

Golden Pearls of Wisdom

Abe Lincoln once said "Most people are happy as they make up their minds to be in life." That reminds me of a mother who took her two boys to the psychiatrist. She was concerned because one son was an optimist and the other son was a pessimist. She wanted the psychiatrist to evaluate the situation. The psychiatrist assured the mother that he had the perfect test in mind that would confirm the mother's observation. He said "Bring the boys in on Monday morning and we'll conduct a test."

In preparation for the experiment, the doctor set up one room full of toys, and the other room was full of manure. He brought the two boys in and put the pessimist son in the room full of toys and the optimist son in the room full of manure. Cameras were placed in each room so that they could observe each boy's behavior. The pessimist son was sitting in the middle of the toys whining and complaining. The optimist son seemed quite happy and playful. He was digging rapidly through the manure. The mother and psychiatrist were curious and went into the room. The mother said, "Son, what are you doing?" He smiled and replied, "Well, I figured with this much manure there's bound to be a pony in here somewhere." The little optimist had definitely made up his mind to be happy. He was going to have a lot of fun in life, looking at the glass half full versus half empty.

Zig Ziglar says, "The only disability in life is a bad attitude, 85% of our success at a job is dependent upon our attitude and 15% skill." Zig goes on to say, "However, the reality is that schools teach 90% facts and 10% attitude." He believes that this is the basis for a lot of the unhappiness among the young people in our country today.

Great philosophers throughout history have been known for their quotes about attitude. Wayne Dyer, "You become what you think about." Earl Nightingale, "Our minds control our emotions." William James, "The greatest discovery is that you can alter your life by altering your attitude." Churchill, "Winners compare their success to their own goals. Losers compare themselves to other people."

In this talk today, I would like to share with you 5 golden pearls of wisdom that will positively influence your life.

#1 Learn to appreciate and to accept each other's differences. People have different personality types. In addition there are males and females. Individuals grow up and establish different value systems.

When you're having a conflict with someone, you're having conflict because you are viewing the situation differently and everyone has their own agenda based upon various factors.

Let's talk about personalities for a moment. What color best describes your personality? Fire engine red? Soft sea-foam green? Bright sunny yellow? Or IBM blue? Actually, whatever color you choose, you represent about 25% of the population.

If you chose fire-engine red, it probably means you are an action-oriented person, you delegate well, you move quickly to action. You may be described as a "type-A" personality. You enjoy being very productive in life. Your challenge of course is patience. Powerful people are not born with patience. Any patience they have, they've had to develop through prayer, deep breaths, meditation, and yoga.

The opposite of the fire engine red is the soft, sea-foam green. These are the peaceful people in life. They're easy going, do not like conflict and will do almost anything to avoid it. They just want everyone to be happy. If you push them, they will dig their heels in and you will see a different side of them. Typically, we marry our opposites, so quite often the fire engine red and the peaceful are in a long-term relationship together.

The third is the bright, sunny yellow. These are the cheerleaders of life. They're out-going, talkative, they like to have a lot of fun. Often times can get distracted and off-track because they love people. They have a tendency not to stay on task. They're favorite thing in life is to relate to others.

The opposite of bright, sunny yellow is the IBM blue. Order and structure make these people feel good. They have certain ways they fold the towels, certain ways they load the dishwasher. They prefer detail oriented professions, like accounting, bookkeeping, and orthodontics. They love to plan. Their challenge of course, is flexibility and taking action.

The next difference we deal with in the orthodontic office is the male-female difference. "Men are from Mars and Women are from Venus" is a famous book written by Dr. John Gray. Males value achievement, power, and efficiency. They like to do things themselves. If they have a challenge, they go to their cave and rejuvenate. Women focus a lot more on love, communication, harmony, and teamwork. If they're upset, they need to vent and talk about it. They don't necessarily want anyone to fix it. They just want to talk about it.

The Mars and Venus concept is prevalent in the dental office. When waves of emotion come through the office, the male doctor needs to be able to know when to just ride the wave or evaluate if they need to get involved.

The doctor should determine three things that are really important for him/her to have in the practice. It may be running on schedule, customer service, or quality treatment. They need to hire people who value the same

things. The more the staff members value the same things as the doctor, there is a better chance they will have a long-term working relationship. When you are having a conflict with someone, you're having a conflict because you value one thing, they value another. It's not necessarily right or wrong, it's just different.

#2 Accepting the fact that change is inevitable for growth. We are creatures of habit and it takes us 21 days to make a change. Often times the orthodontist announces a change and expects the staff to have it integrated in the day-to-day operations by that afternoon. This is not reality. Reality is that we cross our arms the same way each time. We put our fingers together the same way each time, because we are creatures of habit. As the external factors change, you must change the internal factors in order to have a successful practice. The desire to gain pleasure or avoid pain is what motivates us. As the external factors change, we must adjust the internal factors, or people will perceive us as behind the times. For example, the office needs to be redecorated every 5-7 years. The orthodontist needs to continue to attend clinical lectures so they can stay on the cutting edge of changes that happen year to year in clinical orthodontics. The staff and doctor need to stay in tune with the patients' and parents' needs. Desires of treatment and financial needs have changed. No one enjoys going to an office that looks like nothing has changed in 15 or 20 years. They perceive the office as behind the times. Production will suffer.

#3 The key to success in life Dale Carnegie says, "Is to make other people feel important." The sweetest sound to a person is the sound of their own name. The number one thing people want to talk about is themselves. Asking patients and parents about themselves is the most effective way to make them feel important while they are in your office. A successful orthodontist is very skilled in finding out the interests and desires of the young patient. They can converse with them on a one-on-one basis. The parent loves to sit back and observe the doctor having a conversation with their 7- year-old child. The doctors who are able to connect with people and make everyone feel important are highly successful in their practice and in their life. Self-centered people do not focus on making other people feel important, they focus on themselves. People do not enjoy being around people who are self-centered.

A fun exercise to do is what I call the Sugar Gram Exercise. Pick a partner near you. Spend the next 60 seconds writing down everything positive that you can think of about this person. At the end of 60 seconds, you exchange the sugar gram. It's a lot of fun and it will put a smile on your face when you read the positive comments from the other party.

#4 Focus on creating your own happiness. Design your life the way you want it. It's so important to learn how to take time to sharpen your act. It's like the two men who were chopping wood all day. One chopped wood all day and never took a break. The other took a break every hour. At the end of the day, the gentleman who took a break every hour had chopped more wood. The one who

did not take a break was very disturbed and wanted to know how in the world he did that. The other guy said, "Well, did you see what I was doing when I took a break?" The other man replied, "No, I was too busy chopping." "Well, I was sharpening my axe."

This very much applies to everyone in life. I talk a lot to orthodontists about making sure they're able to take control of their schedule. And to schedule no more than 144 to 165 patient days a year so that they'll have time to do their treatment planning, to do their behind the scenes duties, pursue their hobbies, and spend time with their families. These are the orthodontists who are the happiest, because they are committed to creating balance in their life.

If you interview people who are 80 or older, no one says, "I sure wish I had gone to the office more." They will answer that question by saying, "I wish I had more fun, danced more, sang more, hung out with friends more, spent more time with my kids", the list goes on and on. That it's not about work. Work is a very important part of everyone life's. Most people's lives, however, keeping that balance is what keeps you enjoying your practice long term.

A real key to happiness, that has been a popular subject on the book and lecture circuit in the last few years, is finding your purpose. People who pursue their purpose in life each day are perceived as "happy". Dr. Steven Covey talks about beginning with the end in mind--to close your eyes and visualize your own funeral. He takes you through an exercise where you evaluate what you would want people to say about you at your funeral. Once you get visualization in your mind, then work to pursue your purpose and to live your life each day with those values in mind.

As I said earlier, the greatest discovery in life is to realize you can alter your life by altering your attitude. You create your own happiness. People design lives just the way they want it. Happy people look for the good in their lives. They take action to be happy and they don't waste time whining.

An excellent exercise to do for yourself is to sit down and look at what do you feel like is preventing from being happy in life and what is preventing you from pursuing your purpose and reaching your goals. As Steven Covey says, highly effective people are proactive and they take action to create the life that they want for themselves.

#5 You become what you think about. Our minds control our emotions. You will always have struggle with various emotions in life on a day-to-day basis. However, the wise person understands that feeling an emotion does not necessarily mean you should act on that emotion. Following your emotions can lead you to a path of destruction in life. Learning how to evaluate the emotions and decide wisely which ones to act on, is the key to maturity.

There have been many books written on emotional intelligence. Just because someone has a high IQ does not necessarily mean that they have emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is one of the main keys to long-term happiness in life. Wise people do not spend a lot of time thinking about things that are not going to add value to their life. Steven Covey talks about the circle of concern and the circle of influence. The circle of concern are areas that are reality, however, we cannot change. For example, the weather or other people's behavior. People can waste a lot of energy worrying about things that they cannot change. If I only I had better kids, better job, better staff, a more attentive mate. The question is: What are you willing to do about it? In the circle of influence, these are areas you can influence yourself personally. I can be a better parent, I can be a better worker, I can be a better leader, I can be a better mate. Wise people will focus on the circle of influence and make changes in their behavior that can make a difference in their lives.

Dr. Victor Frankel, the famous doctor, for years, survived the concentration camps under Hitler's reign, is a classic example that you can create your own happiness. The search for happiness is self-defeating. People who search for meaning, purpose, and strong relationships find happiness comes to them. Dr. Frankel made up his mind that no one could control his thoughts and emotions without his consent. Under horrific circumstances he succeeded.

Napoleon Hill the great philosopher of personal motivation said, "In every adversity in life there is a seed of greatness." When you are faced with challenges of life, stay focused on your purpose, believe there is a lesson to be learned from this situation, and have faith that this challenge will result in your personal growth and development.

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