



“Serious Results for Successful Dentists”

NEXTLEVEL

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DENTAL TRIBUNE

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Chairside Challenge

Weekly Article Contribution by Gary Kadi, founder of NextLevel Practice™

The real reason your patients dread visiting you.

And it's not money, pain or time.

Chairside Challenge –

How can I increase new patient flow, eliminate hygiene cancellations and increase case acceptance?

Poolside Solution –

This week I am not coming to you poolside, but rather “sandwich-side” after landing a “C” boarding rank on a Southwest flight to St. Louis.

The Ascent: After taking a sabbatical from my weekly column, I wanted to come back with a bang. As most of you know I am on a mission to end suffering and slavery in dentistry. You see, both of these demons have seemed to become norms rather than exceptions. I know this may not include *you*. But if you are looking to take your practice and your lifestyle to the Next Level listen up, my friend.

During a recent focus group I conducted, I came to a huge realization upon hearing the response to the question – Why do you miss your hygiene appointments?

As I opened the floor for feedback, this strong voice cut into the conference call with a vengeance. She doesn't know it but her response has inspired a new way of thinking that will make a difference for many.

Her response was this:

“I hate to be berated for something I already know I'm guilty about.”

Wow. Sounds simple and we've heard this before, but she went on to say, “I feel bad enough and I hate going to a place that has an entire group of people telling me what is wrong with my health and that I haven't done this or that.”

This thought parallels the way many dentists and their teams think when considering hiring a practice management consultant. They fear being invalidated and judged for how they do things. Our minds beat us up enough – we never want someone to stick our noses in it.

My NextLevel Team invented a way to address this barrier. We've faced this issue with potential clients and you too can use this approach to address the barrier between you and *your* patients.

Here is my three step solution:

Transform the way Patients Hear and Respond:

Step 1 – Start with what is right about your patient’s health.

Step 2 – Understand your patient’s goals.

Step 3 – Educate them on the missing elements between where they are and where they want to be.

Let me explain why this approach is so effective and then I will share with you how you can apply it.

As humans we tend to naturally beat ourselves up and experience guilt. It feels good to be right and it is easy to make others wrong. We are used to this method, but when you start with Step 1 and acknowledge what is right about your patient’s smile you immediately shift that person’s ability to listen and more importantly to hear. Just so you know most patients enter a dental office listening through a filter that sounds something like Charlie Brown’s teacher “mwa mwa mwamwawawa”. This is their defense to hearing bad things and dreading what you have to say.

Once you open the floodgates of listening, you can then get to Step 2 – discover their cares and values. They usually want one or several of the following: Health, Function, Aesthetics, or Immediate Pain Relief.

Knowing this is the key to high case acceptance and Sales 101. We buy things we value and want. Both of my parents are in dentures at age 60. I do not wish to follow these footsteps, so when my dentist shares anything about bone loss and recession, I can’t wait to whip out my wallet and schedule. But if one doesn’t set me up to *hear* what they have to say nor tie it to something that is of value TO ME (not what you want to *sell* me), I may not be so willing.

Now if I’ve been set up and prepped to hear the missing elements between what is currently great about my smile and how to achieve the outcome that is important TO ME (not what you want to *sell* me), I’m on board!

The Descent: It is now time to prepare the cabin for landing and my “A” ranked friends beside me in the primo window and aisle seats are probably ready to share with me what is wrong about me and my *elbows*. I think they will get more love if they start by telling me what is *right* about me.

This method of thinking will transform how you approach your practice and your patients. By doing so, we’ve already upgraded a system that will produce a dramatic increase in three areas:

- New patients
- Re-care effectiveness
- Case acceptance

Yes, one “aha” moment can dramatically affect all three.

I spend countless hours studying human behavior. I love learning about the things that make us all tick. For years, I dedicated my career to mastering the technical side of practice management until I realized that I can only take a practice so far knowing this one dimension.

You have heard before that dentistry is a people business, not a teeth and gums business. Where do we spend most of our time? Yup, on the technical side. This only accounts for ten percent of why a patient visits and stays loyal to you. The other 90% of patient acquisition and retention has everything to do with their experience. Therefore we are really in the business of creating experiences, aren’t we?