

PPA Podcast

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December 13, 2023

Gifting Ourselves Reflection and Design

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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: Well, good day everyone, and welcome to the latest episode, and final episode of 2023, of the Dental Success Today Practice Profit Accelerator podcast...the one and only, Mr. Scott Manning, welcome to the show!

Scott: Well, Kevin, it's been quite the year. It's a wild ride, and every time you get to see the end of a year, you just have to be grateful. It's like you get to open a present every day of your life, and I know I speak for you, and me, and our team and how appreciative we are to have the opportunity to make an impact, to talk, but more importantly, to be listened to. And yeah, we just take it really seriously. So I'm ready to, not as much end the year, as start the next one. I get excited about the start, finishing the year, it is what it is. I hate going to sleep at night, I don't want the day to be over. So at night or at the end of this year, it's not about finishing, it's about starting it. So let's roll.

Kevin: I love it. And it's always interesting when we come to this moment of we're in December, January follows, and the majority of the world following the calendar. And so we play into it to a degree, and I'm with you. I just look at every day as a day and I continue to just be grateful for the day, seeing as how none of them are promised or guaranteed. And given the gravity of situations that your family has been through, my family has been through, and countless others, it's like I appreciate them more and more. And the older I get, same deal. I got two young kids and I just look at every moment as being really cherished with that. And so I'm going to flip it up a little bit too with regards to how you left it, which is, since we have arrived here at our last Practice Profit Accelerator podcast for the calendar of 2023, let's say, let's finish strong! Because guess what, we still got a couple weeks left, so we're not even mailing it in.

And in the spirit of Christmas and the holiday season, I say let's put our focus on today of creating this pathway to gift ourselves the spirit of giving. This month let's gift ourselves the opportunity of reflection so that way we can identify the good, what we'd like to cast away forever, and design being the keyword, what it's going to look like as we head into the future, which so happens to be the turn of a calendar. And so Scott, if you don't mind, why don't we begin with just creating space and opportunity to reflect on all that we've experienced over the course of 2023. And eventually we'll make our way into taking time to lead people into designing what lies ahead for 2024 by making what we like to say, smart, calculated and meaningful decisions about not only what we do in our practices and for patients and their health and all that, but also for life. So take it away my friend. Dive in.

Scott: Yeah, well listen, Kevin, I really love, I love just the way you put some significant thought-provoking comments into that. I mean, we always run out of time, so I really want to turn this towards the future. I mean, at this point, what are people listening at this live right now or listening later? There's only a handful of days probably left before Christmas, and it's really, we can still run through the finish line, like you said, finish strong. But here's the thing: no one is going to learn lessons for you from this year. It's really up to you. So you have 365 sunsets and sunrises, which is not a bad gig, but other than that, you got shit to show for it unless you stack up your memories. Unless you take a

Scott: moment to reflect on what you've learned. Now, if I was in your team right now, I would've been, all year long, slapping patients' faces on the wall of people's lives, you've changed.

That's the kind of memories I'd be collecting. I'd be building a stack of daily testimonials and reviews like a good old fashioned gratitude jar. And I would be building that baby all year long. Now, I was a little bit too late, but I would be thinking in my end of days, Kevin, you'd love this. Now maybe one will do it even the best, even the best, maybe one will do it. But I told our Wealth Groups, I said at the end of the day, huddle, why isn't there a journal? Every fucking day people start accumulating the thoughts of the day, the lessons learned, the patients, literally, we don't take it seriously enough. And so this year, you need to take the next two weeks and you need to really say, "How am I better, faster, stronger, more resilient, tougher? What am I taking away, packing in my suitcase, into the depths of my soul in 2023 that I'm going to bring with me to the new year?"

And then the beauty of that is not how much you fit in a bag, it's really the bridges you burn when you leave. So if you do not reflect, if you don't keep something, then it was all for naught. And then if you bring anything else with you that you shouldn't, you're just going to drag yourself down in the future. So to me, Kevin, it's really, it's both. It's a win-win, it's a double-edged sword, it's heads and tails, it's whatever you want. So lessons learned, how am I better, faster, stronger? How have we grown? How have we changed and are different in this moment in time than January 1st, 12 months ago? And then also, what's the wash your hands clean list? And of course we're going to shift gears then to starting fresh. So those are my thoughts, Kevin, accumulation of memories, of lessons learned, of growth and reflections, and really having something to show for this amazing masterpiece of 52 weeks of another life. And you got to, as the saying goes, I don't like saying take the good with the bad. Because I just think it all just is, it doesn't have to have a label, but you really do have to embrace the successes and the struggles, the tragedies and the triumphs, because you can't have one without the other. But if you blindly walk into 2024, you are nothing more than mediocrity.

You still with me?

Kevin: Oh, I was on mute. My bad. Okay, listen, wonderful way to get this thing kicked off. Great way to get people into the proper mindset to see things. I love when you say no labels, because I'm tired of labels too, right? It is what it is! One of the things that's interesting, is over the last four to six weeks, I've had a number of requests to say, "Kevin, can you help us to just think differently about how to prepare for what's to come?" And of course they're talking about calendar change and all that kind of stuff. And I love that. It's not just help us prepare—how can we do it differently? How can we do it more effectively? And the thing that's interesting, and everybody knows this about me, I'm the people guy, and I believe that the source of the majority of our problems that exist on a regular basis is simply communication.

Kevin: It's connectedness as, "team." And so what's important for me to emphasize is if we focused on one simple thing, it doesn't have to be my choice, I'm just giving you something that's really obvious, and things that I talk about on a daily basis with practices all over the place, is how can we be so connected as a team, more connected than ever before, to display a level of agape love, like I like to talk about? Wanting the best for everybody. How can we display that in such a way where everything just works out so much better? Doesn't mean we're not going to have challenges, doesn't mean we're not going to run into grumpy people, none of that stuff. It's just we're going to be more united than ever before so that we have each other's backs, so we have more empathy for each other, we celebrate in grander ways.

And I'm with a practice right now where we're setting up individual calls with each person and the doctors, and I'm doing this with them. And what we're doing is we're going through this little five question list. And one of 'em is exactly that: how can we make certain that we are protecting the culture, we're elevating the culture within the practice, we're more connected, communicating better than ever before, so that nothing is in the way for us to elevate and expand what we believe is our standard of excellence?

And we just kicked it off this week, already had two calls, and they're going wonderfully because they're in the spirit of good. They're in the spirit of proactive, they're in the spirit of wanting to be catalysts for and be the force for good for others. And everybody listening here has the honor of choosing what I always say is the number one most important thing in anybody's life, which is health. And so it makes it even that much more amplified into such great things.

So I just wanted to add that in, Scott, from what you said, because it is what we focus on that allows us to then expand into other areas. And when you tie them all together, connecting this as team, communication as team, making sure that we completely understand vision, mission, all of that, it's easier, not easy, easier. And, I would argue, more enjoyable. And let's face it, we spend more time with each other than we do with some of our families. So goodness gracious, put in the effort to make it enjoyable.

Scott: Yeah, I mean, listen Kevin, I think it's an amazing point. And I love the enjoyment. I love the focus on love that you always say. So yeah, listen, again, I think this has to be done individually. It has to be done as a team. It has to be done over your patient outcomes. Has to be done over the practice of whole. And then we really now need to focus on where we go from here. And I'm going to give you the three staples that always think about.

Okay, first one is, what's different about next year? Just plain and simple. I like to label that. Now we talked about no labels, but in different way. Let me say categorize, as what do you want more of? What do you want less of? And I do this every year with our Wealth Group, but we're beating them up, driving in the ground, getting really to the deep, deep, deep layers of personal reflection in order to arrive at that.

Scott: But just overall in your practice, maybe it's less of people being late, less insurance. Maybe it's more of complete health dentistry. Maybe it's more of high quality patients. It's more of communication. But you really have to assess how will next year be different? And then I'd like for you to go crystal ball, 12 months from now, what will we celebrate? What will we be proud of? What will the things be? And as a team, this is what we have to do and we have to talk about that. Otherwise, it's just more of the same.

It's the same reason why you can engineer any amount of growth and you have to break it down to daily, weekly, monthly. But these are not done by, we want to grow the practice by $100,000 a month or $10,000 a week or whatever. It has to be, how do we want to grow our patient's health? And if every patient or a practice, if we leveled up by, whatever: a crown, an implant, ortho, TMD, facial aesthetics, we get one more full arch a week. That's the level up that's required.

And most of the time you don't even need more of anything! You just need to organize the schedule differently. You just need to incorporate one more new patient, or you need to be more discerning about which new patient you let through the door. Maybe it's you need to reboot more patients and hygiene through conference exams and full-mouth updated photography or scans. For our specialists, it's one more referral a day. I mean, all you have to do is pick up the phone and ask somebody for that. So you can really do the math in reverse.

So what do you want different for next year? What will we be most proud of 12 months from now? And then where are we going to level up? Where are we going to stimulate increases? And this can be categorized down into buckets. It can be categorized into schedule, engineering, making room and space for various things. And then the other thing, I guess I'll just throw this out there very quickly and then I'll let Kevin go, is I also like to look at where do we simply need to tighten up on consistency and/or where have we felt sticking point we need to break through?

So sticking points: we can't get somebody in for six weeks or we can't schedule anchor appointment for two months, or all of our new patients spots are filled for 30 days. Like, okay, these are bottlenecks. We have to address these types of bottlenecks. Now maybe we've gotten lazy on diagnosis, maybe we're doing a shitty job of tracking case acceptance, let alone the fact that we're not selling effectively or closing the gap on follow-up. Maybe we've gotten super sloppy on prepay. Maybe our schedule has gotten the best of us because we've had to fight through some busy times.

So it's all this stuff. This has to be a very, very messy brainstorming discussion of everyone airing it out in a free space, in an open, blank canvas of taking our fingerprints to the future. I like to say, "Keep everything you love, throw away everything you didn't, and then challenge yourself for what better looks like, where our growth will come from." Identify qualitative, not just quantitative, but also not the other way around either, victories.

Scott: And then we'll drill that backwards down into the first quarter. Just picking some 90-day wins. This is a big, big, big picture, and I just made that very complicated, confusing, Kevin will make it better. But then you got to go back and really re-listen to the last six or eight minutes of this in particular because I just built an entire one year growth plan, all of your own choosing, your voluntary self-selection of exactly where you're going to see your breakthroughs. Kevin...

Kevin: I love it. And I do want to dial in on a couple of things as I'm feverishly writing notes here. So I may be a tad bit all over the board on this one. I promise you I'm going to bring it all back as I do. A few thoughts that came from what Scott's shared there, is number one, actively engage in this process. Please don't do the process for the sake of it. Don't do the process because we asked, don't do the process because your doctor asked. Don't do the do process just for the sake of it. Actively engage yourself in it. Breathe life and energy into it so that you realize something good, something extraordinary will ultimately come from it. And what I would say to you is, please also, let's not get into the pattern of making these crazy big lists because, let's face it, the crazy big list, nothing ever gets done with them. And all we do is add to 'em and then we complain about that.

And so what we want to do is we want to make smart decisions on a more refined, you can start big, then refine, categorize, do something so that it doesn't look so insurmountable that you'd never start, you don't follow through, or you just keep adding, the list keeps getting bigger and you complain about that. And as a side note, just stop complaining, right? Guess what? The list is always going to be there, okay? There's always going to be a list! There are things to accomplish in life; personal life, professional life, the whole deal. Let's become comfortable with that. So smaller, more refined, highly impactful lists of things that you believe will lead to extraordinary outcomes, that will lead to this feeling of joy, feeling of accomplishment, satisfaction, worth, all of that.

And don't add to your list until you eliminate something. Okay? So that shows we got to get some things done. Don't keep adding to the list. Now, one thing that I would suggest, because this to me, when I started this process, this was so fun. I mean it was a little alarming at first. Then I got so excited about it, now I look to do it all the time. Begin with elimination. Let's celebrate all the stuff that you're going to say no to, because we've all, for the most part, rare exceptions, we all say yes to too much stuff. We all say yes to things that aren't meaningful. We all say yes out of obligation. We all say yes just to please others. Let's just make the decision to stop doing that. And if you say no to more, guess what it does? Creates space and opportunity for you to say yes to things that are far more meaningful, far more enjoyable, and can be far more effective in the practice, out of the practice.

Both of them work, just like you don't have to say yes to every patient. They need to earn the opportunity to come see you, just like you're trying to earn their trust and confidence for them to agree to come see you. It's an equal exchange of value here. Same thing in your personal life. Because when you

Kevin: get all that dialed in, you'll be far better within the four walls of the practice because of it. So begin with elimination. Feel the freedom to let some things go, feel the freedom to delete stuff out of life that is just messy and in the way, which includes people, by the way. Begin with elimination.

Then go into design mode. Go into what do I want to spend my time on? What will be meaningful? What will be impactful? Where can I just do one thing a tad bit differently that's going to have a big impact in the conversations I have with a patient? What's one thing that I can do just slightly differently that's going to make me more engaging with my team, more supportive for my team, to have more empathy for my team, to be a better team player, to set up my team members to be more successful?

Let's not over complicate it. Nobody gets an award for the biggest list. Nobody gets the award for the biggest change. The award comes personally through satisfaction when you do it in a meaningful way through elimination and then through focus. And so Scott, that's where I wanted to reign that in so that people understand it's not a competition. It's not about how much, none of that. It's about what matters, specifically to you, so that you can wake up every day and be excited to be the best version of yourself.

I just had a call with a doctor today and I shared this with him. He asked a very insightful question to me. He says, "You know Kevin," he goes, "One thing that's so interesting is you and Scott like, man, every time you guys are just on, you're on for every phone call, you're on for every training. How do you do it? Because I know that you guys are humans." We were just joking about that. And I said to him, I said, "Well, you've got to play a lot of mind tricks on yourself because life happens..." And this one specific example I gave him, I said, "There's two main reasons why I go all-in every time, everything I do." And I said, "My main one is my family. I want to be the best example to my children as possible. I made this vow to God to be a great father and all these kinds of things. And so I've got to do those things to honor it. And you know how I remind myself every day? When Addison walks out of the door in the morning to go to school, Julie takes her to school, I give her big hug. I tell her I love her, and I say, 'Addison, be your best today.' And then in return, that's my reminder that I've got to be my best too, because I can't ask of my children what I won't do with myself."

And so that's where it all begins. And then throughout the day, I have other reasons to keep me focused, to keep me strong, keep me hungry, to keep me going, because that's what everybody expects of me and they deserve my best, even when I'm not at it, even when I'm not feeling well, whatever the case is going to be, I'm still going to go for it.

And so Scott, I wanted to take a moment to share that because I believe that's our biggest downfall, is that we don't have a strong enough reason why to push through when we need to push through. It's easy to perform at a high level when things are going great. It just doesn't always happen that way.

Scott: Kevin, you just gave your whole life lessons and philosophies. I think, friends, we're going to hit replay on this recording for every month for 2024 because Kevin gave you the theme. I'm just going to recycle it real quick. So first of all, a hundred percent, I always say, "Delegate, eliminate, automate, mitigate," all that, mitigate negative thoughts, eliminate time-wasting, delegate things that bog you down from the higher value things, et cetera, et cetera. You have team collaboration within all those. But Kevin, I love it. You got to make room for growth. This is not about stacking on more shit. This is about getting rid of stuff that no longer is relevant. Maybe you've outgrown. And in many ways the same thing goes for your time, goes for your home, your life, your hobbies, all your stuff, and of course goes for your practice and all those things as well.

So I would ask what isn't relevant anymore? What isn't meaningful anymore? What isn't valuable anymore? Remove, and then prepare to fill up again with much more substance. Less is more, common theme. The thing, I want to move now to something that Kevin said, and by the way, this goes with schedule. Declutter the schedule, more time for creation, less time for dentistry. You got to have less time for follow-ups. More time for new case starts. It just keeps going. Rinse and repeat. You have to tip the scales in your favor. But what I love Kevin said, and I'm going to just slightly change it to a rhetorical reflective question, "Who are you?"

Kevin has his, I don't like to say hat you wear, because it's not hats you wear, it's the human characteristics you embody. Who are you? Who are you today? Who are you at the end of this year? Who are you going to be at the end of next year? And I believe this also goes into who are you as a practice? Are you the same as you were ten years ago? You ain't the same as you were before us! Even if you do exactly the same stuff, you are better today. You have a bigger expectation, you have a bolder diagnosis, you have more conviction in your service and value and belief for others. Who are you? Who are you when you walk into the morning huddle? Who are you when you walk into your home at night? Because these are the reasons why, these are the things that move you. These are the things that compel you.

I will tell you who we want you to be. We want you to be filled with positivity. We want you to be a self-fulfilling prophecy of all that is good, of all that you deserve, and that you've earned the ability to create and take responsibility for yourself. Kevin and I are wrapping up your Christmas present now. And inside of that Christmas present you'll find the greatest gift of all, and it's called, "responsibility." Because inside of that is the discipline and the choice, maybe you would say the discipline to choose, and the discipline to carry out said choice. So that's really what this is all about. So I hope that you take this very seriously.

And now I want you to answer these questions. When you look at 2024, who will you be to your patients? Who will you be to your team? Who will you be to your significant other? Who will you be to yourself? And for all of our team, you also, you owe it to yourself, and you owe it to your doctor who has given you the empowerment to supply you with personal development, with a belief in you that they're willing to reinvest in your future, in your skills, in your

Scott: abilities, most of all in your self-worth. Don't squander that gift. Cherish it, honor it, embrace it, and go forth and accentuate and multiply it.

And I always finish the year by saying, "It's not a happy new year. It's a happy 365 days in a row, because you chose to make it that way." And I also believe that the best is yet to come, because we will be determined, we will be relentless, we will persevere and we will make it so.

I got nothing else for you. I had this quote, Kevin, it was a Steve Jobs quote, and I thought, why the hell not? First is an Oscar wild quote says, "Be yourself. Everyone else has already taken." Be you next year. Just be a better version of you next year. And this quote, Kevin, said, "You have to be burning with an idea, or a problem, or a wrong that you want to make right. If you're not passionate enough from the start, you'll never stick it out."

Whatever you decide to do when you turn over the leaf of 2023 and flip the calendar 2024, whatever betterment you choose, whatever right you choose, whatever who you choose, I sure as hell hope you are on fire for your future and you are passionate about the person you're going to become. Because that is the only way that one year from now we're going to have anything to talk about.

Kevin, I'm going to sign it off and put it right back in your capable hands. Thank you for a great year and a great year-end, and most of all, a filled with possibilities and unlimited potential, brand New Year beginning.

Kevin: I love it. Way to wrap it up, Scott. Highly inspiring, and you got me fired up here, and it takes a lot to get me fired up, because I already am. So friends, here's what I say. What can we do to win the day? And then if we string 365 of those winning days together, it's going to make for a really extraordinary year.

I received as a little gift, we celebrate St. Nick, fun little thing we do with the kids. And I got a metal plate that is in my office now, and it says, "Who dares, wins." Friends, let's win each and every day. Let's choose today to be the day, and then tomorrow when it shows up, let's choose it again.

Friends, we are with you. We are excited to be with you. We are honored to be with you, and we cannot wait for what's to come. So let's stay in the moment, choose to be extraordinary, as I like to end all of my email messages.

So everybody, merry Christmas, happy holidays. Have a wonderful and safe New Year as it turns from celebration to reality. And just want to say thank you for all who are listening in, not only today, but every month, to the latest edition of the Dental Success Today Practice Profit Accelerator podcast. Have a wonderful end of the year. Look forward to celebrating the new year on the next show together. We'll see you, friends!