

The Prosthodontic Rule of 32

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The most abused commodity in all of Prosthodontics is TIME. Instead of being invested, it tends to be wasted. And for some of us, this is the greatest tragedy of all. We can all work harder to make more money, but we can never get this time back. That is why I firmly believe that there shouldn't be a high quality Prosthodontist on this planet who should work more than 32 clinical hours a week.

The Prosthodontic Rule of 32 quite simply states:

"If you can't make more than enough money to support your lifestyle by working 32 clinical hours a week (or less), then something is DANGEROUSLY wrong with your practice or your lifestyle."

Read that rule again. This rule only applies to those who demonstrate a true commitment to the highest applications of quality in a Prosthodontic practice. It does not apply to the well-meaning Prosthodontist.

Many of you know this, but there is a direct relationship between clarity of vision and less clinical hours. I see it time and time again. Many of the highest personal net incomes that I have ever seen in dentistry often come from those who work the least amount of clinical hours. This is not by accident. Not by a long-shot.

One thing you will find with these individuals is that they understand and value their time much more than they do their money. They have realized that money, in fact, is a byproduct of providing tremendous value to others.

Most importantly, a Prosthodontist who strives towards mastering a 32 clinical hour work week (or less) has clearly demonstrated one variable that very few people understand. Over the course of their careers they worked harder on THEMSELVES than they did their JOBS. A sophisticated CE course was never an expense. It was an investment that was necessary for them to become more VALUABLE to their practices. They understood that owning



a Prosthodontic practice would never get easier, but rather THEY (as entrepreneurs and clinicians) had to get better at what they were doing.

I feel very strongly about this, but maintaining a workload of more than 32 clinical hours a week sets you up for breakdown in the near and foreseeable future. It is the catalyst for the "something has got to give" syndrome.

If you aspire to thrive in the quality-focused realm of Prosthodontics, you just can't keep such an excessive clinical pace going for a long period of time. True comprehensive Prosthodontics requires intellectual energy outside of chair and chart time. It requires communication time with your specialists. It requires thoughtful lab time. You have to THINK MORE about what you are trying to co-create with each of these patients. And you can't give these efforts your attention if you are emotionally spent from such a clinically intensive week.

You may have the energy to maintain a work week more than 32 clinical hours for a few years, but over time, erosion will be apparent to one or more important areas of your life:

- Your health
- Your emotional well-being

- Your due diligence on the intellectual time needed for this kind of dentistry
- Your willingness to accept new and exciting challenges in dentistry
- Your staff
- Your identity in this world outside of your practice walls
- Most regrettable of all, your MARRIAGE and your relationship with your CHILDREN

It's sad, but one of the realities of our work is that I consistently get calls from Prosthodontists in their 40's who say, "I need to get my life under control." I will ask them why. And they say, "Because my oldest child is 16, and she will be leaving home in the next 2 years. . .I want to spend more time with her."

You and I both know where 16 year-old children want to spend their time. And it's usually not with their parents.

This happens a lot.

I have a client out east who says, "I want to cry when I think of my younger years in practice, because I missed so much of my son's life."

I had another practitioner say this to me at a break during one of my speeches, "I have been divorced twice. My first wife was my soul-mate, but I was never able to control my time enough to see that. The erosion happened in a way that I never saw it coming."

Don't let this happen to you.

Life comes first, the practice comes second. Your Prosthodontic practice should be built around the life you desire. You should be driving your practice. If your practice is driving you, then you have to change it. . .TODAY! The extra time you spend in your practice may look like it's helping the bottom line, but in reality, it may be costing you way too much.

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