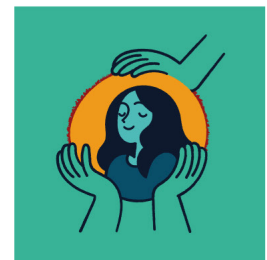
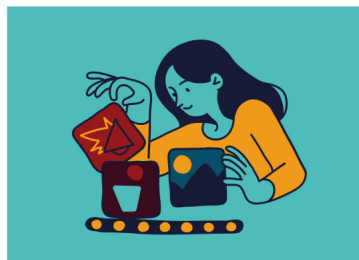
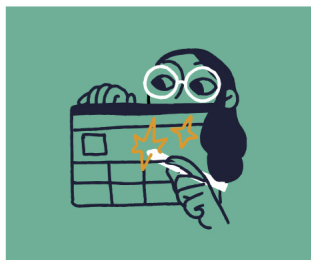
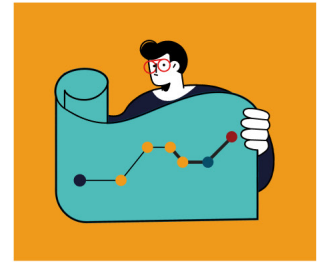
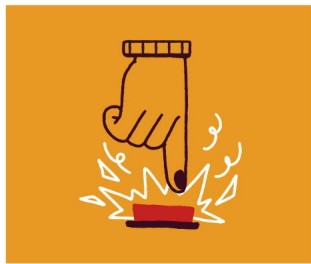


# 10 TIPS FOR SUCCESS IN COMPREHENSIVE DENTISTRY

By Christian Coachman



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**TIP**



**#01**

## **Tip #1: Activate your beginner's mind**

This is the one simple mindset shift every dentist will benefit from



*"The concept of beginner's mind is a beautiful philosophy from Buddhism that says that we all need to keep our beginner's mentality, our beginner's mindset, regardless of our level of expertise in a certain topic."*

As a clinician or clinic owner, continuous learning is part of the daily grind and we are all accustomed to advancing our knowledge and skills.

But when it comes to making that move away from everyday dentistry, and implementing fully comprehensive digital dentistry, it can be difficult to know how and where to start with the huge amount of new information that you need to take on board.

So what is the best way to begin your learning? And how do you ensure that you are going about it in the right way?

## **Try this:**

**I believe in a fundamental shift that is required before any learning even begins: coming with a beginner's mind.**

The concept of the 'beginner's mind' is a philosophy from Buddhism that explains how, regardless of our level of expertise in a certain topic, we should all approach learning with a beginner's mentality or mindset. It's all about maintaining that humble, open mind of a beginner.

## **Why do we believe in the beginner's mindset?**

Beginners learn more than experts. As a beginner in any subject, we see nothing but possibilities.

However, as we get good at something and start to become an expert, our minds can start shutting down to new information. Instead of keeping an open mind to the options in front of us, we begin to listen to our preconceived idea of something before we even start - and we find ourselves judging the information that comes from others.

**The result? We minimize our ability to learn and our openness to things that are new and different.**

BEGINNER'S MIND	EXPERT'S MIND
Unbiased	Biased
No concept	Preconception
Curiosity	Comfort Zone
Eager to learn	Self Sufficiency
Open minded	Close minded

I believe that while it's still necessary for us to become experts - and to continue to value the fact that we are experts - we need to put this aside briefly when we obtain new information. By pretending we are beginners, we give ourselves the opportunity to let the information sink in and benefit more from it.

After this initial approach, we can brainstorm the idea, implement it, judge it, change it and adapt it - we can even say "This doesn't work for me". But why not benefit from a beginner's perspective and do this only after we really embrace the possibility of what's new?

What I'm asking is for you to forget that you are already an expert, because experts learn much less than beginners. We need to maintain our beginner's mind, despite the fact that we do so many things so well and we are experts in so many things, even on the topics related to things in which we are already experts.

Let's just reset our brain, open our mind, allow the new to come in, and give it a chance.

**TIP**



**#02**

## Tip #2: The Differentiation Exercise

A proven exercise to help you identify your own value  
(and let your patients see it)



*"It generates a much greater impact and much more curiosity when people compliment us not just as the best dentist in town, but actually as a different dentist."*

## Do you ever wish your patients were more enthusiastic about what you offer them?

Unfortunately, as dentists we know all too well that while we spend time and money investing in our clinical skills, our team and our office to offer the very best, too many patients still take dentistry for granted.

It's not just a low priority in their lives; often it's not a priority at all.

But is it really up to patients to recognize the value that we provide, or is it on us? Because after all, if we don't successfully let our patients know about the unique value we offer, we can't expect them to appreciate it – **let alone understand why they should choose us above other dental offices.**

To change the way that current and potential patients see us and value us, it's not only about becoming a better professional; **we also have to position ourselves as different and unique.** And what's more, we need to become experts at making these differentials clear for patients before they even set foot in our clinic.

## Try this:

### The Differentiation Exercise

If you believe that potential patients don't understand the unique value that you offer, I recommend the 'Differentiation Exercise' as a helpful tool. This involves taking a close look at yourself, your team and your clinic to:

1. Identify and amplify what makes you different and align it with your team
2. Get the message through to your audience, clientele and possible new patients

**A**

What is the **main differential** of your clinic/office?

**B**

Does your STAFF **understand** and **believe** in these differentials?

**C**

What strategies do you use to make your **client/patient aware** of these differentials?

## Step 1: Think about the main differentials of your dental office

Ask yourself: what is it that sets you apart from other dental offices in your area? What makes you different in the minds of the people who are choosing to come to you for their dental care?

Think about your clinic, your team and yourself and identify the two, three, four, or five things that bring you above average and could be seen as your trademark as a dental office. This is the answer you would give to the question: “Why should I choose you?”.

## Step 2: Get all your staff on the same page

When you know what your differentials are, the next step is to make sure that your whole team understands and believes in them.

If someone were to ask one of your team members: “What makes your dental office special?”, they should have no trouble describing and explaining these unique attributes you have identified.

## Step 3: Make your potential patients aware

These differentials are what is going to set you apart from other clinics and ultimately, show patients why they should choose you. So this is what you need to be communicating to them!

By creating strategies to let our patients know about these unique features, we are helping them to first understand, and then value these qualities.





**TIP**



**#03**

## **Tip #3: Explore the modern definition of branding**

Your dental brand isn't what YOU think it is; it's what your patients think it is – here's why...



*"When we talk about branding in dentistry, branding is the result of every single little detail that creates an experience for your possible patients."*

In today's world, it's getting harder and harder to be noticed. And it's not just the result of the huge competition out there; with the overwhelming amount of information we are exposed to on a daily basis, it's no wonder that people are becoming more and more distracted.

The result? We find ourselves failing to deeply understand or listen to people.

When it comes to dental clinics, we often find that this means patients don't understand or feel enthusiastic about what we can do for them. If the experience we provide for them doesn't exceed their expectations, they become indifferent to what we do.

## **Try this:**

### **Explore the modern definition of branding**

When you think about branding, what comes to mind is probably the classic definition: your logo, the name of your company or the name of your clinic.

But for us, branding is something much more subtle: it's the sensation that you and your team generate in your customers every single minute, day after day. Put simply, your dental brand is not what you think it is: it's what your patients think it is!

This means that instead of being static, branding is something that is dynamic and constantly changing for better or for worse every single time your patients visit you. So how exactly do you work on this type of branding?

Improving your branding means focusing on everything that you do in your clinic that can impact how your patients feel about you, your team, your services, and the outcome of visiting your clinic. This means taking into account every little detail that can contribute to creating the overall experience for your possible patients.

This is one of the topics that I explore at DSD Residency 1 courses. I divide the process of empowering your brand and creating a unique experience into Emotional Dentistry and digital dentistry, examining questions such as:

- How can you change your first and second appointment to create a better experience for your patients?
- How do you change the ambience of your office?
- How do you implement the concept of treating patients with the concierge type of service?

*"It is proven that great branding allows professionals and companies to attract more customers to buy more services, for more years, at higher prices."*

- Brendon Macdonald, DSD Marketing and Sales Director

**TIP**



**#04**

## **Tip #4: Focus on Meaningful Dentistry and boost your passion, pride and performance**

How to achieve greater professional fulfillment in  
dentistry



*“What does Meaningful Dentistry mean? It means the DSD ideas are helping dentists to do more meaningful work, to generate more meaningful relationships with the staff and patients and to pursue more meaningful values.”*

Do you ever look at other dentists and envy how much energy they bring to their day-to-day jobs?

Would you love your daily work to make an even bigger impact on your patients than it already does?

Do you wish you had more tools to reinvent yourself professionally?

Even though they are satisfied with their work, many dentists spend their careers wishing they could achieve greater fulfillment and an even stronger sense of professional achievement and purpose.

At DSD Residency 1 courses, I explain a fundamental goal that can help dentists to achieve this throughout their careers – no matter what stage you are currently at.

## **Try this:**

### **Focus on Meaningful Dentistry and boost your passion, pride and performance**

Over the years, we've seen how doctors often go away from DSD Residency 1 with new enthusiasm for their profession. It becomes more meaningful to them and, in turn, they gain that energy they need to make dentistry more meaningful to their patients. This is something that we call 'Meaningful Dentistry' and we've found that it starts to happen naturally in dental offices that implement the DSD ideas.

For us, Meaningful Dentistry is the combination of three things: doing more meaningful work, generating more meaningful relationships with staff and patients and pursuing more meaningful values.

Do you identify with these three important factors in your daily work?

	MEANINGFUL	NON-MEANINGFUL
WORK	When you feel empowered and engaged by your job.	Feeling powerless, disconnected, not evolving, feeling bored. You have no control or no space to make decisions.
RELATIONSHIPS	When you are part of a group that brings mutual shared benefits, and helps and protects each other.	Selfish goals, feeling lonely, not having trust, pleasure or fun.
VALUES	When your intrinsic values are more relevant to you than your extrinsic ones. You are aware of your motivations and focus.	When your extrinsic values are more relevant than your intrinsic ones. Your happiness is reliant on outside factors and opinions.

Achieving Meaningful Dentistry through these three factors is all about finding greater enjoyment in being a dentist, generating a greater impact on the people around you and becoming an even better version of yourself.

And we believe that you know you're on the right path when you start to see three main things in yourself: you reignite your passion for dentistry, you feel more pride in your work and you consistently improve your performance. We believe that these are essential to really loving what you do as a dentist, every day.

See if you agree with my ideas on what passion, pride and performance mean in dentistry - and how you can maintain them throughout your career.



**TIP**



**#05**

## **Tip #5: Practice the vision of where you want to be in 5 years**

When did you last ask yourself this important question?



*"You should be able to close your eyes and create this vision in your brain of the office you want to be, the type of work you want to do, the type of patient that you want to be seeing..."*

## Do you know where you want to be in five years?

In dentistry today, there are so many opportunities, technologies, courses, insights and new ways of doing things that it's no wonder we often become overwhelmed by the huge amount of information available. And, as a result, we may sometimes make decisions that don't help us move forwards with our careers.

Have you ever found yourself caught up in the momentary excitement of a good sales pitch, or has someone else's opinion convinced you to invest in something without having a strategy in place for how exactly to use it? This resonates because we've all been there. But the result? Despite our best intentions, the new investment ends up unused in a corner of the office.

## Try this:

### Practice the vision of where you want to be in five years

One of my top tips for success with comprehensive dentistry is to decide where you want to be in five years - and select the right strategies to help you get there.

I recommend this method to help any dentist gain clarity on the direction of their career.

*Step 1*

Build a detailed vision

*Step 2*

Reverse-engineer your plan

*Step 3*

Filter all opportunities and strategies

## Step 1: Build a detailed vision

The first step is to build a precise and exact vision of where we want to be. Ask yourself:

- What type of office do you want to have?
- What type of work do you want to do?
- What is the ideal type of patient you would like to be seeing?
- What technology would you love to be using?
- What type of people would you really like to be working with?
- What city or country would you like to be living in?

The clearer you are on your vision, the easier it will be to use any information you receive to help you get as close as possible to it.

## Step 2: Reverse-engineer your plan

When your vision is clear, the next step is to reverse-engineer the plan. This is about looking at where you are now, and where you want to be, and defining the strategies that will help you get there.

## Step 3: Filter all opportunities and strategies

By continuously revisiting your vision for where you want to be in five years, you will be better able to choose, customize and prioritize any idea that you learn to improve your strategies to help you reach your vision.

With this knowledge, we are better able to evaluate any opportunity that comes our way and decide whether it's right for us. Often, by doing this exercise, we find it becomes easier to look at an opportunity and say: "This is a very cool opportunity but it's not pushing me towards my vision. So thank you very much, but no thank you."



**TIP**



**#06**

## **Tip #6: Embrace the fact that you deserve to promote yourself**

4 reasons why dentists deserve more credit



*"We deserve to change society's perception of our profession. If we maintain ethics above all, case acceptance is allowed; selling dentistry is ok. It's what we call ethical dentistry, ethical case acceptance, ethical marketing."*

## **As a dentist, do you feel comfortable promoting yourself and your skills to your patients?**

If you answered 'yes', you are among the few who do! Dentists often tell us they feel very uncomfortable when having to talk about themselves to patients because they don't see it as being part of dentistry, but rather marketing and sales. They are hesitant to come across as selling themselves and even 'pushy'. After all, as healthcare professionals, our top priority is and should always be the patient's health and wellbeing.

And there's a lot to consider when it comes to promoting yourself as a dentist. We need to be ethical, elegant, subtle, and effective. We need to learn how to engage with our patients in a way that will help them to make better decisions for themselves. Is it any wonder we don't always know where to start?

### **Try this:**

#### **Embrace the fact that you deserve to promote yourself**

At DSD Residency 1 courses, I explore the fact that when we offer excellent, ethical dentistry for our patients, we deserve to promote our work without feeling guilty about it.

Here are just 4 reasons why I believe dentists deserve more credit:

## **Reason #1: We transform lives**

There are very few professions that can change lives, systemically and emotionally, like we do.

## **Reason #2: It's expensive to be good at what you do**

Dentistry is an incredibly expensive career. To become a great dentist, we invest a huge amount of time and money in our professional development and also the systems, equipment and decor in our offices.

## **Reason #3: It's difficult to be a good dentist**

It's extremely challenging to gain the whole skill set required to be a good dentist. If you are, you need to value it!

## **Reason #4: Dentistry is a stressful profession**

Simple fact: dentistry is often ranked as one of the most stressful professions on earth.

For all these reasons and more, we deserve to change society's perception of our profession and to promote our work. When we maintain ethics above everything else, then we should feel comfortable selling dentistry. It's what we call ethical dentistry, ethical case acceptance or ethical marketing. I refer to this as the 'ethical test':

1. Become a very good dentist
2. Make sure what you are offering is always the best, long term, for the patient  
...and only then...
3. Promote yourself

As a great dentist, you deserve more credit for what you offer. We want to empower you to accept that you have the right to improve your skills in how to express what you can do - and to feel comfortable doing so.

**TIP**



**#07**

## **Tip #7: Be aware of the modern dentist's 5 main challenges**

This is how I help dentists identify what's holding them back



*"For the last 10 years I have been consulting for dental office owners and companies and from my experience, I have seen that many doctors are facing problems in these areas or there is significant room for improvement."*

## **Can you identify what your number one challenge is right now?**

From my experience in consulting for dental office owners and companies worldwide, I believe that most doctors are facing problems, or there is significant room for improvement, in five main areas. And that even if we are not fully aware yet of what they are or how they affect us, they can often be the things that are holding us back.

If we want to move forwards, these are often the challenges that we have to first overcome. How can we do this? I recommend that the first step is to understand them fully.

### **Try this:**

#### **Consider the modern dentist's 5 main challenges**

1. Designing natural smiles
2. Planning comprehensive treatments
3. Creating perceived value
4. Efficient clinical performance
5. Building dream teams

Any or all of these challenges can present in your career to varying degrees, depending on your unique circumstances. Regardless of your situation, know that you are not alone in navigating these common problems. Let's review them here:

## **Challenge one: Design - Beautiful, natural, consistent restorations**

The first obstacle we face is the fact that as restorative dentists, it's very hard to deliver consistent, natural-looking, predictable, precise, replicable smile rehabilitations - without the stress - in our daily work.

## **Challenge two: Plan - Comprehensive smile rehabilitation know-how**

Our second roadblock is the need to implement better communication systems and treatment planning systems in order to make better decisions for our patients.

## **Challenge three: Value - Attracting and fascinating the right client**

Another significant hurdle is all about creating perceived value. As clinicians, our training doesn't equip us to manage our patients emotionally. We are not trained in how to bring the patient on board with our treatment, how to communicate effectively so people change their priorities, or how to show the real beauty of what we have to offer them.

## **Challenge four: Performance - Efficiency and predictable clinical procedures**

This stumbling block is about clinical performance, and recognizing that performing comprehensive dentistry at the highest level is not easy.

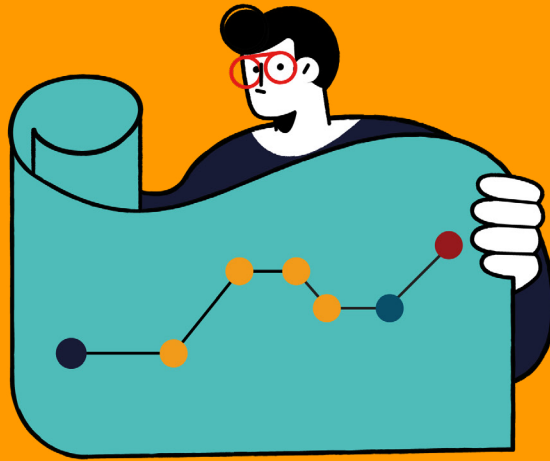
## Challenge five: Team - Training and empowering the staff

The fifth common hindrance to success is one that has an impact on all the other challenges. It's all to do with team empowerment, team training, and having the right people doing the right tasks by your side so that everything flows.

By becoming aware of the issues we are facing right now, it becomes easier to identify solutions, master them and make them into a simple, natural routine in our daily work. This is what I help doctors from all over the world to do at DSD Residency 1 courses.



**TIP**



**#08**

## **Tip #8: Understand the patient journey moments**

My insider tactics to optimize your patient journey



*"By combining these two ways of understanding our patient's journey, we can take the first step towards building strategies that can improve and grow our dental clinic."*



## People expect great experiences from brands. They don't always get them in dentistry.

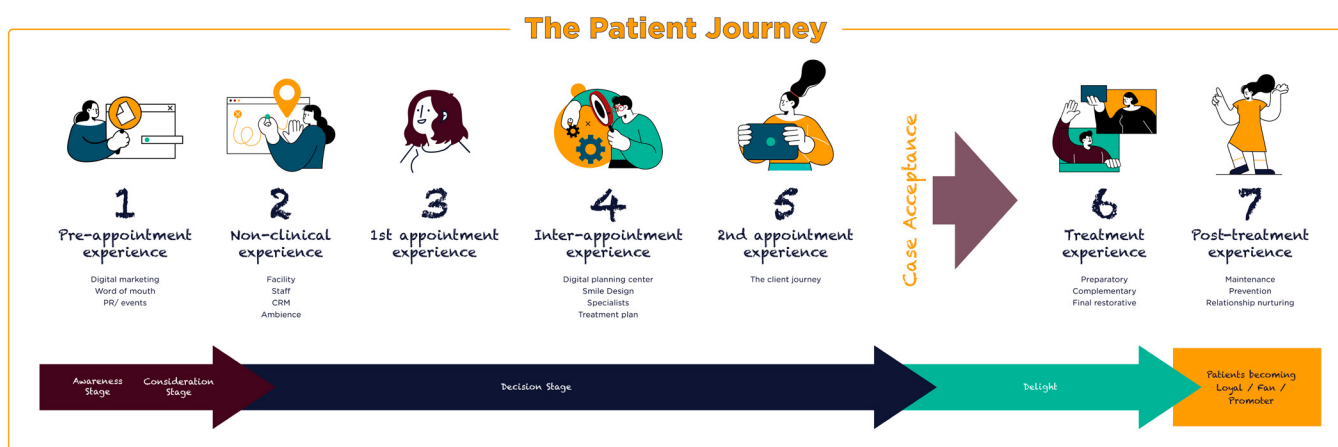
While as dentists we would love to delight our patients with experiences that help them recognize the true value dentistry can provide in their lives, the reality is that many patients think of dental care as uncomfortable, painful and a necessary evil.

The way patients perceive the value of dentistry is one of the many key topics that I talk about at DSD Residency 1 courses.

To start changing the way our patients see us, I recommend mastering the 7 moments in the patient journey AND the 3 stages of the buyer's journey.

## Try this:

### Understand the patient journey moments



I present the 7 key moments that every patient goes through in a modern, comprehensive dental clinic. For each stage, there are defined strategies that can help you to improve your team's performance and your patients' experience:

## **Moment 1: Pre-appointment experience**

This includes everything we can do to improve our patient acquisition and bring more people through our doors. From digital marketing to word of mouth, this moment is all about how we can supercharge the process of convincing people why they should come to us.

## **Moment 2: Non-clinical experience**

Moment two is all about improving the non-clinical experience patients have in our clinic. This is to do with everything from communication with our reception staff, to their experience in our waiting room, to the overall ambience in the clinic and our hospitality strategy. Taking inspiration from the luxury hotel industry and consumer technology brands, we aim to elevate dentistry to a more luxury experience for patients.

## **Moment 3: First appointment experience**

The first appointment is the moment of data acquisition, the clinical exam and patient documentation. It's about improving the whole interaction that we have with our patient at the beginning to not only acquire the information that we need, but also understand them psychologically and clinically.

## **Moment 4: Inter-appointment experience**

After acquiring high-quality information from our patient, we then need to understand all the strategies that will allow us to do the best we can with that information and process it in the best way possible, culminating in the treatment plan.

## **Moment 5: Second appointment experience**

This is when we present our plan to our patient. It is the culmination of the previous moments, combined to create a powerful patient-centered presentation that leaves no room for doubt about this treatment plan being the best course of action. If we do moments one to five very well, the consequence will be case acceptance.

## **Moment 6: Treatment experience**

This is the actual treatment; for us, dentistry only happens at moment six. At moment six, we need to rethink everything that we can do to be a better clinician: to be more efficient clinically, to streamline our processes, and to improve not only the clinical outcome but also the experience of the patient as they go through the clinical treatment.

## **Moment 7: Post-treatment experience**

The final moment in the patient journey is maintenance. This is all about what we can do to improve the quality of our clinical maintenance and our maintenance of our relationship with the patient once the treatment is over.

# What are the three stages of the buyer's journey?

## Awareness stage

The buyer becomes aware of a problem they are experiencing.

At the awareness stage, the buyer is experiencing a problem and their goal is to solve it. They may be searching for information to help them understand what their problem is and give a name to it.

*E.g. Why are my dentures moving?*

## Consideration stage

The buyer understands their problem and looks for options to solve it.

At the consideration stage, the buyer now understands what their problem is and is committed to researching and understanding the approaches and/or methods that can help them to solve it.

*E.g. What is a more sturdy way to replace missing teeth?*

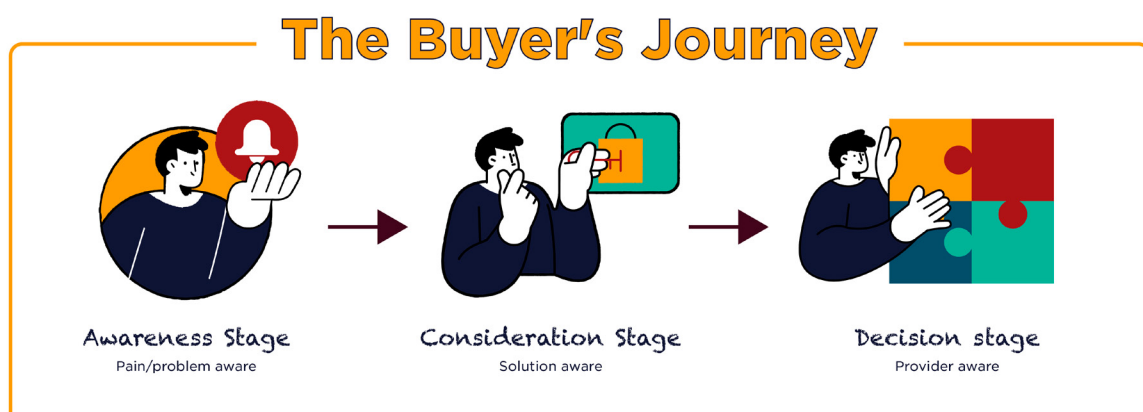
## Decision stage

The buyer chooses the right solution for their problem.

At the decision stage, the buyer has decided on the strategy, method or approach that can help them solve their problem. Now they want to research the providers who can offer them this solution and ultimately make their purchase decision.

*E.g. Who can provide me with the best dental implants?  
How much will they cost?*

I believe that by combining these two ways of understanding our patient's journey, we can take the first step towards building strategies that can improve and grow your dental clinic.



**TIP**



**#09**

## **Tip #9: The 3 games to master in a dental clinic business**

Are these 3 blindspots holding you back from success in your dental office?



*"These are three major moments where we need to start to understand who are the people in our team that can help us to improve them; these are the three games as a dental office owner that we need to master."*

## **Understanding the patient journey is your first step to implementing it, optimizing it - and providing patients with experiences that surprise and delight.**

This is one of the key topics that I explore at DSD Residency 1 courses.

To clearly explain the patient journey and how to improve it, I break it down into three comprehensive stages that I believe every dental clinic owner needs to master.

### **Try this:**

#### **Learn the 3 games to master in the dental clinic business**

Creating your playbooks for these three games will bring home the trophies. It will equip you to understand the psychology and human behavior of patients as well as how to create value. These are emotional moments, and emotion is key if we want to do them well.

# 3 GAMES TO MASTER



## Game 1: Before the patient comes to you

I believe that the first game to master is all about helping people to find you and convince them that they should choose you. How can we bring more people to our door? How do we show people the value we can offer before they arrive here?

### What are our strategies for game 1?

- Master the compelling stories that demonstrate the full value of what you can offer your patients - and become better at telling them
- Reach out to more people to increase your audience
- Empower word of mouth from your existing happy patients

## Game 2: The 1st and 2nd appointments

The second game dental offices need to win at is managing the patient's experience throughout their first and second appointments in our dental office. This includes everything they experience from the moment they step through our door for the first time, to the moment they say 'yes' to their treatment plan - and the ways we can improve it to increase the chance of them becoming real clients.

### What are our strategies for game 2?

- Enhance the experience your patients have at every single moment in your dental office
- Change the way you gather and process your patient's information to offer a positive experience
- Wow your patient with a treatment plan presentation that demonstrates the value of your treatment for them

## Game 3: Treatment and maintenance

We're all too aware that often, patients expect dental treatment to be uncomfortable and even painful. So how can we change this? This is the third game I believe we need to master.

At this stage, our goal is to delight patients with an experience beyond their imagination. And after this, to exceed their expectations, surprise them and transform them from happy patients into loyal fans and promoters of our dental office.

### What are our strategies for game 3?

- Improve the way you perform dentistry
- Change the way patients see your performance and the value they place on it



**TIP**



**#10**

## **Tip #10: The Emotional Game Experience**

The way to improve patient experience that nobody talks about



*"Dentists need to understand that every single little detail can make us gain or lose credits from possible consumers. Every detail counts and every detail has a different value for different people."*

## Do you speak your patients' language?

As a dentist, the words and body language you use to explain concepts to your patients can leave them feeling more confused than informed. How does that happen?

During DSD Residency 1 courses, I enact a humorous scene between a dentist and patient to illustrate this point. The dentist tells the patient what will happen in a procedure using dental terms and hand gestures - the more he waves his hands about, the less the patient understands. It gets a lot of laughs from participants every time.

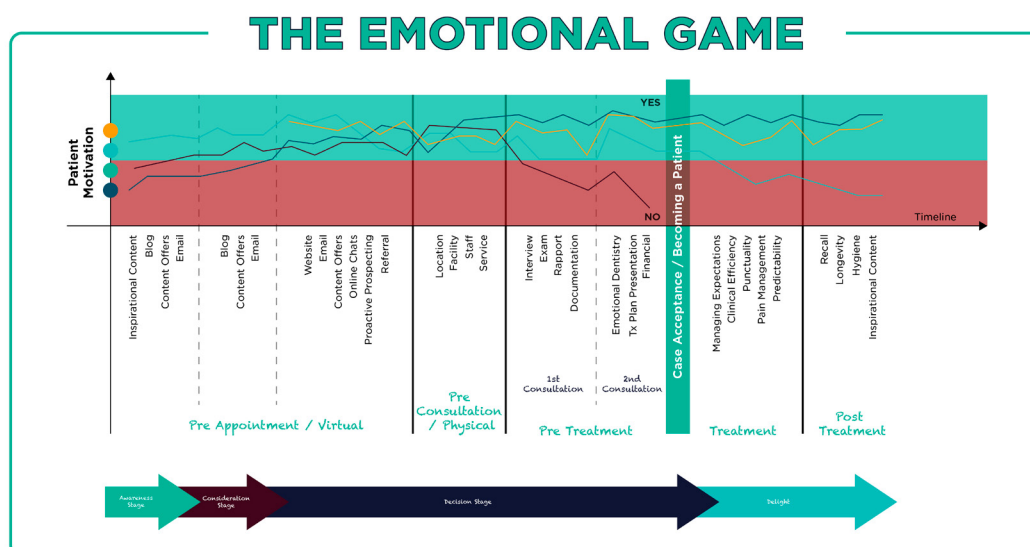
The key? Treatment explanations have no impact when you don't show the value the treatment will bring; only then do you truly speak the patient's language. This is what the Emotional Game is all about.

## Try this:

### The Emotional Game Experience

I often explain how in a dental office, every little detail a patient experiences makes us gain or lose emotional 'credits' in their mind. Negative experiences lose us credits while positive ones earn us more. You serve great coffee while they are waiting? You gain a credit. Boring music playing in the office? You lose a credit. They fail to understand what you are explaining about their treatment? You lose a few more credits.



**The Emotional Game is an exercise I created to help you evaluate the impact of every single experience a patient has in their journey with your dental office.**





Because while we may believe a patient says yes or no to treatment simply because they liked the treatment plan and accepted our fees, in reality there are hundreds of subconscious reasons that all play a part in their decision.

And not only does every detail count - every detail has a different value for different people. Just like we all have different likes and dislikes, we all place more or less importance on certain things. That's why if you want to level up the experience you provide, it's crucial to define the ideal type of patient you want to attract, and really understand the things that matter most to them.

## How does the Emotional Game work?

The vertical axis  shows how motivated your patient is to go ahead with treatment and the horizontal axis  is the timeline of all the experiences they have with you.

We have a green zone  and a red zone . The green zone is our goal: it shows a patient who is motivated to go ahead with dental treatment. The more positive experiences a patient has, the more likely they are to be in this green zone.

There is a line that separates the red and the green, and this line can go up and down. Why? The more complex and expensive a treatment is, the more emotional credits you need to help a patient say yes.

## How does the Emotional Game work?

The Emotional Game is an exercise that's most valuable with the input of your whole team. Here's how to play:

1. Explain the 7 moments of the patient journey
2. Explain that every detail counts when it comes to gaining or losing emotional credits
3. Explain the Emotional Game graph and how it works
4. Focus on each moment of the patient journey in turn and list every detail you believe may be important to generate value for your clients
5. Based on the ideal patient that you want to attract, brainstorm and prioritize the most important improvements you can make to generate positive credits

We believe that everything in life can be analyzed as if we were in this Emotional Game. Major decisions in life are usually emotionally driven, and the experience you offer your patients in your dental office will have a big impact when it comes to the moment that you present your treatment plan.

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