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Putting Your “Think System” Into Practice

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The Practice Profit Accelerator is where we dive deep into the most pressing questions we're hearing from teams across North America.

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Kevin: Welcome everybody. I sure hope it's not only just a good day, but a day filled with excellence. Welcome to the first podcast of 2023 for the Practice Profit Accelerator. Scott Manning; a big grand welcome and hello.

Scott: Well, hello Kevin, DST Universe, friends, family, doctors, team members, children across the globe. Yeah, listen, here's the deal: we just love doing life and for me the new year, it's just another walk in the park, day in the neighborhood. It's really about you being fired up and focused on the things that just light you on fire and that you can't wait to wake up in the morning to get started. And by the end of the day, you're kind of ready to go to bed because you made so much happen. We're excited Kevin. I know it's always a cool thing for the "fresh start" as they call it. I always believe the key to every year is not how much more you're going to do, but about really eliminating the things that you shouldn't be doing and just honing in to focus and more time on what you love, on making a difference, and fulfilling yourself along the way.

Kevin: I can't agree with you more. I've always found it interesting as we get through and we say, "Oh, what are the resolutions?" and all that kind of stuff. To me, the majority of people, which we are not, go through with it and then guess what happens? You set all these grandiose expectations, things that you clearly are not going to commit to, only to lead to failure. It simply sets people up to be disappointed with whatever's going to happen for the year if they actually reflect on it. Like you said, how can we make life better through elimination? How can we make life better through focus, intention, importance, significance, and do more of that and less of all the other stuff that keeps us busy, because of course, for whatever reason, is the mantra of the world, which of course we don't agree with.

It's an interesting way for you to just share a little intro message there because I believe that this ties in nicely with your 2023 Welcome Video. By the way, it was awesome. I watched it twice. I bet you I took more notes than our practices will. I want someone to send me their notes from Scott's 40-minute intro video and see if it's more than mine! Anyways, what I thought would be really helpful, because you did do such a wonderful job with that, is I think we should begin by focusing on the four areas of opportunity you described when it comes to the "think system" into the practice.

Just as a refresher or for those who didn't have a chance to watch it yet, it's one, and this is my interpretation of course from what you had had shared, take responsibility for positively influencing others. Be authentic. Number two, be a guide. Be a leader of people. Be a leader of possibilities, a leader of outcomes. Three, positivity. Positivity of expectations, authority over others' expectations. That one alone, you could have just stopped watching the video and it could make your year. Positivity, raise the standard. The last one, create leverage. Truth is your superpower. Scott, I love you like a brother, but you started out the year hot, man. Okay. Let's take this and let's drill down a little bit. All right? Let's give some specific examples to everyone because you did a wonderful job of high level, setting the stage, philosophy, enthusiasm, excitement, the whole deal. Let's give them some tangibles. What say you?

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Scott:

Well, thank you, Kevin. Coming from you, the comments me so much. I do it because I think it's the right thing to do and I always am talking to myself. I think literally, but also figuratively. I'm glad you liked them. At the end of the day, or I should say at the start of the year, at the start of the year, it's really important that we just reflect on life gets filled up with just bullshit. The more space you leave unallocated, the more control you don't take, the more responsibility you let go, the more you are at the mercy of all these other variables. This begins, and call it what you want, I call it "think system," but it begins with how you think about things because that's what colors your perception, your perspective, your reality. It really begins internally.

I mean we could, first of all, do a call. We could dedicate a year to every one of these. We could do a call though on every one of them and we also could talk about them personally. I love that you challenged both of us going into this meeting here today, podcast as you call it, to apply these to the practice. If we just start with this, take responsibility. I mean the first one, it really sets the tone. It is what you do in a morning huddle. When you look at your daily goals, it's what you do when you start a patient conversation for any team member, for any doctor. It is really, I mean what you do when you wake up in the morning with your attitude. I said positively influencing others. Take responsibility for this.

Now that begins by your decision to be a positive person. That begins with your unwillingness to waiver on letting negativity affect you. Now we're all humans. Somebody pulls up in front of you in the drive to the practice, they make some rude comment or patients fall out of the schedule, you can let these things impact you or you can restrain from that. Instead, you can be positively responsible. What I would challenge you to do, and in December with our wealth groups, we talked to all the doctors. I used the theme of alchemy, you brought it up actually Kevin, is what made me bring it back into a theme because you brought it up last time. I said, "Well what the hell? We'll make a theme." The point is, is that you make all things better, not letting things make you worse. In most people's lives, they let things make them better or worse. They are the thing affected by other stuff, instead of us being the ones that do the affecting.

I mean just this alone, now I got to be careful because you added authenticity and I mean I brought that up in the video. If you got a shitty attitude, being authentic is going to teach you some hard lessons. If you are genuinely concerned, if you are a believer in the value of what you do...one of my little things this year's work on the word, there's no such thing as "worry, issue, concerns." Those are all stupid comments. I like to say "conscientious" instead of "concerned." If you're conscientious about various things, then you're going to be more mindful. I want to tell you that just live with your heart on your sleeve, just be real. Just be authentic when you talk to people, when you engage them. Instead of being affected by, be the effect. That's where your responsibility comes in. I mean all these tie together, they all tie to the next one.

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Scott: I'll stop there and let Kevin talk. We got some specific examples on the other three. Start with your attitudes, your mindset. Start with your morning huddle, start with your conversations, start with your year 2023. Just to be clear, I live by example. Watch the damn video. Now Google has a way of putting everything you don't want to see in your email and hiding everything you do. It's probably like spam or hidden in your promotions tab and all this stuff. You got to get this video, not because I did it, but because it is going to lay out for you and initiate this first one of bringing you to a level of responsibility and authenticity. I am going to positively influence you, exactly what DST, Kevin and I, Maegen, all of our team does on a moment by moment, email, phone call, training basis. You got to now do that in your life. Kevin...

Kevin: Yeah. Listen, great way to get this going and introduce, or reintroduce for those who actually watched your video already. I'm going to start working my way backwards quickly. I love the clarification you gave to authenticity. If you are somebody who in your true authentic state today is, let's carry it over from the Christmas season here, if you're the Grinch, well then maybe you're in the wrong profession. Maybe you could find a remote job who you don't have to speak to anybody ever again on the planet and you can just be mean to yourself and those who have to live with you. That's something to do. Now, god forbid that we have to deal with those kind of people and that we have many that exist. The point being, is that if that's your true, authentic self, well then don't be in a consumer-facing industry where the consumer, i.e. patient, deserves to feel your energy in a positive way, to feel positive vibes, to feel welcomed, cared for, important, worth the effort, all of that.

That, going backwards, ties in to taking the responsibility. It is your responsibility to show up and be a positive influence. That's all there is to it! You've chosen this profession. You've chosen to treat and care for human beings, thus, you signed up to be positively influential. Maybe somewhere along the way someone's missed that. This will be a reminder for them. Maybe it'll be the first time they've ever heard it. I don't know. Let's just be a catalyst for good and let's have this be important. I'll just give a real fast example. I was just on a phone with one of our newer doctors, super excited for this guy. He's got a great attitude, he's excited, he sees the opportunities. He said to me, he says, "Kevin, how can I make sure that my current associate and my new one that's coming on board, how can I make sure that everything goes well?"

I love it. He's taking responsibility, he wants a positive outcome. I said, "Here's the deal, here's where you want to start. You want to make sure that they know they have total permission and have all the confidence in the world to tell the patient the truth about everything that's going on. Make sure they also focus on possibilities because the patient deserves to know what's possible, not just be people who fix problems. And then mentor them, pour in to them, be the difference in their life and career. If you just do those couple of things, your associate doctors will reach the moon." Unfortunately, in the industry, doesn't happen often. That's an example of a particular role, in this case doctor, of taking responsibility for having positive influence on others, which in this case actually has an exponential effect because the influence that he's

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Kevin: going to have on these two, is ultimately going to trickle down and have an impact on a huge amount of people, including the team.

By the way, I made the commitment to come alongside him and do the exact same thing for him. It's going to be amazing. I'm so excited. He's got such a wonderful attitude. Talk about being authentic. I love that. Thanks for letting me weigh in on it, Scott. Why don't we now navigate ourselves into the second point here about being a guide, being a leader of people, possibilities, and outcomes. I loved how you took it way beyond people and you tied in everything else that comes along with it.

Scott: Thanks, Kevin. Great add-on, great example. I just want to say one thing, that the key to influencing others is to know what that influence is supposed to look like, okay? What do you want to do? Kevin and I would have similar answers if we're going to be generic. What we know is that every time we encounter a doctor and a team, we want to break them out of the comfort zone. We want to challenge your limited beliefs. We want you to be open to your potential. We want you to see that greater financial reward is a result of achieving better health for patients. And that delivering better health for patients is not going to come from volume-driven clutter in your practice if you're going to find leverage of time in that way.

Also, we do not want you to settle or be complacent. Good enough is fine when your good is great, but when your good ain't so great, okay? They say good is the enemy of excellence. We want the challenges. That's the influence. Our influence is on all of these things. We know what we want that to be. The more clarity you have over how you're going to influence and what you want the outcome to be of that, leads us into this guide, okay?

I'm glad Kevin mentioned the other things I said because it's not just people. First of all, it's easier to lead people if they're motivated to something meaningful, if they are fired up about the vision you're sharing with them, so the possibilities and the outcome...you ever heard people say when you ask how they are, "They're living the dream?" It annoys me only because people mean it facetiously. All right? Otherwise, I will tell you that the most important comment I ever get from a doctor when I first meet them is that they say, "It sounds too good to be true." I will say, "You are absolutely right because I ain't waking up for anything that is less than what other people believe is too good to be true because that's a worthy mission. That's what I'm striving for."

And that's why we say, it's the little things like, "optional is stupid," nothing is optional. If it's good for you, then we call it "optimal." There's no such thing as "elective dentistry." We say it's "an enhancement to health." You know this. Kevin explains the problems, prevention, possibilities of dentistry, okay? You stop at any one of those and you're doing people a disservice. Clarity over where are you guiding people to is the key. Then understanding that this is not about warm and fuzzy feelings. That helps people, but it's about being so committed to an outcome that is worthy of all people, and that these patients deserve, they just don't know it yet. That is how you create this.

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Scott:

Now tactically, and I know Kevin's going to give an example, think about it, hygiene, we talk about education. We take patients down an educational journey. We guide them through not just discovery of problems, but the creation of possibilities. Then we anchor them with us, tag team, arm in arm, hand in hand, as partners in the journey to optimal health. That's the outcome. This is why I say in every blueprint, every time we engage in a practice transformation, we talk about "no patient left behind." Now most of you don't even remember that from twenty years ago or whatever it is, when that was a theme of education in the government, which they do just a really terrible job at everything, so this year's probably no better. What we want to do is we want to bring patients up with us to the standard of excellence we believe in, that we advocate for, and that we are committed to, passionate about!

We do not water down our standards to people who have no standards, not because they don't want to, because they don't know how to, they don't know what one looks like. That's what this concept of "guiding" is. That's why I say the "think system" is being clear in your mind over what your responsibility is as a guide and what clarity of successful outcomes look like, and then elevating up all those around you to achieve it. Throw it back to Kevin.

Kevin:

I don't know that I can add much to that. That was fantastic. There were a couple things that came to mind I want to get to here. The first one is, as you were describing "the guide," and in my mind I was thinking of somebody who has passion, who has a depth of knowledge, who has excitement, enthusiasm, where it's almost like seeing this sparkle, there's glow around you to create an energy field. I recall when I was with you, this was many years ago, you may or may not remember, where we did a ghost tour. You promised that we had the best ghost tour guide in Charleston, South Carolina, and you were right. The guy was amazing. He was super focused on his energy, his timing, delivery of story, like everything. I paid attention to his delivery. I mean, I enjoyed the tour. I was most intrigued by watching his process.

What I deduced at the end of it was, this guy put a lot of time and effort to make sure that, one, he was mindful about how he took everybody on a journey and how he created opportunities to make emotional connections through excitement levels, pace, tone, all this different kind of stuff. It was truly incredible. He put thought into it. I knew one thing for certain: he delivers the same tour over and over and over again because he knows that it works. Does he customize a portion of it based upon getting to know his group of people? I'm certain, absolutely. The point of it was, the guy was a master and a student of his craft.

That's what brings me to this concept of "guide" through every role within the practice of dentistry and specialty work that we help and serve in, which is this—and this gets into a very deep, advanced selling technique, and it's this: when you're presenting an opportunity to somebody, you're guiding them to the opportunities, possibility, solutions, is if you don't elevate your level of excitement and enthusiasm, vibe, energy, that whole deal, you are not going to bring the patient along to a point where they're at an optimal state to be

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Kevin: able to receive your message and be as excited to go from, “I don’t want to do this.” to, “Now I do!”

Even though we talk about this all the time, I know we talk about this all the time, I’m talking to you about this very specifically because this is your moment as their guide, where you’ve got to go from educator to influencer. Influencer in this case equals salesperson. Let’s face it. You’ve got to sell them on why this is the most important thing on the planet. If you don’t elevate your excitement level because of that, it’s going to be hard to bring the patient along in any sort of transaction where there’s an exchange of money for value.

The last thing that I want to say here is, this ties in very well to our triangles of trust. Because when you make an effective transfer of, “I’m done with the patient experience and conversation and now I’m passing it off to whomever’s next,” there has to be a very natural pivot point there, which keeps the patient connected and tied in to what’s going on, rather than blowing it up, starting it all over, getting too far ahead, whatever the case is.

An example that I’ve shared over and over and over again, and I did this one specifically with a doctor who was going too far back regurgitating everything that the hygienist had already said and it was causing so much confusion, patients weren’t buying the deal. I said, “Here’s going to be our new trigger. Hygienist, keep doing your thing, you’re doing great. Even doctor says she’s doing awesome. Here’s going to be the statement we use as a guide to make sure that doctor doesn’t go off the rails, which is this: ‘Doctor, this is where Mrs. Smith and I have been able to get to before you come in. If you would please pick it up from here and continue to develop our vision for her health, we’re ready for you.’” something of that nature. It’s like, there it is! Now I get to take the reins. I get to say, “Great job you guys!” With excitement and enthusiasm and say, “Let’s get to this...let’s do something really amazing.”

I had to share that. I know that took up a little extra time because there’s key points there I believe we forget. You want to know why we forget? Because you guys do this all day long, 742 patients a day. I get it. It’s exhausting. You get into a rhythm, you get into the motions and you forget to be present. The best guides are present. Scott, I’m going to turn it back to you. We may have to pick up on a couple of these on the next call, but I’d love for you to add on to that.

Scott: Well, thank you so much. Yeah, I mean, first of all, that was about or more than 10 years ago, give or take six or eight months. I remember the exact conversation we had with Rochelle in the street in Charleston on that tour, which led to a few people that are in your household right now. It’s a lot of good stuff. I would say we definitely need to pick it up. I think the entire discussion next time could be about leverage. We could tie in the four pillars a little bit, but maybe even save that even for March.

I think the thing that I would add to Kevin’s brilliant thing, you got to listen to it again, is that this is why we say, “Treat every patient like a new patient every single time.” This is why we say, “Every patient counts...matters...every visit

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Scott:

must count...” however we say that. That’s because every time somebody comes to go through your process, you are the guide. It doesn’t matter how many times you did. It doesn’t matter how well the last one went. Doesn’t matter what you got to do after this one. It only matters about the one that you’re with. That goes to how you guide a phone call from start to finish, how you guide a patient experience from start to finish, how you guide a re-care, a reboot, a re-comprehensive exam or hygiene visit from start to finish. It doesn’t matter. You’ve got to stick to it. Just like doctors following the same diagnostic protocols. Again, diagnosing the standards and principles and pillars of health, not subjectively by random patient situations. These are all vital things.

The other part of the “think system” before the leverage was the positivity. We talked a lot about positivity, but really the specific one, Kevin, was the expectations. I think we’ll have to pick that up next time simply because you either live down to others or you live up to your own. I think anybody living by the expectations of other people is a person held hostage from being their true self and being able to tap into their greatest abilities and really just life. I also believe it’s the fastest way to self-sabotage, because it’s a lot easier to be successful when you’re setting the standards, not when other people are. We’re talking to ambitious people. You can’t be in the practice you’re in with the team you’ve got and the doctor that’s leading the way, without having that fire under your ass, that sparkle in your eye, butterflies in your belly, to want to continue to always better your best! That is because that is what we do.

And that is really the theme of the video overall; your mission is to watch that, to take notes like Kevin did, and to come together as a team with a battle plan, but also apply it to you personally. The greatest work we do is not helping you grow your practice or even delivering health to one more patient. It’s really that we get to help the helpers. We get to help you create better lives for yourselves, and then there in return, you pay it forward and give it all back to the people who make your life possible that you see. Thank you so much, Kevin. I’ll let you have the last word. I know we’re a few minutes over.

Kevin:

Great job, Scott. Wonderful way to kick this thing off. We will save points three and four for next month, and then I think we’ll anticipate doing the four pillars in March. I mean, let’s face it, the fundamentals matter. Let’s put a lot of attention and focus to it because I’m with you—let’s better our best. It’s a wonderful theme. I hope everybody adopts it to some degree within the practice. Maybe some of you just have it be your headline. Let’s go for it. Let’s better our best. I’m doing 52 weeks of excellence, how to be the best version of yourself every day and continue to do just as Scott says, “Bettering what that best is.” You’re getting it everybody! It is coming full-on because 2023 is going to be an extraordinary year, because why? We choose it to be.

Everyone, thanks for being on the latest edition of the Dental Success Today Practice Profit Accelerator Podcast. Here’s to the pursuit of being better in all that we do. Let’s have a great year everyone. Scott, thanks for being on the call. We’ll talk to everybody soon. Until next month.