

Slidelines

One of the best pieces of advice I've ever received came from Charles "Tremendous" Jones: "Every sideline is a slideline."

Over the last 48 years of chiropractic practice, I've had almost weekly visits by enthusiastic salespersons telling me that if I'd only join their multilevel sales program I'd surely wind up a millionaire. Once, I observed a salesman's car in the clinic parking lot. His vehicle looked like it had a terminal condition, with the tailpipe tied up with baling wire. The salespersons often look like they're eligible for food stamps, and their clothes look like they might have been purchased at the thrift store.

Have you ever noticed that when you lose your primary focus (your practice), your numbers go down? If you can see several patients per hour at an average cost of \$30 to \$50 per visit, why would you want to be doing something that might earn you \$10 per hour?

If you think more of your golf game or hunting trip and lose your singleness of purpose, your practice will suffer. Recently, my son Daniel and I opened a new chiropractic clinic in Council Bluffs, Iowa. I made it a point to do all the paperwork; architectural planning; contracting; selecting carpeting; plumbing; furnishings; and other negotiations. I did this to prevent his practice from suffering a loss of his time and attention.

Inasmuch as I have built several new homes during my professional career, I've also noticed a reduction in my practice when my "head" was outside the office, making decisions, visiting the construction site, etc. I know of one doctor that built his own house to save money. Who makes the most money per hour, a carpenter or a chiropractor? He saved \$30,000 in carpenter costs, but lost \$100,000 in professional services. A doctor is far better off if he can purchase a home rather than build one, because most contractors will take advantage of the doctor's lack of construction experience. I've never known a single doctor who has ever built a building under budget.

Perhaps no doctor has violated this concept of slidelines more than I have. "Tremendous" Jones says you get good experiences from your bad experiences. I've been involved in all kinds of slidelines, including: Shetland ponies; laundromats; apartment houses; cattle; farming; management seminars; Arabian horses; rental properties; hotels, etc. Oh, how I wished I would have followed the advice I'm trying to give younger practitioners in this article. Keep your head, heart, and hands in your office, and you'll reap great rewards.

Do you want some good advice that will make you millions of dollars? Build a nice, efficient office. Invest the maximum in your 401K retirement program. Don't buy a car unless you can pay cash for it. Contribute to your church and community. Serve as many people as you can at a fair and reasonable fee. Be honest and fair in your dealings with your patients and colleagues. Be enthusiastic about your profession.

My wife and I have been married for 48 years, but she has yet to hear me complain about a bad day at the office. There's an excitement in chiropractic that no other profession or life's work can match. That's why 16 members of my family have joined me in the practice of chiropractic. We now

have the fourth generation of Hagens studying to be chiropractors.

Bruce C. Hagen,DC
Sioux Falls, South Dakota
Fax: (605) 333-0441

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