

Widen & Deepen Your Relationships With Doctors Rule

I have always emphasized that building and maintaining relationships with doctors is essential for long-term success. If you want to thrive in your work, it is crucial to build and strengthen your relationship with the doctors.

Expanding and strengthening your relationships with the doctors is the next step after building rapport with them.

You need to find out who the doctors' family members, friends, doctor friends, other specialty doctors, as well as non-medical friends are. Opportunities to make connections with them include birthdays, marriages, clinic anniversaries, and marriage anniversaries organizing.

After the events, they will talk good about you...

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CULTIVATE THE ATTITUDE OF PLAYING AN INFINITE GAME

SEE HOW EVERYTHING CHANGES!

P.S: I don't preach or teach what I don't practice myself.

As I'm writing this, I'm in the USA for an experiment.

Today it's my 45th day of the experiment and I am here for three purposes...

One, to expand my business operation in the USA.

Two, to see how can I automate my business in the long run because that is what I'm aspiring to do and ***I'm also planning to teach it in my next Practice Management Workshop - Dermapreneur how you too can do it***, after receiving enough knowledge and experience on the same.

Three, to have think time for my future projects.

However, I am not writing about this here but here's an important lesson I learned. ***From the day I landed in the USA***, there hasn't been a single day when I haven't heard some breaking news, upsetting truths through WhatsApp messages, or any other platform. And due to this time difference between USA and India, ***most of my days start with certain disheartening and disturbing messages only!***

For an initial couple of days and a couple of major events, I not only got disappointed but also started thinking that - **Is it the worst phase of my entrepreneurial life??!** Am I the only one?!

But when I started reflecting on that, I could immediately connect the dots – while being in India also I faced similar situations so often. I already knew that the journey of an entrepreneur is never smooth and on top of it now I'm playing a different game of handling everything virtually which is going to be even tougher. So, I jotted down my ideas and thoughts. The only thing more disturbing was that while I was in India, the news would travel at a much slower pace and they would come to me at the end of the day while here I'm waking up each day with some unforeseen challenges.

However, the lesson is clear... Entrepreneurship or leadership is an infinite game.

Are you playing and enjoying it as a game with constantly evolving and pivoting on your way? Or do you prefer playing a victim's role???

Entrepreneurship is never going to be an easy journey.

Just like in marriage, if you aren't having occasional fights with your spouse then it is a matter of worry. Similarly, if your entrepreneurship journey is very smooth

without any challenge and the events make you uncomfortable then you are at major risk and playing it too safe to grow!!!

Embrace the challenge...

Enjoy the journey...

Just change your attitude towards what life is throwing at you in the form of challenges....

A complete new “YOU” is waiting at the other side of challenges.

In such instances thinking about the times you have faced similar challenging situations in your entrepreneurship journey will give you a complete different perspective, insights, and solutions.

What did they teach you?

How better you were when you conquered them?

What were the lessons learned?

Powerful Affirmation:

I am not going to let my challenges overpower me. I am going to face them with a fresh perspective.

What's Next: Lessons Learned from Pandemic

Just about when we entered 2020, I read somewhere in the news that some unusual pneumonia cases were discovered in China. Fast forward two years. We are entering the third year of the Covid-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 changed the way dermatologists practice and learn. The restrictions on nonessential in-person care shortages of personal protective equipment, and the need for clinics to provide ongoing access had many dermatologists turning to telemedicine.

We all slept in one world and woke up in another and the world in which we were woken up is filled with uncertainty, fear, anxiety, and an economic halt.

Everyone is exhausted by the ambiguity wondering if it's too soon to ask 'What's next?'

And the heart feels 'How can I help in this?'

But a few things have become clearer.

Here are the lessons I have learned from this pandemic...

Lesson #1: Digitize everything

This pandemic made us aware of many truths and among all truths, the most glaring one was that we all were accessible to one another digitally despite being locked down, isolated, and alone. It became obvious that the internet was the most powerful connector.

As a dermapreneur if you have not already done then:

- Digitalize your pharmacy
- Digitalize your staff training
- Digitalize your Medical Records including before-after pics.
- Digitalize your patient onboarding system including patient appointments.

- Digitalize your feedback, review, testimonials.

In short... everything you think of and whichever is feasible.

Lesson#2: Be ready for the unexpected

Once in a decade, a global crisis occurs which turns everything upside down. It could be a medical outbreak, spike in inflation, stock market crash, or violence. They are difficult to predict because their causes are different. But the results are always the same. They include high unemployment, economic contraction, near-bank collapse.

Lesson#3: Strive to be more than average

We will enter an era where average work and average people will become obsolete. Average work and average people will be more worthless than ever. These people will have less value or respect.

Lesson #4: Commit yourself to new learning

At the same time, this disruption will usher in new opportunities.

So, what should you do next?

Commit yourself.

Commit yourself to new learning and new opportunities.

Lesson #5: Develop leadership skills

It became obvious that who were the leaders in the herd and their able leadership to steer the group efficiently in the right direction that ability was priceless.

This pandemic made an official announcement that the industrial era which was struggling for the last two decades is over now. It is being replaced by one based on connections, leadership, and the prospect to show up and make a difference.

We will not wait for the normal

This is the normal

This is the best time to take the helm

Embrace the new normal and TAKE YOUR CHANCE

What have you learned from the pandemic?

How have you changed?

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Affirm it:

I will take my chance and embrace the new normal

**YOU ARE NOT STUCK, YOU ARE COMMITTED TO CERTAIN PATTERNS
OF BEHAVIOUR**

It was March 24, 2020, when the first lockdown was imposed in India in the wake of COVID-19. For the next couple of days, like everyone, **I was feeling stuck. It was a scary feeling! A myriad of thoughts ran over my mind.** Topping it, the media and news threatened to scare us into silence and it seemed like a slow poison!

But if I wanted to change, I knew I had to bite the bullet. I had to be willing to feel uncomfortable. I had to get up and face it. I had to think about how to keep my businesses moving because **it was not only about me. It was about the 250+ team members (whom I consider my extended family members) who were dependent on my company for their daily living.** So, I pushed myself and **jotted down 72 ideas to keep everything moving and how we will navigate through this never-before-seen uncertainty.**

Slowly and gradually, we were able to recover the losses and though we didn't make any profits; our company was in a good position to pay everyone ON time at the end of the year without laying off anyone from the company!

Why I am sharing it with you?

It's because this life incident taught me that 'feeling' stuck is only a label we give.

Even before covid, I have known several dermatologists feeling stuck without realizing that complacency is crippling them.

Maybe you feel stuck in your practice, in your relationships, or you feel stuck in worrying. You know that you have to move, but you can't.

Do you know why this happens?

It's not because you are stuck.

IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE COMMITTED TO CERTAIN PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOR. AFTER ALL, THEY HELPED YOU IN THE PAST.

IT'S BECAUSE YOU ARE STILL KEEPING THE SAME MINDSET AND BEHAVIORS THAT ARE SLOWING YOU DOWN.

Have you heard about the Sisyphus story?

[image 01] In Greek Mythology, [Sisyphus](#) was condemned by the gods for angering them. They punished him to push a rock up a mountain. And upon reaching the top, the rock would roll down again, leaving Sisyphus to start over and over again.

Every human being (including *you* and me) is just like Sisyphus - and the punishment of pushing a rock up a mountain is similar *to* living our life.

Just when you overcome one challenge, the next challenge is waiting for you.

Just when you get out of a situation, you land yourself in another situation and you feel stuck.

The first step to getting out of your “caged perspective” is to *re-pattern your thoughts* - no matter how scary they are.

Let them go.

Try something new.

Consider a new approach.

Let go of old rules that don't work in the present time.

Start small by adopting new habits

Change the formula to experience an upgrade.

“Growth is painful. Change is painful. But nothing is as painful as staying stuck where you don’t belong.”

TRY this small exercise RIGHT NOW and see how you feel?

Dust yourself off, do the action of dusting yourself. Do it.

Did it put you in a positive state of mind!?

The same is with your thoughts and behavioral patterns.

“You’re not stuck. You need growth. Act on it.”

Have you been feeling stuck about something in your life right now?

Write down what it is and how you are going to change it?

Affirm it:

Whenever I feel stuck in life, I am going to change my thought pattern. I am going to change the formula.

DON'T GET TOO COMFORTABLE WITH A CHAUFFEUR-DRIVEN MERCEDES

We believe success is the ultimate goal in our lives. But what happens after we reach it?

"Most don't think ahead of that", exclaimed a self-made millionaire once. This millionaire had spent almost two decades in finance and was a certified public accountant. He traded stock for over 18 years.

"My goal was always to be financially independent and to be my own boss. That is what I have achieved and that was my litmus test for success: financial independence." From the moment he first felt like he had "made it" he knew his work wasn't done. He knew he had to keep going. That's when and why he started his stock education business.

He says, "If you achieve your biggest goals and then lie back, put your feet up, and stop pushing yourself, you become lost and directionless."

Here is a truth for you:

As you walk on the chosen path of becoming successful, you will definitely meet failure. An uncomfortable truth but that's how it is. Just when you are getting used to success, there comes a failure that puts you off course, even makes you

start doubting yourself. So, when success and failure are two sides of the same coin, how do you manage them?

Don't get too comfortable.

The more you earn, the more comfortable you will become - a bigger house, better clinic, posher holidays, branded clothes, and so on. After a while, success will make it difficult for you to hold on to the real world because the world will start treating you with a reverence like some superhero or the man with a golden touch. Your success will isolate you. It will take you away from the real world which was the breeding place of your ideas and that is bad for your creativity. **It is your day-to-day experiences that make you outstanding, the knowledge that you derive from the routine by seeing things differently is what makes you successful – never let go of that.** Highly creative people are consistently successful because they never lose their grip on reality. This may be as mundane as knowing the market price of a bottle of milk.

DON'T GET TOO COMFORTABLE WITH A LIFESTYLE OF LUXURY AND ASSISTANCE.

KEEP THINGS REAL.

Do some reflective thinking once in a while. That will help you stay real and focused. Go into some deep thinking from time to time and come back recharged with more ideas to beget more success while kicking failure in your stride.

Think about the last time you achieved success in your life.

What did you do after celebrating it?

What was your motivation for the next success?

What lessons have you learned from that success (yes, it is very important as we learn from failure but not from successes. It is an auto mechanism) that you can replicate and scale-up? ____

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Affirm it:

"DON'T EVER GET TOO COMFORTABLE."

PEOPLE BEHAVE FOR THEIR REASONS, NOT YOURS!

Can you recall a situation in which you wanted someone around you, say, your staff, client, or vendor to act in a particular way or take a decision in a certain way and they just did the opposite!

Yes, so many times! Right? We have all been there. You wanted them to behave in a certain way but they didn't.

Well, there is a psychological phenomenon behind that! **As humans, it's our natural tendency to behave and act for our valid reasons and motives, and not for other peoples'.**

PEOPLE BEHAVE FOR THEIR REASONS, NOT YOURS!

But first, let me tell you why I am sharing it here? Because **learning this will benefit you as a leader for as long as you live. It will help you to get a hold of your staff, your patients, your vendors and save your professional as well as personal relationships.**

A similar incident took place with me during the second wave of COVID-19. We have two maids and one cook at our home. All three are loyal and they have been with us for almost eight to ten years now. One of them is Muslim which is an advantage for us as she doesn't take leave on our cultural festivals.

We were all horrified during the second wave of the pandemic, and as I am a diabetic, we were taking the utmost care. One day, my wife noted one of the first symptoms of the Coronavirus in one of our maids. She was sneezing. So, we decided to give all three of them a long holiday and quarantine ourselves. It was a good decision a few days later we came to know that all three are infected with the Coronavirus.

Days passed and it was time that we call them back. However, as we took all precautions, we wanted our maids to do the RTCPR report before they returned to our home. Two of them agreed, while the Muslim maid profusely refused to go for it. Upon being asked, we came to know that it was some religious Guru of hers who told her not to go for the RTCPR. And we were all like, what?!

She even went on to say that she will discontinue her work for us if we make it a compulsion to go for the report. The report which was so normal in those days!

My wife and I were in dilemma - what to do? The maid was so loyal to us for 10 long years and she was even taking fewer holidays. For a few minutes, both of us did think about leaving her and it could have turned into an ego issue when I just recalled my lesson...People behave for their reasons, not yours.

And so, we consulted our family doctor. He advised us to give our maid leave for a few more days. He said that by then, the infection from the virus would have decreased so it would not be necessary for her to go for the RTCPR. We followed his advice and she returned normal after a few more days. She had recovered by then and we did not get infected from her.

Now, it could have been an ego trip as we did think about leaving her for a few minutes. But then negotiation was possible and we negotiated the whole situation. We were all happy in the ending.

What's the lesson for you?

As a leader, you need to presume

People, including patients and your team members, behave for their reasons, not yours

So, pause before you take any decision in life

It was not our matter to force our maid to go and get the report done, even though it was the right thing to do medically!!!

However, we negotiated to assume that it was her superstitious belief and her call to not go for it. But we saved our relationship.

At times in life, you might also face similar situations in life. During those times, you would also be inclined to cut off relationships with your staff, vendors, and clients. But as a leader, you need to see where you can negotiate because...

PEOPLE WILL ALWAYS BEHAVE ACCORDING TO THEIR REASONS, NOT YOURS.

If you get hold of this lesson, you would save many relationships in your life, trust me!

What are your reflections on this?

Affirm it:

I will always remember that people act and behave for their valid reasons, not for my reasons.

2 MOST POWERFUL LAWS OF PRODUCTIVITY FOR DERMAPRENEURS

Applying Successful Entrepreneurs' Management Principles in Derma Practice

Being in the industry for more than 18+ years I know the average day of a dermatologist is not easy by any stretch of the imagination! As a dermatologist you have a super busy schedule, typically working about 8 to 10 hours a day or even more whether you work in a hospital, your private clinic! After all, you can never predict when one particular patient will make an appointment! However, you can still be sure that there is always a lot of work that needs to be done!

Most dermatologists report up to 40 to 50 hours of patient treatment on average weekly. That's how much time most dermatologists spend treating patients. So long story short, as a dermatologist you have a huge load on your shoulder.

And wise use of your time is critical as a Dermapreneur.

So, I am sharing the two most important laws I have learned and applied in my life to be productive. If you have them in mind when you are undertaking your tasks, you will win yourself some extra time.

THE 1ST LAW IS PARETO PRINCIPLE

The Pareto principle is also known as the 80/20 rule which says that...

80% of the outputs come from 20% of the inputs

This means if you consider approximately 80% of results come from 20% of the time and effort you invest.

If you apply this law in real life then it is said that 80% of the wealth in the world is possessed by only 20% of the population and 80% of the land in the world is owned only by 20% of the people.

So, what is this principle trying to teach us?

This principle is trying to teach us that we need to identify the 20% of INPUTS that will give us 80% of the OUTPUTS.

Now, you may wonder how this applies to you as a dermatologist? How is the 80/20 rule relevant to you???

Well, you can apply this 80/20 rule in your practice to identify the areas that give you maximum results.

Ask yourself these questions...

- **Which 20% of your patients are yielding you 80% of your revenue?**

You need to focus on that 20% of patients more

- **Which 20% of your procedures produces 80% of your revenue?**

Market those procedures aggressively and become expert of it

- **Which 20% of your machines produce 80% of your revenue?**

Get more of those machines for your practice

- **Which 20% of your referrals refer you to 80% of the patients?**

Take utmost care of these referrals

- **Which 20% of skin conditions do you treat in 80% of your patients?**

Become an expert at it in your area

- **Which 20% of the occurrences in your practice are causing problems 80% of the time?**

Systemize them to avoid those occurrences

- **Which 20% of tasks you perform are of 80% importance?**

You need to do those tasks by yourself

- **Which 80% of tasks you perform are of 20% importance?**

You can delegate those tasks

- **Which 20% of your employees are responsible for 80% of your practice growth?**

You need to hold on to these employees

- **Which 20% of employees are creating 80% problems?**

You need to get rid of them

- **Which 20% of pharma companies are helping you get 80% of your business?**

Maximize the outcome from them

- **Which 20% of marketing efforts yield you 80% of your results?**

Repeat those marketing efforts often

- **Which are the 20% resources in your marketing that are giving you 80% of the marketing results?**

You need to use those resources to maximum advantage

- **Which are the 20% investments responsible for 80% financial security?**

Make more of those investments in future

- **Which are the 20% relationships in your life (who they are) giving you 80% fulfillment or happiness?**

Invest more in those relationships

The bottom line is you need to spend most of the time working on the 20% aspects of your practice and life that matter most to you.

In your personal life too, determine who are the 20% of people contributing towards 80% of your happiness, growth, and success? Limit tasks to the 20% category only to shorten work time.

This principle suggests you identify and focus on the handful of actions that make you the happiest/most productive. This means that you need to eliminate or delegate all of the rest.

2ND LAW IS EXTREME PARETO PRINCIPLE - PARKINSON'S LAW

[image 02]

Parkinson's law says that a task will swell in importance and complexity with the time allotted for its completion. It is the magic of an immediate deadline!

This means if you give 24 hours to complete a task, the time pressure forces you to focus on execution, and you have no choice but to do the task. If you give one week to complete the same task, it's six days of making the mountain out of a molehill. The result of a shorter deadline is almost inevitably equal or higher quality due to greater focus.

Parkinson's law says that work expands to fill the time available for its completion. So, if something must be done in a year, it shall be done in a year. If something must be done next week or tomorrow, it shall be done next week or tomorrow. If you have got 60 minutes to complete the same task, you would complete it in 60 minutes. In a monetary context, if you have got budget of 1 lac Rs. for marketing, it will take 1 lac rupees.

That's the magic of Parkinson's Law! It applies everywhere in all aspects of life.

Just think about it for a moment...How's your productivity on that last day at work before going on vacation?!

In normal times, if you are asked to see 20 patients in a day, then you would feel that you remained busy all day.

But, when you know that it's the last day of your work before going on vacation, then seeing 50 patients in a day will seem easy to do.

Why so?

Because your mind will find great ways to complete the task. For most other work also, this remains the same. You find ways to delegate or recruit more people.

This law works better for employees as well.

To get the best out of this law...

Always have your imaginary boundaries for yourself also and for your people also in every aspect.

When you combine both the laws Pareto's principle and Parkinson's law, there's 10x productivity and yield

PARETO + PARKINSON = HIGH PRODUCTIVITY & YIELD

These are the two synergistic approaches for increasing productivity.

- 1. Limit tasks to the important to shorten work time (80/20)**
- 2. Shorten work time to accommodate a greater number of important tasks (Parkinson's)**

The bottom line is, to keep the tasks that achieve the most results and finish them in a shorter amount of time.

I also recommend you to think and ponder upon the answers to these questions:

1. *{Just hypothetically assume} If you had a health issue and you are allowed to work only two hours per day and still you need to produce the same impact, what would you do?*
2. *If you had a gun to your head and you are told to stop doing 4/5th of different time-consuming activities, what would you stop doing?*

Exploring your answers to these kinds of questions can lead to breakthroughs. They force you to use your imagination and push yourself beyond your comfort zone.

If you ask these questions repetitively, your mind will continue to surprise you with insights. Slowly but sure the answers you come up with will change your relationship to work and to time.

“PRODUCTIVITY ISN’T ABOUT BEING A WORKHORSE.

KEEPING BUSY OR BURNING THE MIDNIGHT OIL...

***IT’S MORE ABOUT PRIORITIES, PLANNING, AND FIERCELY PROTECTING YOUR
TIME”***

Have you ever applied these principles in your life subconsciously?

How have they been helpful to you?

What activities have you eliminated or done less of to become more effective with your time?

Ask yourself these questions & note down

What are my reflections on this?

Affirm it:

***I am going to focus on the tasks that achieve the most results and finish them
in a shorter amount of time.***

NOT USING CHECKLISTS:

THE SIN YOU ARE COMMITTING TO YOUR PRACTICE - EVERY DAY!

According to a 2009 press release from Harvard Medical School, it was concluded that **“A 2-minute checklist confirming safe delivery of anesthesia, prophylaxis against infection, and other basic safety items reduced complications and deaths after surgery by 1/3rd in 8 hospitals around the world.”**

Yes, it perfectly demonstrates the power of a checklist!

In 1935, during the demonstration of bomber flight, the crew forgot to disengage the flight control locks, which caused the plane to stall and crash, killing two of the crew.

This raised the question of whether pilots would have to memorize more and more steps just to be able to fly it.

After the accident, Boeing came up with the idea of A CHECKLIST as a way to display everything a crew needed to do before they could take off.

The checklist was created because of that fateful day and has been in widespread use ever since.

I can recall one incident from my life too. Let me share it here...

For a long time, we are sending newsletters to many of our subscribers for which we have made a checklist.

Now, what does this checklist include?

It includes a list of all the things that our newsletter designers and creators must follow - a kind of preset standard. This checklist includes the standards of images, videos, testimonials, and everything else used in the newsletter. So, every time the newsletters are sent to the subscribers, every item in the checklist has to be ticked off before sending.

Even after creating this checklist, I observed that the standards were not being followed and there were many flaws in the newsletters.

The team member handling the project once mailed me the designed newsletter for approval. I called him and said, "Please email me this newsletter again with the checklist that we created for maintaining the standards and send me ONLY after ticking off the checklist items."

What's the point of sharing these stories?

The point is, to err is human!

We often make mistakes, we often forget important things, we often miss out on vital details. And there is only one solution to all of these.

MAKE CHECKLISTS.

FOR EVERYTHING YOU CAN EVER IMAGINE.

MAKE CHECKLISTS FOR EVERYTHING AND ANYTHING THAT YOU CAN IN YOUR PRACTICE.

You can make checklists for

- your patient onboarding,
- your practice marketing,
- your procedure protocols,
- your employee performance, and many more aspects of your practice.

Furthermore, during my conversation with the newsletter project head I even asked him, "From now onwards, the newsletters MUST be sent with the ticked-off checklist only."

Why did I ask him to do so?

Because only making the checklists will not solve the purpose! It needs to be followed too!

I made it a rule and asked him to send me newsletters for approval along with that tick-marked checklist only or else it would not be approved. It's a human psychology!

By doing this, I made it a compulsion to do everything according to the checklist only.

Bottom line?

Checklists are an important part of organizing and completing tasks. They are used everywhere including healthcare, military, law, and business world.

Making checklists a regular part of your employees' responsibilities will go a long way in cementing critical procedures and tasks in their minds and ensuring they make fewer mistakes.

That, in turn, reduces your risk of liability and improves the outcomes of your practice.

Determine for which elements or areas of your practice you are determined to make checklists?

What is the expected date of its completion?

What is the expected date of execution by your team? From when it would be a continuous process?

Who will observe and evaluate if those are being used correctly or not?

At what interval??

Write down your reflections

Affirm it:

I am going to make checklists for all major aspects of my practice

HERE'S MY SECRET TO HAVING LONG-LASTING RELATIONSHIPS

YES - YOU AND I, WE ALL ARE IN THE PEOPLE BUSINESS! AND HERE, I AM GOING TO SHARE THE MOST GUARDED SECRET TO HAVING LONG-LASTING RELATIONSHIPS - IN BUSINESS AND in LIFE.

Read on...

One of the most memorable quotes attributed to the CEO of Starbucks, Howard Schultz:

"We are not in the coffee business serving people, but in the people's business serving coffee"

I use this quote very often while giving presentations. Replace the word “coffee” here with “dermatology service” and the same would be true!

Just think about it for a moment and recall all your professional relationships. Don’t you prefer to associate with those whom you know, like, and trust?! Beyond the basics of good quality products and services, we are bound by our relationships with people.

Often as an entrepreneur, I get asked by people, “What business are you in?” I am pretty sure that even if I ask you the same question, your response would be “Dermatology practice. I am into the business of making people beautiful”.

But here’s a contrarian philosophy (a philosophy that I live by! 😊):

WE ARE IN THE PEOPLE BUSINESS

Yes, that's what I do!!! And **as I start explaining my reasons behind this philosophy, I’m betting you that you will also say that you are in people's business after reading this till the end.**

What does it mean to be in “people business”?

Well, I consider the people within my organization to be the most important product and asset of my organization. I love them and expect nothing but the best for them. In return, they manage my business, try to do a little bit extra, better, and be better each day. That’s it!

If you could create a happy and thriving environment in your clinic or organization, then everything else will work out.

Simply, ask yourself these questions:

- **IS MY STAFF HAPPY?**
- **ARE THEY EXPANDING IN THEIR POTENTIAL?**
- **ARE THEY BECOMING LEADERS?**
- **ARE THEY ABLE TO DO THINGS INDEPENDENTLY AND INTERDEPENDENTLY?**

For major organizations, the culture can move towards becoming more people-centric over time. But, in my case, I started with this focus from our very first day. I invested in my people and not only them but in their families too. I treat them

as my extended family! And that is the reason why they rarely think of leaving me and even if they think of leaving me, they never think ill for the company.

Then there is also a second part to the equation of being in the people business that is your clients/patients. For this part also if you understand the approach of 'being in people's business then you and your team will have a completely different perspective for your patients and will treat them in a completely different way.

[image 03] If we take the example of Starbucks, more than their service it's the customer experience they give that is unmatched. If you are a frequent visitor of this place, they will start giving you a personalized customer experience by branding your orders with **YOUR NAME**. That personalized knowledge is being transferred through generations of employees at most Starbucks locations. Not only this, even their employees make you feel valued as a person, not as a transaction. They don't directly ask, but they get a sense of your mood from your behavior. So, if you are in a hurry and you visit them, they will serve your order quickly. But if you are not in hurry, then they will engage you in a conversation. Now, this is what I call a trained behavior to enhance and personalize the customer experience.

Imagine if you can replicate that! None of your patients would leave your clinic dissatisfied.

So, how to do that? It's simple...

As a leader, when you can treat the people in our clinic like they're as important in the practice as you are (which they are), you will see the results that you need. People will do anything for you, if they know with certainty that you would do anything for them, too.

I believe that whatever my clients expect, I want my team to go one step ahead and overdeliver. It's our definition of world-class service. As a team, we are committed to this belief.

Yes, I can proudly say that I am in a people business.

Are you in the people business too?

REFLECTIONS

Self-evaluation is so important. Here are a few questions for you to ask yourself and evaluate:

- Is my staff happy with me in my clinic?
- Is my team expanding its potential?
- Are they becoming leaders?
- Are they able to do things independently and interdependently?
- Am I invested in my people?
- Are my patients happy and satisfied with the results we give?
- Have I taken their feedback in recent times?
- What do they want from my practice?
- How am I truly invested in my patients?

“PEOPLE DON’T HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH A BRAND ON THE LEVEL THEY HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PEOPLE WHO REPRESENT THAT BRAND.”

JOT DOWN YOUR REFLECTIONS HERE:

[illegible]

Affirm it:

I am in People Business

BIGGER ISN'T ALWAYS BETTER:

WHY SMALL YET LOYAL CLIENTS ARE KEY TO SUCCESS [image 05]

You must have observed a gardener taking care of the garden. What does he do? Does he only take care of the larger and more colorful flowers that immediately capture everyone's attention? OR Does he take care of small delicate flowers too that are sprinkled all over the garden? Of course both right?

Yes, this analogy is similar to your practice where you can consider the garden as your practice, the larger flowers as your bigshot clients, and small flowers as your other clients.

Many entrepreneurs think that the best way to grow is by luring big clients. But what is the definition of 'big'? You would say, a big client is the one that brings a substantial amount of revenue to your clinic. But I beg to differ a bit. **Revenue isn't the only variable that determines the success of your practice.** Maybe the client is bringing small revenue but he or she is a well-known name. Perhaps the client isn't bringing a lot of revenue, but sending a lot of referrals to your practice. A client like this can be a bigger catch than the high-paying or high-ticket clients.

Also, **big clients aren't always the best clients.** They are sometimes difficult to deal with. I am not saying that you shouldn't be looking after your big clients. Serving big clients is fine. They offer good learning and revenue. But when you start to focus on them more, you lose your focus on your best clients.

The best clients are the ones who don't necessarily go for high-ticket procedures. They are the ones who are loyal to you, refer you to their relatives

and friends, trust you for all their concerns and come over and again for their repeat purchases.

So, while you chase your big clients, here are two things that you need to consider...

1. Look at your bottom line. It's can be tempting to focus only on big clients that come to your clinic. But ask yourself whether that client brings enough profit to allow you to grow the rest of your client base to mitigate the risk presented?
2. Plan for the future. Consider the possibility that the big revenue-generating clients won't come to you again, and start planning what you'll do without them at least 18 to 24 months down the line. Don't let a relationship with a big client lure you into a false sense of security. Planning for the future will come in handy when the big clients leave you.

The bottom line?

It's always tempting to go after the biggest fish in the pond, thinking they'll bring in the most revenue. However, if you consider these things, you'll see that **smaller clients can grow your practice faster** and with fewer headaches. Put your trust in the potential of those who come to your practice with open arms and a warm smile.

[image 04] *Treat each small delicate flower, the client, as the potential star they are.*

Water them well with quality services and products

Fertilize as needed with the occasional "wow" experience

Provide them life-giving sun with your honest and sincere attention

"BIGGER FISH ISN'T ALWAYS THE BEST CATCH!"

Have you differentiated your big and best clients? Write down your reflections.

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Affirm it:

I am going to water, fertilize and provide life-giving sun to my best clients, not just big clients.

THE RECIPROCITY PRINCIPLE IN DERMATOLOGY PRACTICE:

HOW TO USE IT THE BEST?

When you see someone smile, does it naturally make you want to smile back?

When you see someone cheerfully celebrating, do you feel inclined to join in and celebrate too?

These responses are not forced, but natural and reciprocal.

Researchers have been studying for years to find the factors that influence us to say “yes” to the requests of others. Out such factor found by researchers, is the **‘Rule of Reciprocity.’ Understanding this rule and employing it ethically can significantly increase the chances that someone will be persuaded by your request.**

Let’s take a closer look at this rule.

WHAT IS THE RULE OF RECIPROCITY?

Simply put, people are obliged to give back to others in the form of a behavior, gift, or service that they have received first.

If a friend invites you to their home, there's an obligation for you to invite them to your home. If a colleague does you a favor, you owe that colleague a favor. People are more likely to say yes to those who they owe.

One of the best examples of this rule is when you visit a restaurant. So, the last time you visited a restaurant, there's a good chance that the waiter will have given you a gift, probably about the same time that they bring your bill. A discount, a complimentary dessert, or a simple mouth-freshener.

So, here's the question. Does the giving of a mouth-freshener have any influence over how much tip you're going to leave them? Most people will say no. But that single mouth-freshener at the end of a meal typically increases tips by around 3%.

Interestingly, if the gift is doubled and a variety of two different mouth-fresheners is provided, tips don't double. They quadruple with a 14% increase in tips. But perhaps most interesting of all is the fact that if the waiter provides one mouth-freshener, starts to walk away from the table, but pauses turns back and says, "For you nice people, here's an extra gift," tips go through the roof. A 23% increase, influenced not by what was given, but by HOW it was given.

So, the key to using the Principle of Reciprocity is to **BE THE FIRST TO GIVE & To ensure that what you give is PERSONALIZED AND UNEXPECTED, and served with the RIGHT ATTITUDE.**

RULE OF RECIPROCITY IN YOUR CLINIC

If you want your patients to trust you and come back to you repeatedly, plant the reciprocity seed by being nice to them upfront and minimizing their interaction discomfort. Start by giving before taking, and people will reciprocate.

A patient who feels truly valued will always feel compelled to return and refer.

Now let's see some applicable ideas of this rule...

- You can have 'Love Your Skin Sundays' in your clinic where you are offering free introductory test sessions. You may modify this and use this idea as per your liking and convenience
- Free consultations on particular days at a particular time when your OPD is not harmed
- Value-added extras for existing patients like free samples or free booklets on skincare or a free skin-cleansing regime.
- Regular rewards and thank you calls for loyal patients
- Focus on something your target market needs. For example, give a leaflet with tips on 'How to avoid pimples in your teenage'. Both parents and teenagers will find it a useful gift
- Focus on something applicable in your practice. For example, give a sample of face-wash to your OPD patients. Those who are using it will love it and those who are not using it will be prompted to use it
- Concentrate on something that will wow your potential patients. For example, in our company, we offer many helpful resources to our esteemed clients like our magazine DERMATALK published quarterly to give dermatologists an insight into the latest technological advances in the field
- You can give discount codes, checklists, and countless other freebies like free eBooks, good articles, and some such perks to tempt people to get closer to your practice
- Keep some interesting fun trivia like puzzles and sudoku in your reception area. That type of touch will be appreciated by patients who thrive on action
- Keep wet wipes in your reception for your patients who are waiting for their turn. Also, complimentary tea or coffee vending machine would add to the overall effect
- For your existing patients: gifts and personalized offers that are exclusively for them are very effective in reminding them that you genuinely care
- On your website, give the people who are searching you online first something for free – a coupon, a free sample. Your patients will thank you and you'll likely see a spike in OPD

- People tend to return the favor, thus use the abundance of free samples in marketing. It's the best way to network, to meet, and help the people first. Once you've helped someone, they'll be more likely to return the favor when you need it. The best networkers do this with no expectation of a return.

Remember to give first; then you shall get in return.

It can be anything, imagination is the key. Once you know the demographic details of your patients, their likes and dislikes, you will easily learn to entice them with services that they like and what makes them tick.

To amplify the effects of reciprocity, it is important to:

Incite the feeling of indebtedness by offering first!

Provide something exclusive and unique to the recipient so they feel special!

And make sure they know it's from you!

Also, don't just give once. The key is to create a feeling of debt and to maintain that feeling of debt because 'it is in giving that we receive'.

Bottom Line

BE THE FIRST TO GIVE

And people will feel inclined to return the favor

ENSURE WHAT YOU GIVE IS PERSONALISED & UNEXPECTED

Think of a few ideas which you can apply in your clinic immediately to use this law of reciprocity in your favor.

Think of reciprocity ideas that will work as lead magnets.

JOT DOWN YOUR REFLECTIONS HERE:

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Affirm it:

***I BELIEVE IN THE RULE OF RECIPROCITY AND TRUST THAT I GIVE GOOD TO
RECEIVE GOOD!***

***P.S. In our company this principle is at the heart of everything we do and
everybody in the organization is dedicated to it. This is the secret behind
WHAT we are, WHERE we are and WHAT we have achieved***

THREE WORDS THAT WILL ANNIHILATE YOUR EXCUSES

Is there something that you wish to do in life, but you haven't done it yet because you haven't figured out the 'HOW'?

Me too.

I know this HOW can make anyone quit even the biggest dreams of their lives. And when you too feel the same in your life. Trust yourself and repeat these words.

EVERYTHING IS FIGUREOUTABLE IN LIFE

Of course, you cannot bring a dead man back to life but you can figure out:

- *How to manage your time between your practice and personal life*
- *Launching a new clinic if you have been dreaming about that*
- *Starting on your own even if you don't have an experience at the moment*
- *Expanding your clinic that you have been hoping for long*

Everything is figureoutable. So is just about everything in life.

I follow this advice and repeat it to myself whenever I come across a problem. Be it something as silly as figuring out why my mobile is hanging or something as bigger as launching my new project, I repeat these words to myself often. Sometimes it takes a long to find a solution. But nothing is impossible.

Having said that, I would also like to add that **everything is figureoutable ONLY IF you work for it. And the first step towards it is changing your mindset.**

During our yoga hours, when my and wife were not able to hold on to some poses, our yoga instructor said, "You can hold onto that pose for as long as you wish to. BUT only if you train your brain and thought patterns." Well, that was an amazing reminder for us. "Yes, of course, I can overcome the negative self-talk and replace them with more positive affirmations like I can hold on to this pose for at least 5 seconds." And I did! Then I reframed the affirmation to 10 seconds and it worked again!

Affirmations are magic.

So, you need to listen to your thoughts. How often do you say negative things to yourself? Like, "I do not have enough time for my family", "I cannot open my clinic on my own", "I don't have enough funds to branch out", "I don't need to market my services" and so on.

Upon being asked, would you say such negative words to anyone dear to you? No! You wouldn't say negative things to them, then why say it to yourself?! Why not to flip the script and start saying positive words to yourself?!

I have applied this way of thinking to grow my business. Whenever an opportunity aroused, I said yes and then I asked myself, "How to do this?" Though the 'how' wouldn't have been figured out, I always said to myself "Everything is figureoutable" and that helped me figure out the "how" later.

So, you have to take two actions now

- 1. Take one step towards solving a problem that you know you need to solve**
- 2. Flip the script of your negative self-talk every time you catch yourself with negative words throughout your day**

Write down your reflections

Affirm it:

Everything is figureoutable if I work towards it

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT HAVING A MENTOR IN BUSINESS & LIFE

When you want to drive to an unknown location, what do you generally do? You turn ON your GPS to guide you and it will help you reach your destination smoothly without getting lost.

In life, it is the same.

In all spheres of life, you need a guide to help you reach your destination. Your mentor can be your GPS guiding you towards that destination.

From my experience, I can rightly say that having a mentor is an amazing blessing to an entrepreneur. I'm fortunate enough to have known some of the most world-renowned entrepreneurs, business leaders, speakers personally and rely on them for advice, counsel, and growth ideas. I have also had interesting conversations with them and always tried to maximize the interactions

whenever I connect with them. **During the initial days of my career, I used to push myself taking inspiration from my mentors' lives and it helped me achieve my goals faster.**

[ilesh sir's photos with different speakers]

Luckily you and I live in an era where it is *easier* than ever to access, view, and digest their wisdom and experience. We can read and study their books which is the number one way to gain access to them. We now have the opportunity to make our mentors part of our daily lives through social media.

Yes, you're spending time on your favorite social media platforms, so why not fill them with the advice and motivation of people who can set you on the right path to achieve your goals?

But remember, just because you follow someone doesn't mean that you have to agree with everything they say. However, you should keep an open mind, especially when the opinion you're considering comes from someone with a proven track record for getting things done.

So, I would love to answer a few questions about having mentor(s) because many people I speak to have asked me these questions time and again. Even I had these questions in my mind initially when I started following my 'business mentor'...

1. Can you become your Mentor's mentor?

No.

2. Can you prosper more than your mentor?

Yes, absolutely!

3. Can you acquire more knowledge than your mentor?

Yes, you can

4. Should your mentor at the start of the journey have everything you are trying to learn and get through his/her knowledge?

It depends

5. Can you have more followers and a wider circle of influence than your mentor?

Yes, you can have.

6. Can you have multiple mentors at a time?

Yes!

Regardless of where you are in your career - recently started your practice or an experienced practitioner, a mentor can guide you to grow faster and have a more fulfilling life.

Now imagine tomorrow you are going to meet your mentor for a day:

What questions would you ask?

Note down your questions here.

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"A mentor can help you navigate your career path to achieve success. It's important to have one; accept and implement their guidance in your life."

DO NOT ASSUME YOU ARE AN ENTREPRENEUR UNTIL YOU HAVE THIS SKILL [image 07]

Did you know?

Before starting Amazon, Jeff Bezos had the highest paying job in Wall Street as the senior vice president of hedge fund when he felt a call to become an entrepreneur?! It was in 1994 when he risked it all by sacrificing his job to start Amazon which began as an online bookstore run out of a garage!

[image 06] Today, he is one of the richest men on earth with an estimated net worth of \$178 billion.

Upon being interviewed once, he said “For me, I had to project myself forward to age 80. I don’t want to be 80 years old, cataloging a bunch of regrets of my life.” His story perfectly depicts how minimizing what ifs and taking risks can lead to staggering success in life!!!

On the contrary, consider the example of Xerox and the case of the computer mouse and graphical user interface. The company invented the technologies at their research facility. Yet, today you won't find a logo of Xerox on the back of the laptop. Why? Because the Xerox team wasn’t willing to take the risk to bring new ideas to the market.

As an entrepreneur, I know taking risks and growth go hand in hand. In my business too, I have taken risks on regular basis, no matter how big or small they may be. Had I not taken risks in my business, I would have been selling the same products, doing the same monotonous things over the years leading to the same results with negligible or zero growth. but **I dared to take risks that helped me launch new products, new services, and jump into new ventures that no pharma competitors could think of.**

And...THAT HELPED ME REACH HEIGHTS THAT RARELY ANYONE COULD THINK OF!

Do you think I have always been successful in all my ventures? NO! I have faced failures more than you could think of! One of the major risks I had taken in my early days of life was leaving the job of a manager in a pharma company and starting on my own with no financial support. And guess what! I landed in a debt from my initial sale of products. It was discouraging at that time. But today when I look back to those days, I can proudly say that it was one of the best high rewarding risks I have ever taken in my life.

This is not to say that you should take risks just for the sake of it or to lend yourself in a debt 😊 – successful risks are CALCULATED. When taking a major risk, is important to calculate the potential results and have plan B in place if plan A fails.

But that being said... **taking no risk is the biggest risk!**

Of course, you can never be sure that your risk will pay off, however, there is only one way to find out...

"You have to leave the first step to discover your second step.

You cannot fully understand what the next step holds for you if you don't let go of the first step."

To take calculated risks, you must be able to weigh up the available opportunities to arrive at an informed decision. You may like to follow these steps to make calculated risks:

First, identify the risk. Examine the options and outcomes for all scenarios and note which things you do and don't have control over.

Next, create steps. Plot each risk by creating a step-by-step guide that will help you move through the process. This includes considering financial, technology, market, or credibility challenges before they happen.

And last, document the decision. Write a short description of what that decision was and the risks involved. If you do this step, you will learn from your decisions and grow; whether it was successful or not.

Now let's check your willingness to take risks. Tick mark 'Yes' or 'No' against each question given. Complete this exercise and read further to know your willingness level.

1. Can you take risks with money, that is, invest, and not know the outcome?	__Yes	__No
2. Do you take an umbrella/jacket/gloves with you every time you travel? A water bottle?	__Yes	__No
3. If you're frightened of something, will you try to conquer the fear?	__Yes	__No
4. Do you like trying new foods, new places, and new experiences?	__Yes	__No
5. Do you need to know the answer before you'll ask the question?	__Yes	__No
6. Have you taken a risk in the last six months?	__Yes	__No
7. Can you walk up to a total stranger and strike up a conversation?	__Yes	__No
8. Have you ever intentionally traveled an unfamiliar route?	__Yes	__No
9. Do you need to know that it's been done already before you're willing to try it?	__Yes	__No
10. Have you ever gone out on a blind date?	__Yes	__No

If you answered 'Yes' to questions 2, 5, and 9, you may need to develop a greater willingness to take risks.

Being a successful Dermapreneur takes courage! Do you have that courage???

"THE BIGGEST RISK IS TO TAKE NO RISKS!"

Write down your experiences with risks throughout your career – both the good and bad ones?

What did they teach you?

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Affirm it:

I am not going to live a life of what-ifs. I am going to take calculated risks for my practice and my life.

ONE POWER MOVE YOU USE TO MANAGE PRACTICE WHILE BEING AWAY FROM PRACTICE

While I am writing this, I am in the USA doing a little bit of experiment about something as I mentioned previously!

Ahem...This is not the first time I am experimenting it. Earlier I had experimented but I was ignorant of the lessons that I learned later on.

So, I was always intrigued by the entrepreneurs and business owners who would go on vacations, secure that the companies would run smoothly without them. I wanted to do the same!

Unfortunately, **when I traveled my phone always kept ringing with problems, questions from team members, and more calls from business partners, clients, and what not!!! Oof!!** As a leader, I love being the go-to guy in my business and that has involved me in a few mundane tasks from each department. So, when I am not available, my business suffers a bit.

This time I am facing even more challenges...even more phone calls...even more concerns...more questions. The only difference is that my business is not suffering this time like it did in my previous experiments.

What made the difference?

What did I learn from my experiments?

Well, here's my take...

Even when you aren't out, you cannot forget this law –

The health of our business depends on the top 100 clients or top 20% of our clients

You need to be constantly in search of finding creative ways to keep in touch with your top 100 or 20% clients and also train your staff for the same.

There are different ways and means to do this but it boils down to the fundamental rules of any business or practice ...

1. To sustain and maintain the existing clients. So, to bring them to the next level of relationships and make sure that your bottom line is always healthy.
2. To onboard new clients to ensure the top line is increasing constantly.
3. To revive relationships with the lost clients because you always want to broaden your circle
4. To maintain long term brand value

These are the four fundamentals you need to follow in your practice too.

But what most entrepreneurs are ignorant about is how many percentages of resources to allocate to each of the categories I mentioned here.

As a rule of thumb, what I do in my business is

Allocate 40% 30% 10% & 20% resources respectively

What's the logic behind these percentages?

Well, maintaining relationships with existing clients is of utmost important so allocate a maximum percentage of resources to them.

Next, onboarding new clients are necessary for growth and that's why allocating them a good percentage of resources is vital.

Maintaining a long-term brand value will help you get new clients and engage the existing ones so it's next in line.

Reviving lost relationships should not be neglected but it's less important than others so it comes last in allocating resources.

It took me years of trial and error to learn how to fulfill this dream and step out of the daily operations of my company.

Today I am aware that I am the bottleneck of my company. My company might be growing faster or not growing altogether because of me.

It's not easy to step away. But I believe the lessons I learned after experimenting with this have helped my company to make a transition from being dependent on me to running more independently.

Recall the last time you went on a vacation and how did it impact your practice?

Was it able to run smoothly?

What lessons did you learn?

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P.S. IF YOU HAVE A CHAIN OF CLINICS THEN THIS MOVE IS GOLD FOR YOU. AS YOU REMAIN AWAY FROM OTHER CLINICS WHEN YOU ARE WORKING AT ONE CLINIC, YOU CAN KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE PATIENTS OF ALL OTHER CLINICS IN A CREATIVE WAY. THIS MOVE WILL WORK IN AUTO MODE AND YOU WOULD HAVE THOUSANDS OF KEY PATIENTS.

“Get closer than ever to your customers. So close that you tell them what they need well before they realize it themselves.”

Affirm it:

I am going to get closer to my patients

EMPLOYEE BRAIN POWER = THRIVING PRACTICE

Just like your computer, your EHR, or appointment book; your staff is an extremely important resource that helps you generate income.

When we talk about resources or assets, we usually discuss terms like lasers, machines, technologies, materials and discuss it using charts and graphs. While they are your assets but you could be overlooking the most important nuance, which is the fact that your team is also a resource and an asset. Perhaps, the most valuable resource. In the end, **it's only the people in your organization who are ultimately responsible for your success.**

Your staff is an excellent source of information and insights. Utilizing their knowledge and creative ideas can help your practice succeed and grow. As ideas are the lifeblood of any organization, **you cannot think about BRINGING innovation in your practice without the collective, creative ideas coming up from your team members on a regular basis.**

So, here's what I do in my company that you can replicate too...

We conduct **frequent brainstorming sessions** with our team for generating ideas and encouraging them to share ideas through our team building app also where we have a separate section within the app to drop their ideas. You too can encourage your staff to observe as they are the front liners, they are the ones who get to interact with your patients the most after you. So, they can best suggest the best ideas to innovate your practice.

But we usually hesitate in encouraging our team members to generate ideas.

Why so?

Because we have a fixed mindset and we consider that our team members are non-qualified or they are not MBAs. BUT let me tell you that they can create a treasure of ideas if channelized in a proper direction.

Now the question is...how can you do effective idea generation for your practice?

While there are many ideas you will find over the internet to do so, here's what has worked well for my organization...

Create a contest.

So, in November 2021 to grow our businesses we conducted a team meeting with our key players where all the attendees were introduced with ideas on innovation, and they were given a challenge...to come up with maximum innovative ideas for our company within a specified time limit. At the end of the contest, the winner and the runner-up were appreciated and rewarded.





If I can, why not you?

You too can conduct a competition for your staff asking them to observe daily and noting down ideas at the end of every day. At the end of a month, evaluate and give prizes to the best contributors.

Conduct this competition and see the results!

You can also **gift them a diary - 'My ideas' diary** - where they can jot down their day-to-day observation. In terms of what can be improved in the clinic further or patients challenges etc.

You can also plan a meeting at least once in a quarter dedicated to the theme of how further we can grow?

Shy people usually feel their ideas are not so great and they may look bad in front of their colleagues. Encourage them to submit their ideas via mail or one-on-one. Discuss their ideas anonymously in meetings so everyone can hear them and the person giving the ideas gets motivation.

Schedule regular team brainstorming sessions into weekly or monthly rhythm. This creates a culture where your team feels their ideas are valued. During these sessions, also discuss about the ideas in execution or pipeline. Give incentives to the team for coming up with best ideas like a lunch out or a nice goodie bag.

Once you do this, you will see a lot of creativity coming from your staff all around as well as an increase in involvement in its implementation, as all the members were part of generating the ideas.

Note down your ideas for conducting this competition in your practice. And which are the other ideas you would be using from this chapter.

How you are going to conduct it?

How you will encourage your staff?

What will the prize be?

"The best way to have a good idea is to have a lot of ideas.

That is possible when your team is involved."

"None of us is as smart as all of us."

Affirm it:

I am going to leverage the human brainpower in my practice to its full potential

PICK THE TRENDS EARLY

You cannot predict the future but you can pick the trends and patterns!

At least once in your lifetime you must have exclaimed this, "I wish I could have known this earlier!"

It's not just you. Most entrepreneurs would have wished to know something earlier than they realized at the moment. Well, it happens when you don't foresee the future challenges or predict the future trends.

Steve Jobs was such an innovator. While CEO of Apple, his advisers warned him against trying to move into the music and mobile phone businesses. At that time, the digital music industry was less valuable by illegal downloads and weak internet access for mobile phones. **He didn't make decisions based on what was popular at that time but what he knew WOULD be popular in the future. In a contrary example of lack of foresight, PC processor giant Intel gave up on the smartphone market has gained no traction. That's the difference between having foresight.**

While most entrepreneurs live by instincts, **successful entrepreneurs gain knowledge through observation and analysis to create a map of the future.**

Take the example of Jeff Bezos. Once he was congratulated for his recent success and the price of the stock was soaring in the market. Upon being asked about how did he achieve success, he said, *“Oh you are talking about that, that decision was made 3 years earlier as I was able to foresee the situation and could plan that same way. Today, I am working on the things which you would be seeing 3 years later.”* He’s an exemplary entrepreneur.

Being an entrepreneur, on several occasions, even I had envisioned the future - 3 to 5 years down the line - to see the future needs and challenges. Not to boast, but this skill has helped me a lot in my success. Right from my decision of recruiting more graphic designers ahead of the time to building a huge warehouse; all my decisions have been fruitful. *One of the best examples I can recall of predicting future needs was expanding my head office. At the time when my team was small, merely 10 people, I thought of expanding my office that can accommodate at least 20 people.* Why? It’s because I knew the team would grow in near future and that prediction helped me save the cost of frequent expansions in the long run.

As humans, our natural tendency is likely to be action-oriented and focused on the hustle and bustle of today, tomorrow, or seasonal events in the year ahead. The biggest challenge here is to build in focus time. The time where you stop, look ahead, and gather information to predict the future. Building this habit into your routine as an entrepreneur is critical.

Are you spending time to foresee future challenges or opportunities in your practice?

Are you able to pick the trends of the industry before it becomes obvious to see for your competitors?

Are you able to see what your practice may require 3 to 5 years down the line and start working on that from today?

How proactively are you leading your practice?

Are you building and working on the things which you may require 3 to 5 years down the line in your practice?

Ponder upon these questions during your think time and write down your predictions.

“Willingness to take action when everyone else thinks you’re crazy is what makes geniuses.”

Affirm it:

I am going to spare some time for predicting the future needs of my practice

EARLY MOMENTUM – THE LIFE BLOOD OF ANY PROJECT OR PRODUCT

It is a proven fact that the early days and weeks of your project set the tone for the rest of the project. In seeking to understand the relationship between project failures and the role of momentum in it, researchers at the University of Virginia researched 51 projects. In the analysis of a \$2.5 million project low momentum was attributed to issues like taking too much time in waiting for approval and team formation issues.

What’s the lesson here? **Slow and uncertain beginnings hurt the morale of the project!**

But do you know why this happens?

Let's see the science behind it...

Newton's first law of motion:

"Objects in motion tend to stay in motion unless acted upon by an outside force"

This law holds for all aspects of your life – be it YOUR PRACTICE, YOUR RELATIONSHIPS, OR EVEN SELF-IMPROVEMENT. If you want to succeed, you need to create MOMENTUM. Momentum helps you get over the initial hurdle of not being able to start something and then pushes you through to the end. Learning how to build momentum is, therefore, one of the first steps to finding success in life.

Over the years of working on several projects and dealing with a wide range of people, I have learned that there are 3 key strategies for learning how to get momentum and push forward.

ACTION CREATES MOMENTUM AND MOMENTUM CREATES RESULTS

By taking action, you start to focus your time and energy on the things that matter most. So, here are the rules that I follow to build momentum in my organization

For any new project, initial momentum should start within 72 hours of the decision taken, preferably 12 hours

For any new learning or idea execution, it should start within the first 4 hours

As Nike's famous slogan goes...JUST DO IT!!! I apply the same motto in my projects, ideas, and learnings.

So much so that first when I got the idea of writing this book, I took time out of my schedule to decide the topics of the first few chapters within the next 48 hours of having that thought.

SCHEDULE IT FOR A PARTICULAR DAY AND TIME

At times you can't just do it now because situations don't permit you to do it now or you get preoccupied with other priorities. What to do then? Well, in that case, what you can do is schedule a particular day and time to do that thing.

One of the best ways to build momentum is to schedule some time every day say for example 30 minutes where you will be dedicated to what it is that you want to achieve.

Like for any of my new project or idea execution, I conduct meetings of follow-ups and feedback to keep things going

In doing so, it will all add up and help embed it as a habit. It will become a routine in your daily work. That's the magic of momentum! Once you initiate, it becomes a habit.

BUILD DISCIPLINE TO CREATE MOMENTUM

Why did the turtle beat the rabbit? in the race? It's because the turtle was consistent while the rabbit wasn't. Discipline helps you build momentum. Show up every day to do whatever you want to do or become. No excuses!!!! Be steady

THE TAKE-HOME MESSAGE

SUCCESS \propto MOMENTUM

Ask yourself these questions...

Which are the aspects in your practice where you are not generating momentum like...

- 1. Deciding to market your practice but then failing to follow it***
- 2. Deciding to train your staff but failing to train them effectively***

3. *Deciding to incorporate a staff recognition system in your practice but not keeping up with it*
4. *Deciding to develop protocols but not keeping up with it*
5. *Developing and designing packages or planning marketing campaigns but not doing it*

What are your reflections on this?

"SUCCESS IS LIKE A SNOWBALL...YOU GOTTA GET IT MOVING!!!"

Affirm it:

As a leader, I am responsible to start the momentum for any big thing in my practice and I will do it within the first 72 hours only.

**ENTREPRENUERSHIP - THE ART OF MAKING DECISIONS WITH THE
LEAST AMOUNT OF INFORMATION**

*"In any moment of decision,
the best thing you can do is the right thing,
the next best thing is the wrong thing,
and the worst thing you can do is nothing.*

-Theodore Roosevelt"

You can make important decisions when COMPLETE information is available.

You can make important decisions when PARTIAL information is available.

What if...you have to take an important decision WITHOUT having a key piece of information?

This is quite often the case in the real world.

When you have all the information, it is somewhat easy to make decisions. You can interpret the information and make the right choices. But when you don't have enough information, it is quite tough to make decisions. You cannot interpret the results as you don't have information. It is a big challenge.

Tactical leaders often make decisions based on the information available. While strategic leaders make decisions based on their intuition and gut feeling. They know pretty well that all decisions might not go well. They are prepared to take risks anyway and implement their decisions. Why so? You may think that they are crazy OR carefree OR fearless.

No!

They are NOT.

Strategic leaders have learned lessons and improved their decision-making skills over time.

All successful leaders go through the process of failure to hone the skill of decision-making. Warren Buffet made mistakes too while investing. But he believed in both wise decision-making and timing. Yes, timing is also a variable!

Just think about it for a moment.

Information is only one variable of decision-making. It's not the ONLY ONE. Various variables come into play while making decisions. **Opportunity cost is another important variable to consider.** You can never predict the outcome with 100% accuracy. So, if you don't act quickly, someone else will. You might lose the battle or even lose your place in the industry while waiting to have all the information and deciding nothing!

I faced this situation right from my days when I was working as a medical representative. At times I made cold calls, and I had very little information about the prospects. I had different versions of a sales pitch ready. I choose one of the pitches, and BOOM...it got delivered. When I wasn't sure, I went with the most successful one statistically. At the end of the day, I can't hesitate on such a call.

Then I applied the same principle when I started my business. I made decisions to launch unconventional projects like Teamspire (employee management app) which didn't go well with clients. But I took it as a learning experience. After that, launched a few more unconventional projects like iDoc Academy (practice management and academic learning app for dermatologists) and iDoc Solutions (branding and designing solutions for dermatologists) which worked very well!

Even while recruiting new team members in my team, I follow the same principle. I go with my gut feeling when I don't have enough information available.

We mostly take important decisions by weighing the alternatives, trying to decide which choice is more worthwhile. Most of us tend to focus on the benefit of our choices and not *the consequences* of NOT taking decisions. An opportunity cost is the cost of not-taking decisions which is often overlooked.

From this day onwards, you have two choices...

One, be a tactical decision-maker who weighs different alternatives against each other.

Two, be a strategic decision-maker who weighs alternatives with the opportunity cost of not taking a decision.

Which one will you choose?

Just think about it for a moment when you had to make important decisions in your practice. Did you consider the opportunity cost of delaying your decisions or not taking the decisions?

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Affirm it:

I UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF TAKING DECISIONS EARLY.

I AM COMFORTABLE MAKING THE DECISIONS WITH THE LEAST AMOUNT OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE.

**A DERMATOLOGY PRACTICE IS ABOUT PEOPLE. IT'S ABOUT
RELATIONSHIPS**

If I were to ask you what makes a dermatology practice successful? You probably would say; a unique, unforgettable service + ability to deliver an amazing experience.

And you would be right.

However, although important, these two aspects are not the only ones that drive success in practice.

You need to equally dedicate time, effort, money, resources to building strong, long-lasting relationships that help patients see the value.

RELATIONSHIPS can be the major difference between the average and the flourishing practice.

Remember I mentioned earlier, you and I, we are all in people business?!

I have seen many dermatologists who expect their team members to delight their patients WITHOUT realizing that it can't be accomplished without THEM doing the same.

As a dermatologist, building relationships isn't optional. You should be building relationships with patients, staff members, and your community too.

Not to boast of myself, but in my entire career, I have never missed an opportunity to WOW and delight my clients and my team members. On every occasion, my support team raises the bar as with every occasion the expectation of the team also goes up.

This is a simple yet profound principle and not everyone understands it. It is simple BUT NOT easy. Just imagine...giving your best on every occasion...delighting your patient every single time as they enter your clinic...and raising the bar every single time!

It's difficult and that makes it more valuable and appreciable for your team as well as clients.

A word of caution here...

[Image 01] The relationship is the cherry on the cake but not the cake itself.

A relationship can only help if it is combined with good services and products. In your case, the cake is your competency. Because if you are not competent, the relationship won't work up to its full potential.

On the contrary, if you are very competent BUT not investing in your relationships by creating wow experiences, not investing enough in self-development and soft skills, not investing in your staff training; then medical competency alone will also not be able to produce the growth and the results you desire to produce.

That is why I have been always recommending Dermapreneurs to invest at least 30% of the resources in self-development as well as learning life skills, people skills, and other things along with 70% investment in developing medical competency.

Imagine...

I and my team have got an amazing relationship with you but our products don't produce results...you can't help us then. Similarly, if the products are amazing and result-oriented but we are very arrogant, then we won't get your support either.

To put it simply...to be successful, you need to establish positive relationships with patients + develop your competency.

In the preface of the book, I have given an analogy of Ferrari. Let's deep dive into that analogy. So, consider your clinical and academic knowledge, competency in dermatology like the engine of a Ferrari which has got amazing power performance, amazing speed, and amazing pickup. Then learning the art of leadership, marketing, practice management and growing relationships are the tyres of your Ferrari. A Ferrari needs inflated tyres to perform at its best. Can you imagine a Ferrari with all 4 tyres punctured?! Well, it might run as well. But what can you expect from a punctured Ferrari?! Maybe running at a speed of 10 to 30 kilometers per hour?! That's near to a Ferrari not running as a Ferrari. Whereas, a Ferrari with inflated tyres can easily run at the speed of 150 to 200 kilometers per hour.

The tyres won't work without engine. But the opposite is also true. A Ferrari without inflated tyres will not work at its best - the way it is meant to run.

[Image 02] The Ferrari of your practice cannot run without the tyre of relationships.

Here's how you can do it...

Demonstrate to your patients that you understand their situations and feelings by showing empathy during patient counselling.

Engage in active listening. Concentrate on what the patient is communicating verbally and nonverbally.

Enhance your counseling and listening skills by asking few questions like what is going on in your life, how do you feel about that (or how does it affect you), what about the situation that troubles you the most.

And give before you ask for something in a relationship.

In your experience, what are some of the creative ways to build relationships?

Jot down your ideas here

Affirm it:

I will invest 30% of my resources in developing life skills, most importantly, building relationships.

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH PATIENTS REGULARLY AND CREATIVELY:

The most powerful and least used move for a thriving practice

Let me begin this with a true story...

Imagine for a moment that you have moved to a new neighborhood. You have two neighboring families...one on either side of your new home.

One neighbor quickly becomes friendly with you as compared to the other. The 'good neighbor' goes out of their way to proactively introduce himself, offers warm words of welcome now and then, builds rapport with conversations, and extends support all the time. Over the years, you and your family feel good about becoming friends with the "good" neighbors and bond very well.

Contrast this with those other neighbors whom you don't know that much and who have done none of these things. They're probably just busy. At best, they occasionally wave from a distance, and then they become invisible.

[Image 01]

You can see the parallels between the experience of the family in the neighborhood and the good or bad experience of a patient with your practice.

This analogy is a reminder that proactively reaching out in relatively simple, easy, and low-cost ways to keep in contact with the patients forms a lasting connection.

Keeping in touch can help you stay on top of your current and former patients' minds. You need to remember that the reason why patients don't come back is not always about dissatisfaction. The most common reason is when patients feel neglected.

An engaging and positive patient experience that drives loyalty requires a degree of effort. This effort with consistent repetition then becomes a habit.

When any patients first visit your clinic, they are neither committed nor engaged. The marketing and branding effort is not finished *there*; in fact, it's just the beginning. **The patient experience that follows after their first visit will determine if they become bonded to your practice, or if they opt to go elsewhere in the future.**

Similarly, completing a treatment doesn't mean it's the end of a relationship with your patient. Former patients can re-visit your clinic for some other concerns or they might even refer their family and friends to your practice. If you keep in touch with such patients, it makes them feel comfortable to call you regarding follow-up questions and future needs.

Now you may wonder...how to do that?

How to keep in contact with past and current patients?

Keeping in touch with your patients need not be a costly affair. You can implement some engagement and loyalty tips at almost no cost.

- **[Image 02]** *You can ask your front desk to call patients approximately 3 to 4 weeks after their last visit to check-in. Use this opportunity to see how the patient is feeling. You might think that it doesn't work. I have tried but patients get irritated...the point is doing it in the right way without sounding salesy.*
- **[Image 03]** *You can ask for a testimonial or a survey which becomes one reason for them to visit your clinic*
- **[Image 04]** *Hype up your patient referral program and offer incentives for referring others to your practice*
- **[Image 05]** *Send them a hardcopy greeting card or customised video on special occasions like their birthdays or anniversaries*
- **[Image 06]** *You can also run a social media contest and have your past patients like or share the post to win an incentive*

There are many different ways that you can use to stay in touch with your patients so that they remember your practice for a long time. Remember, one size doesn't fit all.

You can use the ideas shared to get started and list down more ideas for this and start practicing.

What do you do to stay in contact with past and current patients?

How can you improvise or be more creative?

Jot down your ideas here

"Your relationship with clients doesn't end with a transaction. That's just the start of a long-term connection."

Affirm it:

I am going to keep in touch with my past and current clients regularly and creatively.

ADDRESS THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM - NEVER, NEVER, IGNORE IT!

Think back to your childhood days. Whenever you wanted something, you continually asked your parents hoping they would agree. But instead of saying no, you likely got a response such as, "we will talk later" or "ask your mother/father". Even as a child, you knew that these responses just meant, "I would like to say no, but I don't want to argue, so I will just divert the conversation".

This is called an objection. And it's the same thing patients do when you try to get them to accept your treatment.

When your patients use objections, it sounds like...

- *"Sounds good...but the price is too high"*
- *"I just need to talk with my husband/father"*

- *"I would like a little time to think about it"*
- *"I will call and book it when I am free"*
- *"I will do it later"*
- *"I cannot afford it right now"*
- *"I have heard bad reviews about this treatment"*
- *"It sounds risky to me"*
- *"I fear what results will look like later"*
- *"It will take a longer time to complete this treatment"*

So, what will be your immediate response? You will work even harder to overcome these objections and convince patients to go for the treatment. These attempts from you often fail, don't they?!

There are two important lessons to learn from this.

1. **The best way to ensure there are no objections is to intentionally uncover the possible objections early during counseling.**
2. **Respond to this obvious objection before the client voices it to resist buying**

So, the key lies in identifying and preventing the patient from voicing an objection. Meaning, address the elephant in the room - never, never ignore it!

All being said, the real question is how to do it?

Well, first think about the common objections you and your team get to hear from your patients and then prepare a response for each of these objections.

Let me share a few examples of how you can do it...

1. **[Image 01]** One of the most common objections coming from patients is **"the price is too high"**. Then you can respond with *"Many of my clients used to tell me that our prices are higher than our competitors' prices. However, when I showed them and clarified that these are the differences,*

we were more reasonable. Then they agreed that yes, it's true...that's right!

2. **[Image 02]** Another common objection from patients would be “I need to speak with my father or husband”. What you can say in response is, *“Having to decide on your own can be a bit intimidating when going for the procedure and our patients usually involve their partner before making a final decision and we also agree to this...”*
3. **[Image 03]** One more common objection coming from patients who are in a state of a dilemma is “I need some time to think about it”. You can clear their confusion by saying, *“I’m sure you’ve been thinking about or looking around the right treatment that fits within your budget and fulfills your expectation of results. We have treatments that meet all of your immediate needs and will fulfill your desired results. Let me walk you through the best treatment that we have...”*
4. **[Image 04]** Another objection coming from busy patients is “I have got more things to handle or it seems the treatment will take longer time.” Then you can respond by saying, *“I understand that you might not have enough time. And that’s exactly the reason why you should consider this service/treatment...We all know that in today’s rapidly changing market things can change. However, our service can make your life better and it has got a quick turnaround time, so should I walk you through it?”*

When your patients decline your recommendations, this is an approach that will work better than any other methods like trying to persuade, barter invites, lowering fees, and so on.

The key lies in having mastery over-familiar objections and being equipped with an answer.

While you’ll never be likely to cover every objection you face, the more situations you create a strategy for, the better prepared you’ll be.

So, list down the most common objections that you are getting from your patients. You can involve your staff to list out the objections.

Then prepare corresponding messages of those objections

Affirm it:

I am going to block objections from my patients before they arise with a prepared response

DOES IT MAKE SENSE TO SAY ‘DOES THAT MAKE SENSE?’ WHILE CLOSING A CONSULTATION?

Many dermatologists don't use this phrase while conversing with clients and avoid using it at all costs because they think it's too overused or salesy. While others pepper their conversations with this phrase religiously.

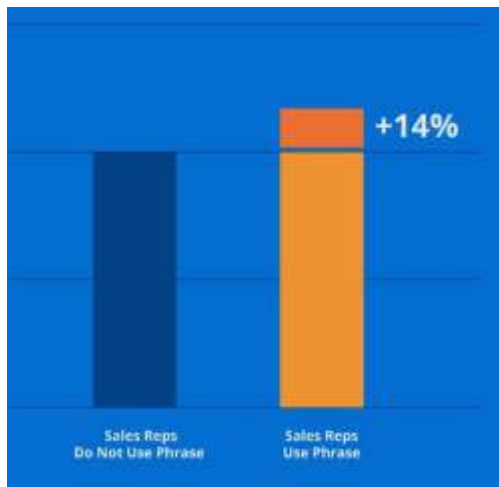
But the assumption that "Does that make sense" is a bad phrase was never tested. So, researchers wanted to know if the phrase "does that make sense" is bad? Did it harm close rates?

Surprisingly, they found a twist in the results!

One million sales calls were analyzed to identify where the phrase "does that make sense?" was used and the sales outcomes. The call transcripts were analyzed and the results showed...

‘DOES THAT MAKE SENSE’ HAS A SLIGHT POSITIVE EFFECT!

There is a 14% higher likelihood of progressing the deal to the next level when the phrase is used.



Yes, that's right and they also found a slight twist. Those in the top 10% performance use a very similar phrase frequently...

"DOES IT MAKE SENSE TO ____?"

These top performers use this phrase to bring their prospects into the conversation and provide a sense of ownership over the call.

Now imagine the difference it makes to a prospect when they hear **"Does it make sense to have a follow-up call next week?"** vs. *"Let's follow up on this next week."*

What's in it for you as a dermatologist?

When you ask this question to your patients, and they say yes, it's kind of a small commitment that they give to themselves. And when someone commits themselves chances of them turning their backdrops to a substantial amount.

So, while consulting your patients, use this question sharply to close the deal. But let me give you a warning here. **DO NOT** use this question randomly. Ask it during very specific topics of discussion.

Because you are running out of time; I strongly recommend you to go for this procedure a month before your marriage. *Does it make sense?*

Looking at your acne, I strongly recommend you to go for this treatment instead of medications. *Does it make sense?*

Provided you are an influencer, I recommend you to go for LHR instead of salon. *Does it make sense?*

As you told me you have tried everything in your power to treat this skin concern with no result. So, I suggest you invest your time and money in this procedure. *Does it make sense?*

You have a wedding to attend this week, so I suggest you go for this additional treatment. *Does it make sense?*

If you wish to have long-lasting results, you must go for the follow-up sessions for this treatment? *Does it make sense?*

During our last consultation, you mentioned your friend who is having the same concern as you, and as you loved your results you can refer us to her. *Does it make sense?*

The last time you skipped your medications, your skin concern got worse. So, I request you to adhere to the prescription? *Does it make sense?*

In other words, use it as a closing question.

“DOES IT MAKE SENSE TO [INSERT SUGGESTED CALL TO ACTION]”

Now determine where you can use this question and note them down here so that you can use them as and when required.

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Affirm it:

I am going to use the phrase 'does it make sense' as a closing question

DON'T FOLLOW UP WITH YOUR TEAM AND PATIENTS:

DO THIS INSTEAD!

90% of the time you would be amazing at following up with the clients and maybe with your team members also! But that's not where the success lies.

Do you know where the actual success lies?

It is the FOLLOW THROUGH which is fundamental for any successful business, work, project, etc.

But then you may ask, what is the difference between the two?

Well, follow up can often be done simply. Typically, through an email or a message or a phone call reaching out to the person. Follow-up is the act of passing on the activity to someone else. It's like saying, "I followed up with them, now the action is in their court."

Follow through is a much more powerful concept. Follow-through means leading something to its completion.

You must have seen basketball players passing on the ball to each other. That is a follow-up. Follow-through is the last shot that puts the correct spin and arc on the ball to make a goal in the basket. This "finish" is a proper follow-through.

If you do not develop a system of follow-through, you will almost certainly fail to meet your objective.

As a leader, you must follow up and follow through with all key players every time because team members would be having different perspectives. Follow-up and follow-through would keep things on-line and everyone on the same page.

Let me share my life incident...

It was Christmas 2021 and we decided to WOW our team members by gifting their kids with some Christmas goodies.

The gifts were arranged by a leader residing in Mumbai which would be then sent to Rajkot Head Office for getting them packed beautifully. Then, the gifts would be delivered to the addresses of team members living in different parts of the country.

This was a long process and it demanded good coordination, as well as proper, follow through to get the gifts delivered on time. However, there was an absence of follow-through between the teams. The leader at Mumbai guided his teammate to send the gifts at Rajkot earliest via courier. But the team member was unable to do so and thus the gifts got delayed in reaching Rajkot. Due to an absence of proper communication and follow-through, the gifts were in transit and we fell short of time. And for that matter even I missed the follow-through on my part...

It was then that I sensed that follow-through is required to WOW my team on time. Being a leader, I knew it was my responsibility. So, then I started following up more actively. The team persisted and after several phone calls, they found a way to come out of this situation.

[Image 01] In the end, the gifts got delivered spot on time due to following through!!!

The team was delighted to receive the presents during Christmas.

Now imagine...if I had missed the follow-through on my part; the gifts wouldn't have been delivered on time and the wow effect would have been cut by half!!!

This teaches us a simple thing follow-through takes persistence. It is a repetitive act.

In the end, I would like to say that most of us want training and coaching on the 'big stuff' like innovation, changing the perception of others, success, etc. These are wonderful things to strive for. But here is something else to keep in

mind...Little things add up to make big things! Many things in life are out of our control, but you have full control over the ability to follow through. You are the only one who can choose to be consistent and proactive in the little things like following through to win at big things in life!

I'LL END IT WITH ONE LAST QUESTION:

**HOW MANY TIMES DO YOU "FOLLOW UP" VS. "FOLLOW THROUGH" WITH
YOUR TEAM?**

&

MOST IMPORTANTLY WITH YOUR PATIENTS???

THINK ABOUT IT!!!

What are your reflections on this?

"Most businesses take 6 to 10 follow-ups to make a sale. Unfortunately, 40% of people give up after 1 follow-up. How many times do you follow up?"

Affirm it:

I am going to follow through for things that matter to me, not just follow up

**NEGOTIATION – THE NON-NEGOTIABLE SKILL DERMATOLOGISTS
NEED TO LEARN**

A 55-year-old man is brought to the Emergency Department with crushing chest pain and is found to have a heart attack. The patient needs an operation, but he insists on leaving the ED. The concerned doctor is unable to convince him otherwise despite confirming that he understands the risks and consequences of his decision. He leaves and returns via ambulance several hours later in cardiac arrest.

Could this story have ended differently? Quite possibly, yes. But not with skills that are taught in medical school. Now consider a host of other conflicts: from interdepartmental wars, to poorly designed agreements between hospital systems and insurance providers, to the difficulties encountered in aligning hospital goals with those of contracted doctor groups. In these and many other interfaces, the limitation is neither incompetence nor ill intent, but rather the lack of negotiation skills.

Negotiation occurs in every fact of life. You negotiate all the time, be it in your personal or professional life. It can be as simple as getting your children to do what they need to do, talking with your travel agent, or as complex as discussing treatment options with patients, buying a property, or signing a deal. As a dermatologist you are often negotiating sub-consciously with your patients, employees, vendors, and so on. Like, negotiating with price shoppers visiting your clinic, discussing monetary benefits with vendors, asking late comers to overtime, and so on.

Many times I have been told by dermatologists that they feel hesitant to negotiate. Well, negotiating may seem odd, or even off-putting to many dermatologists. The reason is that they feel they might lose the relationship or the reputation.

Contrary to what some believe, negotiation isn't about beating the opposition out of the deal. The best negotiators are ones who can create win-win situations, in which everyone walks out thinking that the deal is a good one. No question finding a deal that makes everyone happy is difficult, but this is exactly why it is so highly valued!

It's all about...

HOW WE ENGAGE WITH OTHERS IN A WAY THAT YIELDS BETTER OUTCOMES, BETTER UNDERSTANDINGS, AND BETTER CONCLUSIONS

It's a necessary and inseparable part of human interaction. Had the doctor in the said story negotiated successfully, he could have saved one life! Well, learning this skill might not be as crucial to you as saving lives, but it is still crucial. As a dermatologist, you are part of the most credible group of people in society. That means, your words carry weight. And for the betterment of your patients as well as people around you, learning this form of communication is necessary.

It is necessary if you want to get the most productivity out of your team, it is necessary if you want your patients to get desired results, it is necessary if you want to have long-lasting relationships with vendors and it is necessary while communicating with anyone else.

With that being said, let me share some of the negotiation tactics I use...

- Build rapport first: Doing so can bring real benefits, research shows. You and the opposite end may be more collaborative and likely to reach an agreement if you spend even just a few minutes trying to get to know each other.
- Listen more, talk less: Once you start discussing, resist the urge to think about what you are going to say next while the opposite person is still speaking. Instead, listen carefully. You will likely acquire valuable information.
- Ask good questions: You can gain more in negotiation by avoiding asking "yes or no" questions. Instead, craft open-ended questions that encourage detailed responses like, "Can you tell me about the challenges you are facing right now?"
- Present multiple offers: Rather than making only one offer at a time, consider presenting several offers at once. If your counterpart rejects all of them, ask him/her to tell you which one was liked the best and why. Then improve your offer accordingly, or try to brainstorm an option that pleases you both.

- Never finalize quickly: Keep a window of time in between the negotiation and final agreement. This will allow you to have think time before concluding or jumping onto decisions.
- Apply the rule of reciprocity: Rule of reciprocity applies well while negotiating. For example, if I am providing constant value to you, you will feel the urge to give back the value.

Successful negotiators are always cooperative, not manipulative, and believe in a win-win situation.

If asked, how would you rate your negotiation skill on a scale of 1 to 10?

Think about the last time you negotiated with someone and what was the outcome?

Was it a win-win situation?

What were the lessons you learned?

"NEGOTIATION ISN'T ABOUT BEATING THE OPPOSITE END. IT'S ABOUT CREATING WIN-WIN SITUATIONS."

Affirm it:

I am going to learn and master the skill of negotiation!

BRANDING – IT IS NOT WHAT YOU THINK!

If you surf through the internet, you would find a thousand definitions of brand! Yes, there are so many websites trying to explain the concept of branding.

But what these websites don't explain is the actual meaning of brand. Even expert marketers fail to explain what a brand IS in its simplest form.

SO, WHAT EXACTLY IS A BRAND?

- Is it just your clinic logo?
- Is it just your clinic name?
- Is it about the services you are offering?
- Is it about your clinic culture?

NO.

None of the above represents your brand.

Sorry to prick your bubble if you were also thinking in this direction.

Branding is not only about your clinic logo OR advertising OR the services you are offering OR your clinic culture.

All these things are in YOUR control.

Branding in its actual sense is JUST THE OPPOSITE.

[Image -01]

“Brand is about the customer. It's what customers feel about a product, service, or the company.”

PEOPLE BELIEVE IN BRANDS TO CUT THROUGH THE CLUTTER

The word BRAND is so rich and complex that if this word didn't exist, we'd have to invent a new one. Like the word “reputation.” Your reputation is not in your control. It's not what YOU say - it's what PEOPLE believe about you! So, the best you can do is influence it with your actions and behavior.

The same is true for your practice brand. It's not what you say or do. It's about what your patients feel for your services, procedures, products, and your clinic.

What's the definition of branding then?

Briefly, it's your attempt to build value by delighting patients. The goal of branding is simple:

Give delightful experiences to patients so that **MORE patients come to you for **MORE** procedures for **MORE** years at **PREMIUM** prices.**

Here you need to be careful because branding also has a side-effect. For example, if you overpromise to your patients but underdeliver, your brand will suffer, which will cause the opposite effect:

FEWER patients will come to your practice for **FEWER** treatments for **FEWER** years at a **LOWER** price.

In short, you serve at the pleasure of your clients.

Now pause for a while.

Go through this exercise & answer the questions honestly...

- *What do patients truly think about my brand or my practice brand?*
- *How do they perceive the prices?*
- *What do they believe my practice stands for?*
- *What type of clients do I get more of?*
- *For which service do I get more clients? Is it reflecting my brand?*
- *What do my patients say and feel about my practice?*
- *Do I want them to feel the way they are feeling right now for my practice?*
- *What's the gap between what I am attempting to make them feel about my practice and what they are feeling right now?*
- *What needs to be done to shorten the gap?*

**Now, think about how you are delighting your patients currently.
WHAT CAN YOU DO TO DELIGHT THEM IN AN EVEN BETTER WAY?**

"Your brand is what your patients feel for your services, procedures, products and your clinic."

Affirm it:

I am going to delight my patients so that more patients will use more services for more years at premium prices.

4 STEPS TO CREATE YOUR MAGIC BRAND

Do you feel like you have a strong brand image for your practice?

Do you stand out among patients?

If the answer is yes, then think again!

The reason being, **branding is more than just the logo of your clinic/organization. It is made up of your brand message, your clinic values, how you communicate with your clients, and what you want patients to feel when they associate with your practice.** To have a strong brand image, to be seen as credible, as trustworthy, as the type of brand your demographic desires; you must build a memorable brand.

And without insider knowledge about this, it can be a daunting task.

Through my 18+ years of experience in the industry and creating brands from scratch for several of my projects as well as helping many dermatologists across

the country to build their brand, I have learned many things that are coming here.

But, first, let me clear the 'WHY' behind branding your practice...

Why you must consider developing your brand image as a dermatologist?

Many dermatologists think that branding is just for large-scale practices. If you are the one among them then think again! Because that's not true. It's easy to think brands are reserved for Nikes and Coco-Colas of the world. But **BRANDING IS EVEN MORE CRITICAL FOR PRACTICES OF SMALL SIZE.**

Now you may wonder why?

The reason is that your brand is what your patients and audience think about you. Strong brands are the key to client loyalty.

Think about it this way: If you ask anyone using Apple products for the first time "Are you more likely to buy other products from Apple in future?" Then the answer would be "Definitely Yes!". Apple is the epitome of an emotional brand. Their customers do not just enjoy their relationships with the brand and the products; they love it. Apple creates deep and lasting bonds with its customers, which produces loyalty and positive experiences. So even though the Apple products are costly, their customers won't switch the brand.

That's the magic of branding!

Wouldn't you want to achieve that type of loyalty from your patients too?!

How to create that magic of branding and where to start when building a brand?

I suggest you think about 4 areas to focus on to start the journey towards building your dermatology brand...

First is, **BRAND POSITIONING**

Brand positioning is where you define your audience, the problem you solve, your benefits, and the reasons why your patients must believe in you. Crafting t

positioning statement will help you articulate what makes you different in a compelling way.

Let's look at the example of Amazon's brand positioning statement in the early days:

*For worldwide web users **[target audience]** who enjoy books **[problem/need]**, Amazon **[Brand name]** is a retail bookseller **[Product category]***

*That provides instant access to over 1.1 million books **[Solution/key benefit]***

*Unlike traditional retailers **[alternatives]***

*Amazon **[brand name]** provides a combination of extraordinary convenience **[advantage]**, low prices, and comprehensive selection **[reasons to believe]**.*

How your brand positioning statement can be?

*For teenagers **[target audience]** who want to have look and feel good **[problem/need]**, XYZ clinic **[brand name]** is a one top skincare clinic **[category]***

*That provides holistic skincare **[key benefit]***

*Unlike other cosmetic clinics **[alternatives]***

*XYZ clinic **[brand name]** provides customized skin care services tailored for your needs **[advantage]** with utmost safety **[reasons to believe]**.*

Second is, MARKETING STRATEGIES

First, be clear on the services you offer and your target audience. This will sound like common sense, but you would be surprised to know that many dermatologists don't do this!

List all of your services on your website, social media, business listings and other places your clinic info appears {get a website if you don't have one because it is your front desk online}. It's your services that your patients will look for and they might now know you can take care of a condition if you don't list it in your services.

Talking about the audience, make sure you are making effort to get to know ideal patients.

- *How old are they?*
- *Do they have cosmetic or medical needs?*
- *Why did they choose you?*
- *What are their common concerns?*

You must know your market to build your brand for them

Here's a checklist you can follow to ensure effective marketing of your brand:

- **Have a website and update it often**
- **Get your practice listed online on platforms like Google My Business and Lybrate as more and more people are searching for local services online**
- **Create social media pages representing your brand and post consistently on these pages**
- **Focus on content marketing more as it is a surefire way to increase your SEO. For example, have blogs on your website and update them regularly**
- **Make sure you have ample social reviews and testimonials both online and offline**
- **Leverage video marketing because videos are in trend for quite some time and it won't be going anywhere anytime soon**

Third is, **MARKETING TOOLS**

Promos, giveaways, and specials are great for brand awareness and tempting potential patients to acquire your dermatology services

These giveaways can be used to leave patients with a sense of FOMO (fear of missing out). They will want to grab the opportunity of discount or promo code while it lasts. Giveaways are a great way to gain attention for your brand. It's a great way to spread the word about your services, gain patients, and engage your audience.

Fourth is, **PRIVATE LABELING YOUR PRODUCTS**

As an expert, you know how critical it is to develop fresh and unique products. **One of the reasons to consider *private labeling your skincare and haircare***

products is to increase your brand reputation and patient loyalty. Developing one successful product can be *the first stepping stone* to extend your practice into a skincare brand.

Many dermatologists avoid private labeling their products, thinking it will be costly and complicated. In reality, it's not! *Private labeling skin care involves taking a pre-existing product that's already being produced for and marketed by other skincare brands to sell it under your label.* It is a great starting point for having a branded line to offer your clients and patients.

[Image 01]

Your brand identity is what sets you apart from the endless sea of sameness. It shows your patients who you are and what they can expect from your practice.

And if you want your brand to stand out, it's crucial to nail your brand identity and create designs that accurately represent who you are and your practice.

Now that you know why and how to brand your practice, it's time to take your action steps.

WHAT WILL BE YOUR ACTIONS STEPS TO HAVE A STRONG BRAND IMAGE FOR YOUR PRACTICE?

"YOUR BRAND IS WHAT OTHER PEOPLE SAY ABOUT YOU WHEN YOU ARE NOT IN THE ROOM"

Affirm it:

I am going to create a strong brand identity for my practice

LET YOUR PERSONAL BRAND SPEAK ABOUT YOU!

Whether you know it or not, you have a personal brand! Just open Google on your phone, type your name and see what pops up? These results are the first impression everyone will have of you.

Is it good?

Is the information you are sharing online or over social media sites consistent?

Whether it's the candidate whom you are going to interview or the patient who has scheduled an appointment with you; chances are that someone is searching for you on Google to learn more about you. That's your online reputation.

The question is, do you like what is appearing in the results?

And not just online, in the real world too, if you don't want your reputation to take a life of its own, you need to change the narrative. **Personal branding for YOU is a means to control and direct what is unique and relevant about WHO you are, and thus guide how the patients perceive your professional reputation.**

Think about the strength of a personal brand as you consider renowned names in various fields. Whether or not you enjoy watching them or reading their writing, you probably recognize the name and certain images or topics come to mind immediately. Well, that's the power of personal branding.

Building your brand will...

1. **Solidify your importance.** To succeed as a Dermapreneur, you need to make it clear what makes you different from the other professionals in your field. This could be certain expertise or simply a perspective that comes through in your messaging.

2. **Provide something to your patients that is not easily replaced.** It can be something that makes your service stand out, or the teamwork you're able to foster when you manage a group of people. Regardless, ensure that it comes through in the public eye so when someone talks about that trait, your name should be the benchmark.

4. Complement the work that you do. Just “doing the work” isn’t enough. You can do impressive, significant work within your area of expertise, but you’re missing out if ONLY your paying clients are aware of it. Don’t hesitate to put your successes on display. In any work related to your field, in and outside of patient care, advertising is a must.

These strategies give the prospective patient proof they are making a good decision to select you over all the others. It also gives your staff confidence in you so they are enthusiastic to sing your praises in front of your patients. Remember, your name brand is a unique entity that makes an unspoken promise about the quality of care that can be expected from your practice. I have been using these strategies to build my BRAND AS IK and I have been successful in that to a greater extent.

A great way for you to get started is by building a well-written, intentional profile on all social media platforms and in your clinic.

Take these steps...

- Upload a professional photo
- Write a headline that accurately reflects your professional interests
- Include a short and descriptive summary
- Provide a link to your website
- Tell a story with your experience, education, and activities
- Join groups that align with your goals
- Mention every medical association you belong to
- Acknowledge vendors, and their products and services who have a dermatologist locator tool
- Give a reference of every medical publication you write for or sit on their advisory board
- Highlight every patient review
- Post a link of every media channel you got PR from; especially if they have a link to your video or article uploaded to their website
- Be sure you are listed on important websites related to your specialties like Lybrate and information is up-to-date.

What will be your actions steps in building your personal brand?

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Affirm it:

I am going to build my personal brand proactively

**EMPLOYEE ATTRITION IS INEVITABLE, BUT STRIVING FOR
RETENTION IS POSSIBLE!**

It is believed that maintaining a rate of 30-40% employee attrition is an acceptable norm for most industries.

While this may be a reality for industries, **as a leader OUR focus will always be to retain our employees in the long run, to have zero or minimum employee attrition! Wouldn't you dream about that?**

But the fact remains that no matter what you do, people WILL leave you. No matter how amazing your leadership is, no matter how much you invest in your people, your employees will leave you at some point in time for some reason.

In a previous chapter, I mentioned that people behave for their reasons, not yours.

Now adding to this quote, I also believe that...

"You can be the ripest, juiciest peach in the world, and there will always be someone who hates peaches."

And that's true!

Take Apple, for example, it is the most successful and dominant company on planet Earth with a wealth of \$260 billion. And yet, some people don't like Apple. Now think about this... If Apple spent all of its time worrying about the people that didn't like Apple, Apple wouldn't be Apple. But Apple is fine even if a few people don't like it.

Apple doesn't waste its time worrying about them. Apple spends time and energy building for the people who think Apple is the best!

And so can you!

Provided 30 to 40% employee attrition is considered to be normal, our natural response would be...

"Why invest in people? Why spend time, money, and energy in training them when they are going to leave us one fine day!?"

Well, you won't be able to keep all of your employees for a lifetime. But that doesn't mean you don't invest in your people at all.

EMPLOYEES WHO FEEL VALUED TEND TO STICK AROUND AND SOMETIMES THEY DO STICK AROUND FOR A LIFETIME AS WELL!

So, don't lose hope just because people are leaving you.

Spend your time and energy building with people that think you are shooting the moon.

What are your reflections on this?

What are the ways you can think to retain your loyal clients, employees, and vendors?

Affirm it:

I am not going to think about people who leave me. I am going to think about people who are with me for years. I am going to spend time and energy to lower my employee attrition rate

LESSONS FROM BASKETBALL: RECRUITING AND RETAINING A PLAYERS IN YOUR PRACTICE

For the 2021-2022 season in NBA, only 10% of players were traded to another team. Meanwhile, for other industries including dermatology at least 30% of the employees are actively job searching right now. If you aren't a big sports fan, let me tell you that NBA (National Basketball Association) is one of the most popular basketball leagues comprising of 30 teams.

[Image 01] So, what makes NBA so special that it can retain top players in the team?

To a large majority of employers in the world, the grass seems greener on the opposite side – the competitor side, but why isn't that the case for NBA?

Well, the secret lies in its management style. Its unique ability to strategize and retain its top players could create a massive impact in your practice too to retain your top players.

Losing employees can indeed have a drastic effect on your practice where retaining good staff plays a vital role in the success of the practice. Your patients are used to seeing the same staff for years and they lay trust based on the known faces in your clinic. Not to mention, **it's also expensive to find replacements because it takes an average of 30 days to fill the job.**

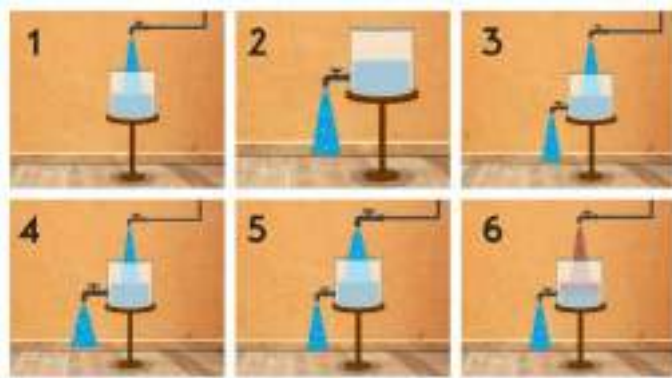
However, the truth is that there is no way you can control every aspect of your team's work experience. *If someone wants to leave your clinic bad enough, sometimes they just will.* Remember I mentioned that in the previous chapter?

People WILL leave you if they want to, no matter what!

That being said, you can apply the lessons of the NBA here to recruit and replace players who are at least as good as the player who left the team.

Let me share how the dynamics work...

WHO LEAVES YOUR CLINIC AND WHO JOINS YOUR TEAM MATTERS A LOT!!!



1. In the first case, the vessel is filling up with additional water and not losing any amount of it. That means if you kept on adding new key players to your team, as well as retaining your existing employees which means there is no loss then you are growing your team.

2. In the second case, the vessel is only losing water. There is no additional water getting added to it. You can consider this scenario in which you are only losing key players from your team but you aren't putting efforts to get new key players or retain the existing ones. This decreases your growth abruptly.

3. In the third scenario, the amount of water that is getting filled in the vessel is the same as the amount of water flowing out. This means the water level remains stagnant. This is similar to a situation in which you are adding the same number of key players in your team as the number of players leaving. It's a neutral case.

4. Now consider the fourth case. The amount of water flowing out of the vessel is more as compared to the water getting added to it. This means you are losing more key players as compared to the players being added to the team. Thus, you are retaining less and losing more. This will result in de-growth but not abruptly.

5. In the fifth case, more water is getting added to the vessel as compared to the amount flowing out of it. This means you are adding a greater number of players and losing a few of them. Thus, allowing you to grow but at much a slower pace.

6. In the last case, more water is getting added to the vessel as compared to the amount flowing out BUT the quality of water getting added is poor. This means,

you are putting efforts to get more employees BUT your efforts aren't in the right direction. You are fetching the wrong employees.

WHICH IS THE BEST SCENARIO?

The first scenario!

You are only adding key players to your team without losing any good people from your team, thus growing your clinic at much a greater speed.

But how to do it??

The answer is...

RETAIN THE KEY PLAYERS WITH YOU ALWAYS &

EVEN IF YOU HAVE TO REPLACE THEM, REPLACE THEM WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE AT LEAST AS GOOD AS THEM.

If you don't think about this while firing or hiring someone, then your team will be full of C players which is the last thing you want for your practice.

At the end of the day, attrition is inevitable. But who is leaving and joining your team matters a lot! And this holds for your clients, friends, vendors, and referring doctors as well.

Evaluate each replacement and departure with this analogy.

Think about this...

On what basis do you hire or fire anyone in your team?

On what basis do you cut off your relationships?

How can you improvise after learning this?

"THE COST OF LOSING AN AVERAGE EMPLOYEE IS 1.5X THEIR SALARY. THE COST OF LOSING TOP PERFORMERS IS 3X THAN LOSING AN AVERAGE PERFORMER".

Affirm it:

I am not going to lose any A player on my team.

I am going to recruit more A-players to my team.

REWARDS AND RECOGNITION THE SYNERGISTIC COMBINATION

WHICH ONE ARE YOU MISSING?

Reward + Recognition = Fulfillment

You and I know that people are motivated by rewards as well as recognition. But the best output or fulfillment is achieved when they are used synergistically! This seemingly looking common sense is not so common. I can give you several examples and you can revisit your memory lane to recall the same instances over and over again...

Where either you are not using both of these together OR not strategically using them OR not optimizing them. This synergistic approach is where missing by even 5% affects your outcome negatively by 50%.

That is the reason why, understanding this point is of utmost important.

As human beings, we crave recognition as much as we crave for monetary reward.

For a moment, visit down your memory lane and recall...*when was the last time you appreciated your staff not through money but simple words or gestures?*

Pat yourself on back if you could recall a few moments.

But if you couldn't, then here you are...you are committing a big mistake!

And I think many dermatologists mistakenly do this all the time.

What's the point?

The point is when a reward is not combined with appreciation, compliments, or positive words; then the value of that reward drops down to 50%.

But, if you give words of appreciation like a simple thank you, or a thoughtful letter, or just a plain gesture of giving the reward through your hand, then the value of that reward doubles.

We are emotional beings and that's the number reason why you **MUST** appreciate the person who is being rewarded. And while you do so, give precise exact reason clarifying **WHY** you are rewarding. Otherwise, the person being rewarded would be kept in the dark and he/she would never value the reward as much as the reward is given along with appreciation.

The opposite is also true.

[Image 01]

It's rightly said that ***claps don't pay the bills!*** Clapping for a few minutes could not make up for the long hours, inadequate PPE kits, and the personal sacrifices of the medical staff during the pandemic.

Similarly, appreciating your staff without fair pay won't motivate them. The fulfillment requires a holistic approach.

Yes, it's true that not every good deed from staff is worth rewarding with money.

But when it's the other way round...when you **ARE** rewarding someone, you don't have to necessarily spend a lot of money to reward them.

Let me give you my example of this...

Recently, in our company, we changed the tradition of giving cash as a gesture of blessings to our newly married team members. We are now giving them a customized kit of goodies that costs the same to our company as it was costing earlier. But, what's the difference? Well, it's more appealing, more personalized, more creative, and it shows more appreciation towards the team members.

Cutting the long story short,

Give rewards with compliments or sharing the reason 'why' you are giving rewards

This synergistic approach will go a long way to boost the morale of your team members.

Identify or make a list of the rewards which don't cost you much money BUT the perceived value of it is higher or which would be appreciated a lot by your key people, employees.

Affirm it:

Every single time I reward my team members I will appreciate them through positive words clarifying the precise 'why' behind the reward

HOW THE SIMPLE INGREDIENT OF DELIGHT CAN TRANSFORM YOUR PRACTICE?

Have you ever felt interconnection between a restaurant and a theme park?

Have you ever imagined the whole restaurant running like a well-oiled machine in a theme park? Almost like a play where everyone was on their mark and every step was running smoothly? And you enjoyed everything at the restaurant?

Isn't it amazing that nearly everyone who visits Disney theme parks comes away with a good feeling about the visit? Many will wait in a queue for an hour in the heat and humidity yet feel that they have had a good experience or certainly got their money's worth. BECAUSE THERE IS MAGIC!

And that magic can be transferred to your practice.

How?

Here is the magic potion...

Anyone can do the big things right; it's the little things that differentiates one from another and that influences patients to choose one practice over the other.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS – GREETING YOUR PATIENTS!

Imagine this scene...

Your patient enters your practice and is greeted by your friendly, smiling receptionist who makes eye contact, acknowledges them immediately.

Your receptionist then directs the patient to where they should sit to be comfortable and offers them water, tea, coffee or beverages. Then provides them useful information that will educate them about their skin, the practice, and special offers using your clinic brochures, testimonials.

Once the patient is settled, the receptionist then notifies you that the patient has arrived. These are simple, low cost super effective measures that are guaranteed to make your patient feel welcome.

ADD TO THIS MAGIC...EDUCATE VISITING PROSPECTIVE PATIENTS BY USING STIMULATING THEIR 5 SENSES:

You can **show them videos of the procedure, videos of any training or talks you have given, digital photo frames showcasing your work.** You may also **keep photo album of before/after photos of the procedure they are interested in.** You can show a DVD of you, your staff, your practice & patient testimonials. And yes - forms to fill out ahead of time - try to complete them before sending them in.

Also, ensure you have a testimonial album on the coffee table that includes:

- *Patient surveys*
- *Testimonials*
- *'Thank you' cards*

- *PR efforts (media coverage)*
- *Articles you've written*
- *Skills & Expertise*
- *Speaking Engagements*
- *Special Awards*

SHOW CONSIDERATION. SHOW APPRECIATION. SHOW RECOGNITION.

Instead of LESS PATIENT INTERACTION TIME, plan your day so that you get more one to one time with patients. The keyword here is to *PERSONALISE*.

FOLLOW-UP AND TRANSPARENCY GO A LONG WAY

One of my dermatologist friends recently gave a Botox and wrinkle filler session. He then emailed the patient offering to do a quick laser procedure to help minimize his bruising if she had any. It's these little things in after-care that separates you from the rest!

Your team is your eyes and ears, so train them to notice. Train them to act when it is appropriate on even the smallest pieces of information they observe or discover about a patient.

If you know it's their birthday, make sure you send a personalized birthday card (and voucher if possible) but also extend birthday wishes in person when you see them.

Attend to their grievances and make sure they only have to say good things about your business and the service they received – because you have addressed their concerns!

Think about the little things that you could do, they don't need to cost much – perhaps some extra bucks per patient; perhaps a warm drink and a biscuit, with a nice cold wipe to freshen them up?

Always think about what can you do to ensure that your patients are treated like PURE PLATINUM? It is the patient who pays your wages. Give them more than they expect.

[Image 01] LET'S DO SOME REFLECTIONS

1. *Does your receptionist greet the patients with a warm smile?*
2. *Does your staff educate the patients about your practice?*
3. *Does your waiting area have brochures that enlists all the treatments and services available at your clinic?*
4. *Does your staff make patients comfortable by offering them water, tea, coffee or beverages?*
5. *Do you show them videos of testimonials, or before and after pics?*
6. *Does your clinic have photo album which showcases your work?*
7. *Do you give more time to your patients during consultation?*
8. *Do you offer add-on follow up sessions?*

Look at all these magic-creating things. Give yourself 1 point if you are doing it and 0 points if you are not doing it. Check your total score and I am sure you will understand where you stand and what needs to be done.

JOT DOWN YOUR REFLECTIONS HERE

Affirm it:

We as a team are going to give our patients a WOW experience with genuine care!

HOW FREQUENTLY ARE YOU REINVENTING YOURSELF AND YOUR PRACTICE?

The hard truth everyone knows - without systems you cannot scale your practice or business.

You would be aware of this; you would be following it and so did I.

Six years back, I realized as a part of the onboarding process we should have one handy tool like the presentation to train the new team members. It is a kind of orientation training about company's values vision mission and culture for all the new recruits irrespective of the title.

[Image 01]

(If you don't have one such presentation, this is a golden nugget for you. Do you need help? **Connect with me through my social media to get to know how to do it in a crisp and compelling presentation**) Now, as per the priorities and knowledge at that time, the concerned team member developed an amazing PPT back then. You might be doing the same for your practice but...

A few months ago, I just called one of the executive directors of our company who is handling employee training and asked him, *"Since how many years have, we been using the same presentation to impart training to our new team members?"* To which he replied, *"Almost 6 years"*.

And his reply was an eye-opener for me!!!!

I realized at that moment that we had missed one of the important elements of business growth...because six years earlier our priorities, strengths and USPs were different.

RE-EVALUATION

Yes, we were using the same old presentation which was created 6 years earlier to train our new employees about our company culture! What a blunder!

I immediately asked him to send me the presentation. Then, I went through each slide to re-evaluate it and noted my comments and thoughts on...

- *What needs to be changed?*
- *What we started doing as a company during these six years but not highlighting here*
- *What we stopped doing but not removed from the PPT*
- *What are the improvements needed in the presentation?*
- *How can it be made better?*
- *What are the points we had missed or were not put in an empathetic way as we didn't know "how to" at that time?*

I remember calling a few more leaders of our company after that incident and telling them a few vital points which I am going to share here...

Re-evaluating everything regularly at a specified intervals right from systems, processes, and training is a part of a leader's job.

As a leader, we get so busy in our day-to-day mundane chores that we forget about **THESE 20% OF THE BUSINESS ELEMENTS that can yield 80% OF RETURN.** That is, re-evaluating everything often to check if it is still relevant in the current situation or it has become *obsolete*. Had I not thought about it, our new employees would have been imparted the training with the same old presentation that required improvements as our company had grown a lot over these 6 years.

So, the lesson to learn from this incident...

EVALUATE AND RE-EVALUATE IN YOUR PRACTICE OFTEN;

YOUR SYSTEMS, YOUR PROCESSES, YOUR PROTOCOLS, YOUR TRAINING, &

EVERYTHING ELSE!

After being in business for more than 18 years, my company has seen so many seasons – times of struggles, times of growth, times of momentum, and times of success. Through all the times, I have learned that ***it's ultimately my job as an entrepreneur and CEO of the company to evaluate and re-evaluate my business and its growth.*** Nobody is ever going to come to me and say, “Boss, let's evaluate where our business is going!” No, that would be stupid to think!

AS A DERMAPRENEUR ITS YOUR JOB TO RE-EVALUATE YOUR PRACTICE EVERY 6 MONTHS TO SEE...

WHAT'S OBSOLETE & REMOVE IT

WHAT'S WORKING & DO MORE OF IT

WHAT'S NOT WORKING & IMPROVE IT

Conclusion

Whether you are a well-established practice or preparing to start on your own, you need to learn these skills. Challenge yourself to take a hard look at your practice, systems, processes, training to understand whether it is still applicable or not. Change them often or it will become obsolete.

{Need help on how to do it? Scan this QR code to download the additional information on what this presentation should include...}

DETERMINE WHICH ELEMENTS OR AREAS OF YOUR PRACTICE REQUIRE RE-EVALUATION?

Write down your reflections

Affirm it:

I am going to re-evaluate my practice every 6 months.

SOPs: THE LIFE BLOOD OF ANY PRACTICE OR ANY BUSINESS

Although everyone in your staff may want to do their job the right way, everyone's version of that right thing may vary. With the patient's health on the line, your staff members must follow the same rules and guidelines to provide quality patient care.

Clearly defined SOPs are essential because they eliminate uncertainty about how to best complete the tasks. Put simply, anyone in your clinic should be able to produce the same outcomes for any routine task by simply following the

instructions that detail how to complete routine tasks in simple easy to follow steps.

BUT HAVING SET PROPER SOPs AND THINKING THAT YOU HAVE PROPER SOPs – BOTH ARE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT!

[Image 01] Let's look at this sample SOP (aka checklist) for Laser Hair Removal.

Laser Hair Removal Procedure (Things to be followed)		Yes/No
1	Counselling patients coming for the first time	
2	Took their signature on a consent form	
3	Washed hands properly before the procedure and wore gloves	
4	All materials required for the procedure are available in the room	
5	Safety eye-goggle provided to the patient	
6	Switch on the machines	
7	Set the Power, Duration, and Frequency (mostly 13 J)	
8	Duration * Frequency is smaller than 200	
9	Press the procedure button to start the procedure	
10	Ask patient to lie down on the bed	
11	Remove hair with the help of a razor	
12	Start the machine cooling	
13	Apply gel on the part from where hair is to be removed	
14	Start the procedure by rotating the probe	
15	The probe was in continuous contact with the skin when it was on	
16	Write down the power in the book after the procedure	
17	Apply sunscreen on that part	
18	Burning or discomfort or irritation; if any, noted precisely in the patient's record books	

Creating and more importantly using such SOPs in your practice, can dramatically improve productivity and minimize risks associated with procedures. However, the scope of SOPs is not only limited to procedures but can also be used for your day-to-day tasks like record-keeping of a patient.

For example, your staff uses a checklist like this to ensure that all the required details of your patients are recorded in your data.

[Image 02] Medical Record Keeping Checklist

- ✓ **Patient demographics, such as name, date of birth, and contact details**
- ✓ **Progress notes that document the patient's status or achievements during the treatment period**
- ✓
- ✓ **Video or audio recordings with patient's permission**
- ✓ **Patient's medical history if any including allergies, medical and surgical procedures**
- ✓ **Test results, X-rays, scans, and photographs**
- ✓ **The entire treatment plan, including recommended treatment, procedures, tests, and medications prescribed**

Once you start using such SOPs for your practice, you will realize that all your staff members can complete tasks without compromising safety and producing productive outcomes.

Here are some quick tips for forming good SOPs:

- ✓ Gather inputs from your staff when outlining SOP steps
- ✓ Write steps briefly, concisely, and in active voice
- ✓ Use the standardized format for familiarity
- ✓ Save and customize SOPs as and when needed

You have formed SOPs and using them. What's next?

The next step would be to check if they are working or not. You can check if you have proper SOPs set by inviting the unknown person to perform the things just with the help of SOPs and see what he does. That would be a litmus test.

Note down a list of SOPs that you would be developing with your team. If you have already developed, revisit those SOPs and think about how you can change them?

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Affirm it:

I am going to develop SOPs for all of the operations in my practice

26 NUMBERS TO BE TRACKED REGULARLY IN YOUR PRACTICE

Imagine driving a car blindfolded around your eyes! Would you? No!

You wouldn't do it and you should be not doing it; this applies to your practice too.

Not knowing your numbers in practice is just like driving a car blindfolded.

Your visibility on your practice is firstly through your numbers, so you need to ensure that they are up to date and you are tracking it. ***Unless you have a grasp of your figures it is difficult to ascertain which areas of your practice are working and which aren't.***

KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

TRACK EVERYTHING IN YOUR PRACTICE

EVERYTHING MEANS EVERYTHING

SYSTEMS, PROCEDURES, EMPLOYEE TURNOVER, CHURN OUT CLIENTS,

EVERYTHING!

So, here I am listing out a few numbers that can you track in your practice...

Remember, you might or might not be tracking these numbers as of now. You might be tracking some other numbers, apart from the ones listed here. The key lies in knowing what is important to track in YOUR practice as every practice is different.

Here are the numbers that can be tracked for your practice growth

1. Incoming calls per day
2. Outgoing calls per day
3. Conversion rate per day
4. OPD for each day
5. Number of appointments every day
6. Number of patients you have seen per day
7. Number of OPDs that have been converted into procedures
8. Number of no-show patients
9. Number of big-ticket procedures being done every day in your clinic
10. Number of patients leaving your practice in between treatments per month
11. The average fee received per appointment
12. Number of prescriptions that are being generated from your pharmacy per day
13. The % of appointments seen within the first 15 minutes of the scheduled appointment time
14. If you have got a telecaller, tracking how many calls are done regularly
15. The % of phone call inquiries taken that resulted in an appointment booked
16. Number of referral patients visiting your clinic every month
17. Number of referrals from your clinic to other referring doctors
18. Revenue generated year over year, month over month, or procedure wise
19. Your overhead costs per year
20. Percentage of profit every year
21. The average total Rs. received per client over their lifetime with you

Here are the numbers that can be tracked for your team

22. Number of people in your team coming exactly on time or before time
23. Number of employees joining your team year over year
24. Number of employees leaving your team year over year
25. Number of events and workshops conducted for their professional development
26. Number of times you gave wow experience to your team

Now go ahead and tick mark the ones you are already tracking in your practice.

Getting these numbers right is key to sustainability.

YOUR ACTION STEPS

Don't get overwhelmed with these numbers! You need to keep it simple by deciding on the numbers that are most important to YOUR practice growth NOW!

Identify the key numbers that you need to measure now to improve your practice.

Start with the most urgent ones. For example, if you get too many no-shows, start from here. Now you have an overview of numbers that influence your growth.

The irony is that most dermatologists cannot diagnose the flaws in their practice because they don't know what's happening around these numbers. It's much scarier not knowing what's going on with the health of your practice, right?

See, tracking these numbers are not about having a million-dollar practice. The intention of focusing on these numbers is to help you make informed decisions.

If you're looking to take your practice to the next level, then tracking these numbers could be the right thing for you!

Think about which are the numbers you are tracking in your practice apart from the ones listed here.

Think about other figures that you need to track in your practice?

Note down here

[Image 01]

"WHAT GETS MEASURED, GETS MANAGED"

Affirm it:

I am going to track everything in my practice.

Everything means everything

HOW TO CALCULATE PATIENT LIFETIME VALUE - AND WHY LTV MATTERS



To grow your dermatology practice, you have two essential tactics at your disposal.

One is, acquiring new patients.

The second is retaining existing patients and increasing patient lifetime value.

If I am not wrong, your prompt reaction will be to focus on the first option. Most dermatologists look at the first option as:

More patients = More appointments = More revenue = Increased bottom line

However, I suggest that the second option which is retaining existing patients is a far more effective strategy for producing a consistent increase in revenue. **The longer you can keep a patient, the higher is the provided value during their relationship with your practice.**

Because the value of a patient isn't based on their current consultation or treatment. The value of the patient is based on their interaction with your practice over a lifetime. Here's where the term patient lifetime value comes into the picture.

Now you may think what exactly is the lifetime value of a patient?

To explain it in simple terms, it is the predicted total of ALL FUTURE revenues or profits that a particular patient is likely to generate for your practice.

Put into mathematical terms,

LTV = PATIENT REVENUE - THE COSTS OF ACQUIRING AND SERVING THE PATIENT

This means it can be calculated by multiplying the number of consultations taken with the fees per consultation OR the number of services taken multiplied with the cost of each service. Now subtract the cost of acquiring the patient and the amount to render the services and you get the LTV.

To give an example, say a patient has been taking services for 10 years at your clinic and spending Rs.10,000 per year then the total revenue generated from that patient will be Rs.1,00,000. Now, the cost of acquiring the patient is, say Rs.5000, and the amount to render services to the patient is Rs. 10,000 then subtracting that from revenue will give you the LTV of the patient which would be Rs. 85,000.

Calculating lifetime value is crucial to the success of your practice because it allows you to narrow down your focus on specific clients (the 20% of clients who will be responsible for 80% of your revenue) and gives insights into how profitable your practice will be in the future. You can use it as a benchmark to see if a particular segment of patients is spending more, sticking around longer, or purchasing more frequently.

By understanding how long your patients can expect to stick around and how much they are likely to spend, you can make smarter decisions to impact your practice's bottom line.

There are a lot of metrics you need to understand to grow your practice. However, understanding the lifetime value of your patients is one of the most important metrics to calculate.

Start calculating your LTV consistently and look for shifts that may tell if you are moving in the right direction.

With this long-term mindset, you can create more repeat clients and build a loyal patient base.

Have you ever calculated the LTV of your patients?

Write down your reflections

Affirm it:

I am going to calculate the LTV of my patients consistently

THE MYSTERY SHOPPER EXERCISE:

TOOL FOR GETTING THE INVALUABLE INSIGHTS FOR YOUR PRACTICE

On many aspects we are blindfolded in our practice or business because we are so close to it and that is where this mystery shopper exercise would come in picture

One way to measure your team's performance is, of course, to monitor your patient inflow. But that has its limits. Secondary analysis can't help you understand the 'whys' behind performance or reveal how to improve it.

A "MYSTERY SHOPPER" EXERCISE in which individuals are hired to pose as shoppers and report back on their experiences can help you do just that! There's no better way to put yourself in the shoes of your patients than to experience what they do as they visit your clinic.

In your practice too, mystery shopper engagements can be designed to answer questions such as:

- *What return I am getting from the investment in my team members?*
- *What can be gained from optimizing how my team members explain my practice to my patients?*
- *What obstacles stand in the way of increasing patient loyalty?*
- *How do patients experience while visiting my clinic?*
- *What can be improved further to build my practice and to delight patients?*
- *What are patients truly struggling with in the systems and protocols?*
- *Which the points where 5% improvement in the process or things will yield 20% improvement in results or satisfaction*
- *Are my team members showing empathy?*
- *What patients are feeling and saying about your practice?*

Many more insights you can get from this exercise

To illustrate how a mystery shopper exercise works, let's walk through a real-life example...

A dermatologist had invested heavily in training his staff on how to communicate with and advise patients about certain treatments and procedures for more conversions. After the program had been up and running for two years, he lacked

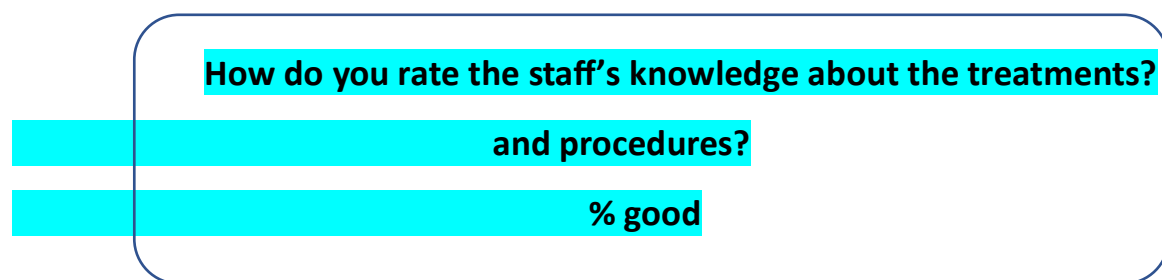
a clear view of the program's value. Now the dermatologist wanted to evaluate the current approach before possibly modifying it. The key questions were:

- How well the staff members who were trained through the program were conversing with patients when they needed advice?
- How did patients perceive the experience?

To get answers, the dermatologist managed to get a few mystery shoppers for his clinic. The mystery shoppers were instructed to record these things...

- The extent to which staff devoted their time to ask open-ended questions and providing full information to patients
- Whether the staff members offered proactive advice
- A satisfaction rating of the overall experience

Then he interpreted the findings and concluded as follows:



Out of all the mystery shoppers that visited the clinic, 36% shoppers rated good while 64% rated not good



He then made changes in his training program.

What's the bottom line here for you?

Sending a mystery shopper to your practice is a good idea to find out where you are lacking. It can help you find out those missing links and bottlenecks of your practice.

It can be done to record the entire experience from call to visit.

Sometimes it can be done as walk-ins also and you will get a wealth of information about your practice from a patient's perspective.

Sometimes you can suggest the mystery shopper to appreciate your staff which will provide the much-needed motivation! A cherry on the cake!

WOULD YOU SEND A MYSTERY SHOPPER TO YOUR CLINIC?

If you send a mystery shopper to your clinic, what would you like to find out?

Note down here

[Image 01]PATIENTS CAN'T MEASURE THE QUALITY OF CLINICAL CARE, BUT THEY CAN MEASURE THE QUALITY OF EXPERIENCE!

*{Here's one bonus for you! To understand **the difference between bad service and competent service**, you can enroll in my online course for FREE. Scan this QR code and you will receive step by step instructions from my representative to guide you.}*

Affirm it:

I am going to improve patient experience at my clinic

SCALE UP YOUR PRACTICE - THE SMART WAY!

"BELIEVE EVERYTHING HAS A HUGE POTENTIAL TO SCALE-UP AND LEVERAGE"

Did you know that **you can grow your practice exponentially by the same amount of time, efforts, assets, resources, capital, energy and same number of opportunities**, to produce many times of greater yield?

[Image 01] There are plenty of things in every business and practice where 5 to 10% of optimising is capable of producing 2 or 3 times the results...

Yes, you can and you can do it as an ongoing process IF you understand the 'how'...

The key to it is a constant... and it is called

Scaling up

However, the only problem is that **you don't have the context of how to scale up your practice in the fastest, easiest, best and most profitable way.**

So, I am going to give you that context.

Now, take a hard look at your practice to see if you are ready for growth. As, you can't know what to do differently unless you take stock of where your practice stands today.

Look at your practice and examine how you are performing in different criteria like your marketing, your patient engagement strategies, your prices, your operations, your relationships with patients, vendors and staff members and how you can optimize them.

You can think about thousand different ways to market, strategize, and scale up your practice. I am going to give a little bit of it now...

So, the first thing to do is change your marketing...

Change your marketing by having a different position, different headlines, different creative graphics, different calls to action, different mediums, different offers. It's about trial and error. If changing any of these gives you better results then do it.

One more way to scale up is to think about how you can leverage your model strategically like...

Offering unlimited hair reduction sessions yearly,
Creating low end products to start relationship with the clients,
Creating proactively referring clients,
Collaborating with referring clients,
Having back-end products to make clients to come to you,
Having back-end services where you make money.

Find out better ways...

Better ways to operate everything in your practice
Better ways to price your services
Better ways to use human capital
Better ways to use financial capital
Better ways to use inventory management
Better ways to use client optimization

As soon as you open your mind to doing things differently, you will see yourself unlocking doors of opportunities.

I can give you my example of how I do it...

So, when I wanted to build my new house, I was in search of a land. I knew one of my trusted team members who had connections with real estate agent. So, I leveraged that relationship to buy my new land at a far better price which could have costed me a lot – had I not leveraged my relationship. In return, even my team member got benefit from leveraging his relationship with that real estate agent.

This is just one aspect – finding better way to leverage relationship. You can think about many different ways to do it.

Let me give you one more example that's directly relevant to you which I always give in my Dermapreneur workshop



What do you think?

Which one is a better offer?

Just a little bit of optimization in the (left hand side) offer can produce far more better results from the optimised (right hand side) offer.

Pause and think

Which are the areas you have not maximized and optimised and leveraged

There would be a lot more than what would you ordinarily imagine

Now think how to maximize them all

And start taking actions

Jot down your reflections

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"Every business owner deserves the right to learn how to increase sales, multiply their profits and mine every hidden asset and overlooked opportunity.

-Jay Abraham"

Affirm it:

I am going to look at every area in my practice where I can optimise, leverage and scale up to produce far more better yields

ONE TACTIC TO DOUBLE, TRIPLE AND EVEN QUADRUPLE THE NUMBER OF PATIENTS VISITING YOUR CLINIC

You would agree if I say that most of your practice runs on referrals only. Almost 60 to 70% of your income comes from referrals only. It's a fact!

While most dermatologists recognize the power of referrals, they don't know how to tap into their networks to generate more referrals proactively.

This might happen due to several reasons. One is that you might be uncomfortable to ask for referrals or you don't want to appear desperate.

[Image 01] But I can bet on this...if you commit yourself to generate referrals proactively, meaningfully, passionately, purposefully, then you can double, triple or even quadruple the number of people visiting your clinic.

I'm talking about a simple, ethical, way in which you can accomplish this and it costs next to nothing! So, what's the easiest, most effective, least expensive way to get many more patients like the ones you value most?

GET THEM TO DO IT FOR YOU!

All you have to do is systematically ask your present patients to recommend your practice to people just like themselves.

Every satisfied patient or client you have is in a position to know a huge number of people that are ideal patients for your practice. But you cannot expect your patients, on their own wish, to be responsible for or even aware of the opportunity they have to bring their friends, neighbors, coworkers, employees, employers, club members, associates, and colleagues into your practice for you.

You've got to program them. So how to do it?

SET THE STAGE FOR GETTING REFERRALS

First, make sure you have a good or valuable service which I am sure you have.

Then, show interest in them by asking them about themselves. Tell them why your service is of better value. Educate them. Tell them what buying from you means to them both in the present and in the future

Also explain that **they owe it to their friends, relatives, and associates to refer them to you if they care, really care about them. Give them reasons why they should give you referrals.** Explain that you get most of your patients by referral. Because you do get referrals, you are able to invest your money and your time in providing a better service.

Then **offer to give them an incentive for the referral.** Get back with the person who provided referrals to you and let them know what happened.

You can also train your team members to ask for referrals – how to approach patients for referrals, when is the good time to ask for referrals like immediately after the successful treatment, and whom to ask as some patients will be more than willing to give you referrals.

Here's a five-step plan for getting referrals...

1. Contact your best patient and ask them to recommend you to their friends.
2. Offer incentives, such as service and product discounts to those patients who send you referral business.
3. Ask other professionals to recommend you to their patients or clients.
4. Use the holidays as a time to offer your patients special incentives for giving you referrals. Have you done this?

Tick mark against each step that you are already implementing in your practice.

So now, here is your key to do all this - consistently and persistently and regularly

– with a proper plan! Do it. And enjoy the results.

JOT DOWN YOUR REFLECTIONS HERE

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Affirm it:

From this day onwards, I am going to put proactive efforts in generating referrals for my practice

YOUR COMPETITORS DON'T WANT YOU TO KNOW THIS SECRET – WIIFM!

Fact:

99% of people in the world are almost always tuned into their favorite internal radio station: WIIFM-What's in it for me?

That's not to suggest that most people are selfish. It's simply a fact that *personal context* is usually the first filter we use to evaluate our environment. It drives almost every decision we make. WIIFM is a subconscious mantra guiding all your actions right from deciding which patients to prioritize, to deciding which marketing campaigns to run for your practice.

And so, everyone including your staff and patients would be operating with this psychology.

To win the support of others YOU, AS A LEADER, must always appeal to this psychology of people.

[Image 01] Let me share my story with you...

When I bought a new car, I was deciding between two options – Toyota and Nissan. Both were equally good and priced almost similarly. However, the Nissan salesperson kept highlighting the features that he thought made Nissan superior, especially talking about how inexpensive the transmission was to replace. The Toyota person, on the other hand, asked me WHAT I LIKED IN THE CAR. Besides the obvious, I told him that I liked the sounding stereo and color of the car. For both options, I took test drives. The Nissan car was slightly cheaper.

But what do you think I chose?

I bought the Toyota instead. Why?

Because the Toyota salesperson took time to find out that I liked the color of the car and the top-of-the-line stereo system (HE APPEALED TO WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME)?!

These were the things that were important to me-they made me feel good.

The Toyota person knew how to appeal to WIIFM.

This means, as a leader you need to learn this art!

You need to show people what you are doing is in their best interest!!!

Appeal to their WIIFM!

Because if you fail to do so, and demonstrate it compellingly then they will not do it.

Whenever you are trying to adopt a new protocol, procedure, service, or product, consider thinking about WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOUR TEAM AND PATIENTS?

In the past, I have had an experience as a consumer where the company from which I bought an expensive product changed their policy without any notice, and afterward while speaking to them, they told me that they would not honor their prior policy. Their response was, "We are sorry but it is no longer our policy!" If they had taken the time to explain 'why' behind the changes and the benefits to me for the changes then it would have made a difference.

Now, imagine, what if you are focused more on serving your patients and staff with 'WIIFM'!

For example...

For your patients

- Taking the early visitor's seating first instead of waiting to finish the cleaning and other routine organization tasks
- Utilizing products that make patients experience pain-free
- Having blankets, neck rests, etc for comfort
- Using products based on the taste of patients

For staff

- Keeping work hours flexible for key players who need it
- Changing protocols that allow them to explore their talents

The value of WIIFM may benefit you as much or even more than them!

However, there's one more important thing to remember here...

Even after demonstrating WIIFM, there will be 3 to 5 % of people who will not value what you do for them.

Now, you are left with two choices...

Either get demotivated by those 3 to 5% people and stop doing what you are doing for the betterment of others

Meaning to say that you focus on those 3 to 5% of people

OR

Focus on the rest of 95% of people who appreciate and value what you do!

Choose wisely!

But for now, just start putting yourself in their shoes. Think about – how it is going to benefit the other person? Will it make their experience better or easier? What are its long-term benefits? How it will affect their life?

You can appeal to other person's WIIFM by using phrases like...

- *The benefits of this are...*
- *What this means for you...*
- *Why this matters to you...*
- *How this will affect you...*

Even better, dedicate your next week as WIIFM WEEK. Follow this one simple rule. Before you take any actions in your practice, you must first appeal to WIIFM of the opposite end.

Do this for the next one week and see the difference in your practice!!!

Now ask yourself these questions...

- **What could you do to make your staff's life easier or better at work?**
- **How different would your actions be if you focused on the WIIFM of your patients and staff?**
- **How would the overall atmosphere of your clinic change?**

Write down your reflections here...

**TO UNDERSTAND WHAT YOUR CUSTOMER NEEDS, USE THE WIIFM TEST
("WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME")**

Affirm it:

Before I take any decision in my practice, I will appeal to the 'what's in it for me' of the opposite person

UNAWARE PATIENTS: THE BITTER SHOCKING FACT

A survey conducted by a leading information technology consulting firm - Accenture - suggests less than one in five patients are aware of all the services available to them. Results show that patient awareness is low across all therapeutic areas.

Furthermore, it also suggests once informed, 58% of patients use them, and 79% of patients rate those services as valuable.

It also suggests that investments in providing information and access to patient services should be revisited.

Now think about your clinic and practice for a moment...

Are ALL of your patients aware of ALL the services available to them?

Are you sure?

Are they aware of every service at your clinic?

No, do not assume that they were informed or they have found out.

Are they aware at this moment also?

Are you, your team, or the clinic decor reinforcing the services enough?

See, you have worked hard to build your practice that provides outstanding patient care but your patients have plenty of options. They might not be aware of the services available to them at your clinic. They might be looking for it somewhere else. Only if you, your team, and your clinic invest in good communication; patient engagement will increase.

For them, YOU – the doctor – is one of the primary sources of information. They want all the information about your services, about your procedures, before availing them. They need to know their *options*; they need YOU to suggest them ways for having beautiful skin and hair. They won't ask you every time. So, if you are not doing it proactively, then *someone else* will.

HOOK YOUR PATIENTS WHILE THEY VISIT YOUR CLINIC

An important source of information for your patients is your waiting area. The time that your patients are wasting in the waiting area can be utilized by you to anchor your services and strongly sow it in your patient's minds. Why not use the physical space that you have as a place that gives out messages that you care and you have several services available to address all of your patients' concerns?

For example,

[Image 01] The large TV screen in your waiting area can play the videos about different services in the loop. OR

[Image 02] The standee in your waiting area can have different brochures for each service you are offering so they can glance through the ones they are most interested in.

And what's even better? {For designer, please use image for all the inputs we are suggesting}

[Image 03] You can train your team to have good observation skills. Your team can provide a briefing about the services if they feel the patient is interested in availing of the services.

[Image 04] Message boards or any piece of information appealingly put on the wall will also catch the attention of the visitors who are not so conscious to take in a message that you want them to know. Hanging posters that have

information about your specialty discipline will let people feel that you care about their awareness.

In short, leave no stone unturned to level up your awareness efforts.

Incorporating all these steps into your indoor marketing will draw in new patients and give existing ones a nudge to go for services they are looking for and interested in.

A comprehensive indoor marketing plan is the key to raising awareness about all your services and bringing more patients to your practice. Different tactics attract different patients, so a well-rounded approach is needed to captivate them.

Do you feel you need to change your clinic décor or indoor marketing?

Do you feel you need to change it in near future?

What changes you are planning to do to your clinic décor?

How will you train your staff so they can raise awareness of your patients?

Write down your reflections here

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Affirm it:

I am going to level up my efforts in raising awareness of my patients so each of my patients knows about all the services I am offering through my practice

**DIGITIZE EVERYTHING IN YOUR PRACTICE SO YOU CAN FOCUS ON
PROVIDING HIGH-QUALITY CARE**

Did you know?

While several industries are leveraging digital transformation to accelerate their productivity and quality, medical practices are among the least digitized sectors and that includes dermatology practice too!?

[Image 01] Just imagine this scenario...you are not keeping records of your patients in your clinic along with before-after photos and the treatment your patient had undergone. Now one of your past clients who had been treated successfully at your practice several years ago comes to you again with the same ailment without any track record and says that he/she had thrown away the file and papers. I am sure it would have happened to you some time. Even worse, your current patients forget to bring their files along with them during follow-up consultations. Now imagine that you aren't keeping a digital track record of all these patients and their history in one place, then what would happen? Since there is usually only one copy of paper documents, the loss of it is an irreversible disaster.

How would you treat them? Even if you do, you wouldn't be able to treat them as effectively as you would when you have the data and medical history ready on hand.

Now let me walk you through some reasons *why* you must digitize your practice. These are just some of the reasons to consider if you had been thinking about WHY TO DIGITIZE...

WHY YOU MUST DIGITIZE EVERYTHING IN YOUR PRACTICE?

- 1. Digitization allows you to keep a record of the patients and maintain their history all in one place. You can store information on the cloud or your system so that you don't lose it. The history of your patients is critical and if your data is digitized then you can access it with the TOUCH OF A BUTTON. It is also less likely for your digital data to go missing, as it is in the case of physical files which can be misplaced or lost.*
- 2. I have seen many dermatologists spend time on administrative tasks instead of attending to patients because the task requires manual labor.*

It's just a waste of time because it takes a significant amount of your limited precious time. Digitizing administrative tasks will allow you to focus on your work.

3. *Physical records are risk-prone. They can be lost, misplaced, or damaged. Electronic records will allow you to keep patient data safe and secure as they can only be accessed by authorized personnel and kept safe.*
4. *When you switch to digital solutions for your staff, they can experience a far more effective administrative process. From scheduling appointments to accessing records, sending bills to collecting payments; every step can be easier with digitization. When your staff isn't weighed down with repetitive tasks, they have more capacity to focus on the patient experience.*

“Okay Mr. Ilesh, these are the benefits that you have told me about digitizing my practice. But what about the cost of digitizing everything in my practice?!”, you would exclaim.

Well, honestly it will be costly to get started. But it will be a long-term investment. Just like any other investment, say for example buying a new laser machine; digitizing everything will be an investment that will pay returns over and again.

EASY ACCESSIBILITY AND STORAGE

COST SAVINGS OVER TIME

SECURITY

ACCURACY AND READABILITY

These are the benefits, to name a few.

Be it entering details into electronic health record system, training your new team members, onboarding team members and patients, indoor marketing, automating administrative tasks, communicating with patients like sending reminders, protecting your patient's data, medical invoicing; everything can be digitized.

IT IS THE PERFECT TIME TO DIGITIZE YOUR PRACTICE!

After the pandemic, a lot of businesses adapted themselves to the digital revolution. You can also enjoy many, many benefits and the most important is better communication with patients, improved internal staff communication, and ultimately more effective care and efficiency.

It can be easy to read this and continue to settle for doing things the way you have done for years. But if you invest in digitizing your practice then they will make up for both financial investment as well as your precious time.

Think about which areas in your practice require to be digitized first?

What will be your action steps to digitize them and within what time frame you will achieve it?

"The biggest part of our digital transformations is changing the way we think"

Affirm it:

I am going to digitize everything in my practice
