

Paying Is Part of Getting Well

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There is a universal law that states that when you give something, you will receive something in return. How does this manifest in the business of chiropractic? Well, it's quite simple. You give the best chiropractic care you can give to your patients, and in exchange, you receive money or trade for services.

In my seminars we look at the characteristics of two types of patients: Those who don't pay and those who do. Take a moment during your team meeting and to do this simple exercise.

1. On a white board or large paper, make two columns.
2. On the top of the first column, write "Patients who don't pay."
3. On the top of the second column, write "Patients who do pay."
4. Now, list the characteristics of these patients in each column.

You will find things like this:

Patients who don't pay:

- cancel their appointments and don't reschedule;
- are "no shows," meaning they don't bother to call or show up for their appointments;
- have excuses like, "I forgot my wallet";
- want to use your telephone;
- aren't committed to wellness care;
- don't refer - and on the rare occasion they do, the referral is just like them;
- wait until you are on the telephone and leave without paying or scheduling;
- are pushy and demanding.

Patients who do pay:

- pay before they see you, and pay for the whole week in advance;
- refer great patients;
- call and reschedule if they are not able to keep an appointment;
- are committed to wellness care;
- respect office procedures and you;
- say "Thank you";
- bring you gifts;
- make the practice fun.

So, which would you rather have: patients who pay or ones who don't?

Here are some simple, practical things you can do to grow your practice and improve your cash flow!

- Have a clear vision of the patients you want to serve. Write it on a 3 x 5 card and place it beside the telephone and appointment book, so that when the phone rings and you think it is a new patient, you will get what you ask for.
- Have a good, sound and practical financial policy that every patient reads and signs prior to

beginning care.

- If there are concerns, address them before care begins.
- If someone needs to make a payment plan, make it workable. Have them go home and look at their budget with their partner, and return with a specific dollar amount and date that you will receive payment. It is important that you have a specific due date and dollar amount, just like your car, mortgage or rent payment.
- Be sure that the agreements are in writing and signed.

As Sherry Hodge says, "Most people don't want a discount doctor." Similarly, in another article I recently read in *Chiropractic Economics*, if you offer some kind of discount to the patient who demands one, they will most likely leave you for someone else who will offer a better deal.

The bottom line: Don't settle for less than what you deserve. Your adjustments and other services are priceless.

Finally, if the money stops flowing into your practice, reflect upon the following formula for success offered to us by Foster Hibbard, who was a great supporter of chiropractic. Make the proper adjustments and you will experience greater abundance.

$Q + Q + A = C$: Quantity + Quality + Attitude = Compensation

Since ideas about service are unlimited, we can work at giving everyone more service throughout our life. Throughout life we can increase the quality of service we give by learning more about our business, product or service we offer and the needs of those to whom we give service. Finally, as long as we live, we can work on improving our attitudes to become a more loving person who give more loving service. As a result of all of this, our compensation has no alternative but to increase accordingly.

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