

Small Fixes, Big Growth

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"Stay in business with a constant improvement of quality of product and of service..." -- W. Edwards Deming

How can we continue to grow regardless of how your practice is doing? Growth, whether in a gigantic company or a small doctor's clinic, requires constant improvement. Everything can be done better. In order to double your practice, you must significantly improve the quality of your service.

It could be argued that there are limits. How can one possibly improve close to or beyond 100%? Aren't there limits? Yes, there are, unless you break the problem down further. If you'll analyze every aspect and improve each one even a little bit, you will grow again.

Great athletes are faced with this same problem. They'd like to improve their performance, even when they're at the top of their sport. They realize that they'll have to do even better next year, if they want to stay at the top. How do they improve every year? Simply, they break their programs down into the most basic elements and examine and improve each part. They prepare for their next assault on the seemingly impossible, by improving each aspect a little bit. You and I must do the very same thing. But where does one start, and how does it work?

The obvious place to start is with the most important element, you! Your practice is a reflection of you. Could you do your adjustment with 3% more focus? Could you communicate your findings 4% more eloquently? Could you listen to each patient 5% more attentively? Of course, you could. This is exactly what it takes to grow. Lots of little improvements in dozens of important areas add up.

I was counseling a doctor whose practice had taken a severe dip. He decided to sell his clinic and do something else. I let him know that it would be a shame to get nothing for all the years he'd invested. I encouraged him to sell his practice but first fix it up a little. An amazing thing happened, as he replaced the old carpets and painted the walls. His practice started to grow again. He became more excited and he started to attract new patients. Pretty soon, he decided not to sell. He reasoned, "Why sell a growing biz?" Little improvements in a lot of different areas stimulated growth. The paint on the wall and the new carpet did nothing for his practice. However, taking an action step that raised his level of enthusiasm did. His patients felt his excitement and responded, and so will yours.

Create a List and Post It

Choose what you want to improve. Decide what would make the most impact and start there. Create a list of action items and post it where you start and finish your day. You might tape it to a mirror or bedroom door. Start each day with a clear idea of exactly what you'll do to improve. Then, check yourself when you return home to see how you've done. Hold yourself accountable.

This program works because your practice is a reflection of you. If you change and grow as a person, so will your practice. There is no other way to create real sustainable growth. A renewed commitment to your life's work is palpable to existing and potential patients in your community and

this will grow your practice. Any activity that engages you with your life's work will create growth.

Check the action plan below to see if there is a fresh idea to grow your practice?

Here's A Sample Doctor's Action Plan

- Get adjusted weekly,
- Meditate or pray 20 minutes a day,
- Wear suits to work,
- Stop watching TV and reading the newspaper,
- Every morning visualize your goals coming true,
- Show more concern during history taking and reporting of findings,
- Make sure every patient leaves happy on every visit,
- Work out 6 days a week for at least 30 minutes,
- Have more fun inside the office,
- Call patients after their first adjustment and ask them how they're doing,
- Compliment patients, thank them, and honor them, or
- Teach patients at least health-related fact on every visit.

Why This List Works?

The best place to start is with yourself. When you improve in any area even a little bit, clients will notice, and your business will pick up. They have an incredible ability to size us up quickly and decide if we are ready to help more people. They'll refer other patients to you, if you get excited about and are committed about your work!

Get adjusted weekly.

Your patients can tell if you stand and move well, or if your posture is slightly off. Getting adjusted regularly creates a readiness to serve that's obvious even to the untrained eye. Besides, you wouldn't get adjusted by someone who didn't believe in chiropractic enough to get adjusted themselves, would you?

[pb]*Meditate or pray 20 minutes a day.*

Choose to meditate or pray daily, especially if you are "high energy". You must be able to meet people on their emotional plane. If you can encompass the totality of the human experience, people will unconsciously choose you as their "doctor". Are you connecting with everyone, every time? Do you match their emotions and inspire them?

Wear suits to work.

Wearing suits to work is a great way to increase your clinic's appearance without spending lots of money on expensive interior decorating. It feels warmer to work this way, but you'll get used to it. Surveys show that suits enhance credibility. Isn't that what you want?

Stop watching TV and reading the newspaper.

Choose the information you ingest. TV and newspapers cover mostly negative topics and can wear down even the most optimistic minds. Is your information intake positive?

Every morning visualize your goals coming true.

Decide to program your own mind. Visualize your goals coming true with emotion before you get

out of bed and right before sleep. What you think about materializes. What are you thinking about? Is it positive?

Show more concern during the history taking and reporting of findings.

If you are concerned, show it. Lean forward in your chair, and listen intently. When appropriate, pause, and repeat what was said. Comment with statements that show you care like, "that's terrible", "how can you stand it?", or "ouch!" Pain has a deep emotional component. If you discount their pain, your patients will not relate to you. Can you be more demonstrative and empathetic?

Make sure every patient leaves happy on every visit.

In practice, you never get a second chance. If patients are dissatisfied, they will not return. You must exceed their unspoken needs on every visit, or they will go elsewhere. At least ask them on the first 2 visits, "How was your visit? Did you get what you wanted?"

Work out 6 days a week for at least 30 minutes.

Would you go to a doctor that was overweight and out of shape? Also, regular exercise helps to reduce stress and produces endorphins, which makes us happy. Wouldn't you rather go to a happy doc?

Have more fun inside the office.

If your clinic is all about avoiding "phase 5 degenerative changes and an untimely death", most people will avoid it. Lighten up; it's healthy for everyone. The adjustment is a celebration of life. Do you laugh often or smile a lot?

Call patients after their first adjustment and ask them how they're doing.

This is easy to do, but most doctors don't do it. If you really care, show it. Call them. Reassure them if necessary. Isn't this how you would like to be cared for?

Compliment patients, thank them, and honor them.

A sincere compliment is always appreciated, especially if it comes from someone you respect. Notice improvements in posture and gait and mention them to your patients. Are you telling them about their progress?

Teach patients at least 1 personal health-related fact on every visit.

Is your table talk positive, up-beat, and orientated toward them? Do you even know what their favorite hobby is? It's easy to get off track and discuss our needs and interests. Focus on their needs and direct your conversation accordingly. Provide them with a fact on each visit concerning their condition or related to their favorite hobby.

Move Boldly and Act Now

Regardless of how long you've been in practice, you can always improve. If you've been in practice for a while, you probably already know what you could or should be doing. Decide to make a 100% improvement by improving a little bit in several areas. Start with yourself first and never give up. We can all do better. Improvement must be constant, and start with you. If you don't do this, your practice will wither on the vine. If you start today, and hold yourself accountable with a list, you will improve and attract the business that is rightfully yours. If you continue this way, you will

double again and again. Plan accordingly and get to work.

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