



Practice Focus

Practice Focus

Series 6 The Championship Playbook

Session 12 Measure, Monitor and Make It Right (Part 2)

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1. Listen to the audio recording.
 2. Follow along with this transcript.
 3. Use the transcript to help complete your Team Activity: **key points are highlighted.**
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Hello, everyone. Today, I'm looking forward to regrouping with all of you and setting you up for a reflective exercise today. And the theme of the reflection is going to be one that you've heard us talk about before, but it's so important and it requires so much focus that it's worth us coming back to it like an anchor at all times, and so it's the perfect time in the year for us to really dial in to the theme of how can we become better guides for our patients, for our teams, for ourselves, and not slip into the trap of the order taker.

It's a tough topic to really own and to reckon with ourselves. I know for myself, it's something that I come back to and I look at ways where, when I think of serving our Dental Success Today universe, ways that maybe I've slipped into being a bit of an order taker, and I'm always looking for ways to up-level as a guide. And so there's no shame in this. Nothing has to be wrong for us to want to get better. In fact, it's actually where the fun happens is when we can look into up-leveling.

So before I set you up for that reflective exercise, I wanted to bring you two stories that happened recently, and I immediately thought of all of you and wanting to bring this in. And even though it has nothing to do with dental, I know you'll be able to follow where I'm going here with the concept of becoming a better guide for our patients and for everyone we encounter.

And so the two stories I want to share are about restaurants that I went to recently. Two separate occasions, and the first one I walked into, they're both really great restaurants in Toronto, fairly new, I was looking forward to trying them.

And so I went into the first restaurant, and it was a busy night and I knew it would be unlikely, but I thought I would check and see if it was possible to get a table. And so I met with the person working there. Her name was Quinn. She introduced herself. She was very warm. She apologized and said they were fully booked for the reservations at the tables but she could offer me bar seating and we could sit at the bar. And I thought that was really nice of her to give that offer, and then she kept going and she mentioned to me also, they have a sister restaurant about 10 minutes away, it's a really great restaurant, they just opened up, it's right next to a theater if we wanted to catch a show later, and that it was the same level of service and quality that they had here. And she even offered to phone ahead and see if they had any availability for me.

It was really nice. It was a really nice experience. And so the thing that stood out to me here is when I walked in and I said, "Could I please reserve a table?" she didn't take my request so literally. She didn't answer, "No, because all the tables are full." which was true, but she went above and beyond to offer me the bar service first at the bar table. Then she went above and beyond to offer me the sister restaurant. So you can see here all the ways that Quinn really stepped up as a guide. She took the experience that I was about to have very seriously, and she took ownership for it, and she tried to make it really great.

And so the moral of this is that I felt really cared for. Even though she technically said no, she technically turned me away from what I was originally asking for, which was just a regular table, but she did such an amazing job of making me feel cared for that when I left, the first thing I thought was, "Wow, I would hire her on the spot." and I think she would do great in dental. So it's one of those things where the experience really stood with me. And it's that classic quote, I think it's Maya Angelou that says it, "People forget what you said, they forget what you did, but they never forget how you made them feel."

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So let me offer you another example. On a separate evening, I was at a different restaurant in Toronto, and same idea: I thought I would walk in and just see if they had a table. So when I walked in, no one was there. I was standing around, I saw some people walking back and forth, but no one said hello. Eventually, someone walked by and asked me what I was looking for and I looked around. There were a bunch of empty tables, and I asked if there were reservations, and she simply said no, and she continued to walk on and I thought, oh, okay, I guess they must be full, not a problem.

And I was about to turn away to leave, and then I thought I would ask is there any bar seating? And she looked around, she said, "If you'd like, it's first come, first serve." And so I thought it was funny in that whole experience where that was an option, but I didn't feel like they really wanted anyone to come in the restaurant. They didn't really want anyone to come and sit there. That was the impression that I was given. Now she didn't say that, but you can see how the energy of that experience, it was almost turning away because the literal answer to my question was no, they don't have reservations. They don't have seats available.

So when we bring it back to dental, you can see here how sometimes, even though we aren't turning away patients, the way we're answering can be turning away patients. The way we're giving off certain order taker responses can sometimes let the patients feel like they can't come here. We do this sometimes with how we answer the in or out-of-network question. We do this when they ask if they can come in for a cleaning or a new patient appointment or an emergency. So something to think about.

Now here's the interesting thing: this restaurant actually had better food than the first example I gave. It was the more memorable in terms of the food itself, which is what I went out for, but the experience, I don't remember her name. I wouldn't go back to that place, whereas the experience with Quinn was so great that I want to go back to that restaurant. I want to go back and experience that level of care and service and really feeling welcome.

So it's very powerful stuff that we're talking about here, and I think it's something worth considering, is that sometimes when we know we're really good, and all of you really are in terms of what we offer, our patients don't know that yet, especially the new ones. **So when we think about this, the question I want you to come back to as you reflect is, how can you be more like Quinn?** In that first example with that beautiful guidance she gave me as a customer. What can we be doing and where can we up-level? So nothing has to be wrong, doesn't mean that you're being rude if you aren't doing it that way, but just consider how you can step up even further from being not just answering the patient's question, but feeding them new information, letting them know what could be helpful, guiding them into the practice, into the next step in a helpful way.

So one of the things I want you to think about as you reflect, because the conversations I have, I ask a lot about what are the blocks? What stops you from doing this? Where do you get in your own way? And you're all at that advanced level where a lot of the times, you know the basics. You know what the strategies are to get back on track. It's our own mental blocks, it's our own way that we get into. **And so some things to think about: within your own head when you're talking to patients, do you feel like you're bothering your patients, or are you helping them stay on track?** This could be with how you give insurance questions. This could be with recommending treatment. This could be anything. **Are you feeling salesy, or are you proud of how you can help your patients and want them to know all the options possible?**

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Something to consider. Do you give up on patients when they say, for example, that they don't have money, or do you take that as a reason to keep fighting for them and to encourage them to move forward now before it gets more expensive? All different ways to think about it.

So as you're having this reflection, think about how you can frame your service, what you're offering your patients more as a guide. And the thing that I like to think about is, if the website can tell them the same thing we're telling them when we're talking to them, that's just not enough. We want to keep adding more. Bring the human element in, bring in the analogies, bring in the proof with pictures to help them really see what's going on. Help them get back to healthy maintenance and why it's going to be worth it. These are the things that we can develop in the conversation.

So the challenge I want to give you, and this is something that you can take forward from your own reflective exercise, just take a few minutes first to just journal with yourself. Write down what's been in your way and how you can step up to be a guide. And then from there, the challenge I want to give you is to identify the top three things that patients will put up as blocks for moving forward. So come up in your day-to-day conversations, what are the things patients say for wanting to delay, to not want to take the next step, to waiting, whatever it is that you're hearing, let's identify that first, and then come up with three ways for each of those that you can answer that's more of guidance; giving them good reasons to want to move forward, really stepping up and feeding the conversation beyond what they ask.

And once you have those three things written down, you're going to play a game. And this could be in your morning huddle where you do a role-play on the spot, we ask one of the objections and just on the spot, let's see how quickly we can say the response. This is where recall becomes your friend. You can pick one of the things, you can pick all three, but the faster you can do it, the more often you practice within your team, the easier it is when you're actually doing it with patients for it to feel natural.

This is all about creating a culture of guidance, not order taking, and the biggest thing here when everyone's doing it is, it's a little bit more effort. It is more effort to be a guide. There is more emotional energy that we're investing in our patients, and literal energy and time. And so when we're doing this, just remember: it's going to be worth it, you're going to have more influence and help your patients feel even better about taking the next step, they feed off of your energy, and it'll be worth it.

So I'll leave you with that for your final exercise. I hope you get some really honest conversations coming out of this. And congratulations again on being such a superstar team that wants to keep bettering their best, and the basics we can always come back to, with that anchor of being a patient's guide.

Thank you very much. I hope you have a great discussion.