do dentistry my way — offering the best without constraints from insurance companies or other dentists. I opened my dental practice in Cary, North Carolina, with no patients and only one employee. With faith and good intentions, the success of the practice grew very fast. When you do the right thing, patients notice and their trust grows. With that, your practice grows. Some would call this luck, but it came with lots of work and purpose.

THE SPECIALIZATION: GROWTH AS A MISSION

Cosmetic dentistry and orthodontics are my clinical passions, but my deeper purpose lies in growth and development — helping children thrive through airway development, and helping patients and team members build confidence and reach their potential. Treating children with underdeveloped airways has been especially meaningful; it’s life-changing work that goes far beyond teeth. I’ve also made it a priority to invest in my team’s personal and professional growth. When we grow together, we elevate the care we provide — and that’s where real transformation happens.

LIVING LIFE TO THE FULLEST: BEYOND THE OPERATORY

Somewhere in my early 30s, I realized that living a life of passion outside the practice actually made me a better dentist and leader inside of it. That's when I created a bucket list — a list of everything I wanted to do before I die, no matter how unreachable it seemed.

I learned to fly airplanes.
I competed in half marathons, marathons, and even an Ironman triathlon.

Next on the list is a bikini competition. Yes, that's right. I'm gonna do it! It's on the list, so I have to.

With this list, I've traveled, studied, pushed myself physically, mentally, and emotionally — and I've loved every minute of it.

Many people ask me, "How do you find the time?" The truth is, you don't *find* time. You *make* time for what matters. Living fully isn't optional if you want to lead fully.

A MESSAGE TO OTHER WOMEN IN DENTISTRY (AND BEYOND)

To every woman (or man) reading this: Don't limit your life to the four walls of your practice.

Don't put your passions on hold "until someday."

Build the business. Chase the dream. Love your family fiercely. Live every moment like it matters — because it does.

Success isn't about being busy; it's about being intentional. It's about designing a life that reflects the very best of who you are — in and out of the office.

DESIGN THE LIFE YOU DREAM OF

I believe dentistry is one of the greatest professions in the world — but it's only part of the life you can create. You already have everything you need inside you to build a life of purpose, passion, and fulfillment. Dream big. Live boldly. And know that if I can do it, you can too.



Somewhere in my early 30s, I realized that living a life of passion outside the practice actually made me a better dentist and leader inside of it.

10 TIPS FOR ELITE DENTAL PRACTICES

STRATEGIES THAT SET HIGH-PERFORMING TEAMS APART

1. LEAD WITH VISION, NOT JUST GOALS

Elite practices have a clearly defined mission and vision that every team member understands. When people know *why* they're doing what they do, they're more inspired and aligned.

2. HIRE FOR CULTURE FIT FIRST

Skills can be taught. Character, attitude, and cultural alignment are priceless. Elite teams are built with people who genuinely believe in the practice's values.

3. EMPOWER EVERY ROLE

Every position in your office should be treated like a leadership role. Empower your team to take ownership and make decisions within their scope.

4. COMMUNICATE WITH INTENTION ELITE TEAMS DON'T LEAVE

communication to chance. They have structured huddles, weekly check-ins, and an open-door policy to keep communication clear, direct, and respectful.

5. INVEST IN CONTINUOUS EDUCATION

Whether clinical or leadership development, growth is part of the culture. Encourage CE, attend events together, and celebrate the pursuit of mastery.

6. CREATE A SAFE, TRUST-BASED ENVIRONMENT

Psychological safety is key. When team members feel safe to speak up, ask questions, and make mistakes, innovation and collaboration thrive.

7. CELEBRATE THE SMALL WINS

Elite practices know that recognition fuels morale. Acknowledge effort, not just results, and celebrate even the smallest wins as a team.

8. DEVELOP SYSTEMS THAT SUPPORT EXCELLENCE

Efficiency is a hallmark of high-level teams. Invest in systems, processes, and technologies that make delivering excellent care seamless and consistent.

9. MAKE BURNOUT PREVENTION A PRIORITY

High-performance doesn't mean high-stress. Promote work-life balance, build sustainable schedules, and model self-care from the top down.

10. STAND FOR SOMETHING BIGGER

Elite practices give back, stand for ethical care, and align with purpose-driven initiatives.



Make your practice known not just for the work you do—but for what you stand for, and the people who stand beside you.



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THE INFLUENCE FORECAST

A cosmic mindset check-in for dental pros making waves—intuition meets impact.

SUMMER 2025 FORECAST:

This season brings a powerful shift in energy—from grounded reflection to expansive action. Like the first light on a summer morning, you're being called to step forward with boldness and purpose. Expect your influence to deepen—not through effort alone, but through *alignment*.

THEME OF THE SEASON:

Intention Over Hustle

In a world that glorifies busyness, the most influential professionals will rise by slowing down, tuning in, and acting from a place of clarity. Now's the time to reconnect with your *why*, audit your calendar, and say "yes" only to what aligns with your bigger vision.

MINDSET MANTRA:

"I am rooted in purpose, grounded in gratitude, and rising in power."

Repeat this before big decisions or when you feel overwhelmed. Let it anchor you in what matters most—and give yourself permission to let go of distractions.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR:

EXPANSION IN RELATIONSHIPS:

Summer opens the door to new collaborations. Stay open to partnerships that feel effortless and values-driven.

LEADERSHIP UPGRADES:

You may be called to lead in new ways—on stage, in your team, or in your community. Don't wait to feel ready. *You are.*

EMOTIONAL WAVES:

Growth often stirs old emotions. Take care of your mental and emotional well-being. Burnout prevention is not optional—it's your power move.



SUGGESTED RITUAL:

Start each week with a 5-minute "alignment check." Ask yourself:

- What do I want to feel this week?
- What is one action I can take that supports my highest vision?
- What can I let go of?

INFLUENCE INSIGHT:

Your presence is your power. The more grounded and authentic you are, the more others will naturally follow your lead. Influence isn't about volume—it's about *vibration*.



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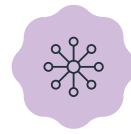
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THE POWER OF MINDSET FOR DENTISTS

Transforming Your Practice from the Inside Out

In dentistry, success isn't solely defined by clinical skills or the latest technology—it's deeply rooted in mindset. The way you think directly impacts your ability to lead, grow, and thrive. Shifting your mindset doesn't just make you feel better; it rewires your brain to be better.

Neuroscience confirms that your thoughts shape your reality. Thanks to neuroplasticity, the brain's ability to reorganize itself by forming new neural connections, your mind is never fixed. Studies show that when you focus on positive thoughts, you stimulate the release of dopamine and serotonin—neurochemicals that enhance mood, motivation, and even immune function. In contrast, chronic negative thinking activates the amygdala, keeping you in fight-or-flight mode and impairing decision-making and memory.

As a dentist, you face stress daily—patients in

pain, running a business, staff challenges. But when you shift your internal dialogue from "I'm overwhelmed" to "I have the skills to handle this one step at a time," you activate the prefrontal cortex—responsible for problem-solving and emotional regulation. This isn't about toxic positivity. It's about choosing empowering, realistic thoughts that support your success.

Example:
Let's say a patient cancels last-minute, and your first thought is, "My schedule is falling apart—this always happens to me." Pause. Reframe. Instead, say, "Unexpected gaps give me time to reconnect with my team, review my goals, or take a breath." Do this regularly, and you begin training your brain to seek solutions rather than spiral into stress.

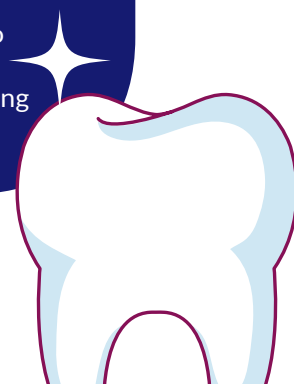
Dr. Carol Dweck, renowned psychologist, popularized the term "growth mindset," which refers to the belief that

abilities and intelligence can be developed through dedication and effort. Dentists with a growth mindset are more likely to embrace challenges, persist through setbacks, and continuously improve—not just clinically, but personally.

Mindset is the silent engine behind every thriving dental practice. It fuels leadership, resilience, and connection. Changing your thoughts won't just improve your mood—it will elevate your influence, your relationships, and your ability to create a meaningful career.

The good news? You don't need to be perfect to begin. You just need to become aware of your thoughts—and choose the ones that pull you forward. The greatest shift starts not in the operator, but in your own mind.

You have the power to think differently. And when you do, everything changes.





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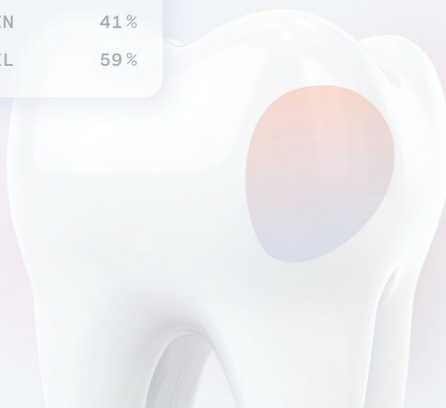
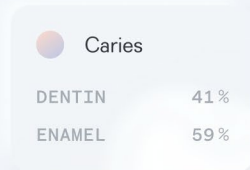
Turn practice data into opportunities that boost growth and improve care.



Radiograph Analysis

Second Opinion®

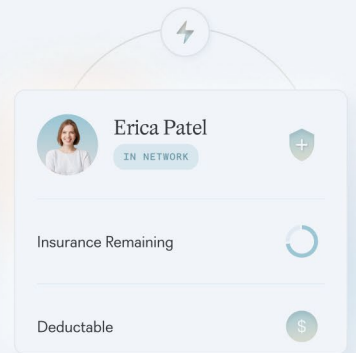
Read x-rays faster and more accurately to enhance outcomes and case acceptance.



Fast Verification

Precheck™

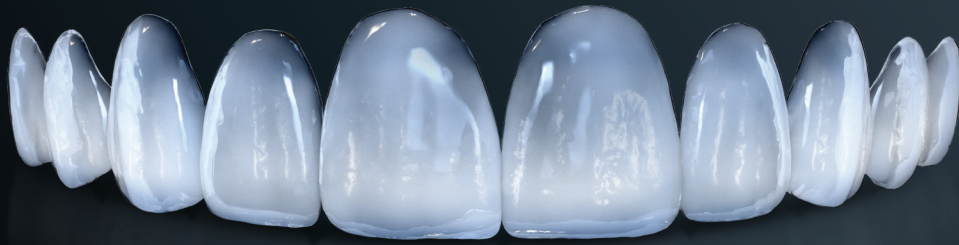
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