

The Seven Habits of a Successful Chiropractor

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Having worked closely with nearly 6,000 chiropractors from the United States, Canada, Europe and Australia, I have observed that the truly successful doctors have repeatedly demonstrated success habits. These habits are routine or normal ways of doing things. Habits can obviously be either good or bad, and "failure" habits can be changed to "success" habits. If you wish to get rid of a negative habit, you need to first know that your way of acting is, in fact, a habit, and that it is destructive. To get rid of a negative habit, you simply need to replace it with a positive one. You create positive habits simply by repeated action. If you do something long enough and often enough, it becomes a habit.

The Seven Successful Habits:

1. **Know the End Results:** Whatever you wish to do, you must know in advance the result you wish to produce. For example, if you do a lecture, what is the exact result you wish to produce? When you do a report of findings, do you know in advance the result you wish to produce? When you talk to a patient about referring someone, do you have full knowledge of the result you wish to have occur before you begin to communicate? A successful doctor knows exactly what he wants to have happen prior to taking any action. Such doctors have developed the habit of envisioning the result in advance.
2. **Self-Correction -- Not Criticism:** A successful doctor recognizes the fact that he or she can and will make mistakes. However, successful doctors also have compassion for themselves and when they do make a mistake, they do not condemn, criticize or make less of themselves. Rather, they simply correct the error and recognize how to avoid the same mistake in the future. Conversely, doctors who tend towards failure actually guarantee their own destruction by being their own worst enemy. They judge themselves too harshly and torment themselves. They don't even need anyone else to do it for them. The destruction you cause by self-condemnation is usually far greater than any problem caused by an error.
3. **Make Things Happen -- Don't Wait:** Successful doctors do not wait for outside circumstances to go their way. They change circumstances to make them be the way they want. The less successful doctor would wait for new patients to call or come in; the successful doctor actively does things to get new patients. Successful doctors are not stuck with any circumstance or situation. If they don't like their location; they go out and find a new one. If they don't like a staff member, they don't wait for a change -- they find a new one. The underachiever, lesser performing doctor, less aggressive doctor, etc., waits to see if things will somehow magically change in their favor. Doctors who succeed do not "wait to see how the movie will end"; instead, they act to ensure it turns out the way they want.
4. **Make Time -- Don't Lose Time:** A successful doctor makes time instead of waiting for time. "There's no time to do anything I need to" is the common justification which the middle of the road doctor uses to avoid responsibility. The successful doctor makes time by organizing. Successful doctors evaluate what needs to be done and then they do the most important task

first, not the easiest. Ordinary doctors look for what's easy: successful doctors look at what is important. If you do what is most important first, you will find plenty of time is available for the easy things. If you put off what is important, it can then appear that there is no time. The reason there is "no time" is simply because you have put it off, instead of doing it now.

5. **Fight -- Not Fear:** A successful person is always willing to fight back when necessary, not hide in fear. When the insurance company fails to pay a claim, the successful doctor calls and confronts the issue and is willing to fight for what is his. The doctor with "back-off" hides in fear, avoiding the issue. If a patient fails to come in, the successful doctor "fights back" against missed appointments by calling and handling the patient. The timid doctor hides in fear of being rejected. When successful doctors approach a spa or company to form an alliance and receive a rejection, they fight back by going above the person who said no. The failure gives up and remains in fear of upsetting someone.

6. **Be a Rock: Don't Compromise -- Say No:** Successful doctors do not compromise when it comes to what they feel is right. If a patient demands the doctor help absorb their deductible, the successful doctor says no. If a patient asks the doctor to treat a friend on one visit and put it on insurance, the successful doctor says no. If a patient wants to come in during a time the doctor normally does not see patients, and it is not an emergency, the successful doctor says no. If you would be successful, you must recognize that once you begin to compromise on the rules, hours, methods and ethics you feel are right, you are betraying your most important friend -- yourself.

7. **Define Who You Are by What You Do, Not What You Don't Do:** When you are asked to describe what you do and how you practice, do you define yourself in positives or negatives? Successful doctors define themselves in positives. The failures define themselves by what they don't do. "I don't make patients come when they don't need to. I don't charge too much. I don't make people go to lectures. I don't force people to refer." It's great to know what you don't do, but what do you do? When you define yourself in terms of what you don't do, you spend all your time trying to not be something instead of being something. When you define yourself as a doctor who does not make people come for unnecessary visits, you will never be emotionally free to build a maintenance practice. I am not condoning the unethical practice of forcing unnecessary visits. Please get the distinction. A better definition would perhaps be "I am a doctor who treats everyone the way I, myself, would want to be treated." To say "I am a doctor who doesn't force people to refer could prevent the implementation of any ethical referral procedure. A better definition would be "I am a doctor who encourages patients in a friendly manner to refer as many people as possible, so that I can help more people." Of course, there are many things that ethical, successful doctors are not. But if you focus on negatives and define yourself by negatives, you will find yourself restricting your own actions due to fear of violating the self-imposed restrictive definition of yourself. Define yourself in positive terms, and you will soon live in a "larger universe" without having to look over your own shoulder at yourself each time you wish to take a step.

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