

“Re-firing” Instead of Retiring

Kirk Behrendt, ACT Speaker & Coach

Ken Blanchard used these words during my lunch with him today: “We should re-fire instead of retire!”

I thought about these two different paths in the specialty of prosthodontics. Some look at prosthodontics as a means to an end, a vehicle to the promised land of retirement and fulfillment. These people feel a lack of significance in their work. Others see it as a wonderful opportunity to make a significant impact in other people’s lives. They have an incredibly exciting view of the future.

Which side of the fence are you on?

Do you spend more time planning your vacations than you do your future? Do you daydream or do you dream of the days ahead?

Many prosthodontists tell me that after they get the money and time issues under control in their practices, it opens up an exciting door to what is really possible. The energy that your practice eventually gives back to you is refreshing. Most of these individuals could never think of working hard for an exit party. In fact, most tell me that they worry there is just too much to learn and do, and that they don’t have enough years ahead to try all the great things that prosthodontics has to offer.

How can two prosthodontists feel so differently?

The problem is not the profession. The problem is how we see dentistry and our future in it.

The answer lies in your **BOLDNESS** to create the future you want.

Are you bold enough to create what you want? Or have you already become complacent with how your practice has evolved?

Are you **RE-FIRING** or mentally **RETIRING**?

I met a great 67-year-old dentist who had hopes of slowing down. He thought about selling his practice but wasn’t sure that he was ready to quit. He felt like he had a little something left. He was in good shape financially but just didn’t want to keep

practicing as hard as he was. So he came up with a plan. Instead of being all things to all people (like he had done for years), he made an effort to slow things down by just “doing the **RIGHT THING**” with patients by presenting everything they needed. He always wanted to do it this way, but he was always too afraid to be bold about it. In the past, he mostly presented to patients what he thought they would accept. Now he had nothing to lose.

His new idea was to tell patients about *everything* they needed. He was convinced that this would slow down his practice. He would probably make a lot less, but he could finally live the life of a comprehensive dentist who was doing **ONLY** what he loved. He also decided to raise his fees by 10% every three months as a practice-thinning measure. By doing these two things he was certain that these changes in his practice would reduce his patient numbers slowly, and by doing so, he could start to select only the cases he wanted to do.

He finally reached a point where he could be bold enough about the way he wanted to practice, without fearing rejection or failure. He wasn’t overly concerned with how his patients were going to respond. Actually, rejection was part of his plan for success.

What do you think happened to him?

To his surprise, his plan completely backfired. Very few patients left. In fact, it created a problem he never had before: too many patients started saying “yes.” He started telling his patients about *everything* they truly needed in order to be healthy. Then he would work up the fee for *everything* and present it to the patient. He didn’t care if they said yes or no. He said, “It was absolutely amazing. I now have more work than I know what to do with. What upsets me is that I should have done this 30 years ago.”

For the first time in his life, he is practicing the way he has always wanted to. He only does the procedures he loves. His fees are still going up 10% every three months.

By accident, he is re-firing instead of retiring.

Re-firing requires boldness and a commitment to doing what you are truly capable of. . . doing the

RIGHT THING. Don't let it take you 30 years to get over your fears and live boldly. Your future is too expensive to wait on.

As Goethe said, "Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. **BEGIN IT NOW!**"

Keep up the great work.

Kirk

Kirk Behrendt is the Director of ACT Dental Practice Coaching. He has lectured all over the United States to major meetings and study clubs. He has extensive experience with practice profitability, team building, leadership and dental practice marketing/branding. Kirk and his team are primarily focused on positively impacting the future of dentistry one practice at a time. You can reach him at Tel. 800-851-8186; E-mail: kirk@actdental.com.

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