

They Don't Care How Much You Know

4 Fundamentals to Show How Much You Care!

BY JUDY KAY MAUSOLF

You may have heard the phrase, "They don't care how much you know until they know how much you care!" I am blessed to work with dental teams nationwide to help them cultivate a happier, healthier and higher performing culture while delivering care with more passion and fun!

The care part can often be vague and confusing. I send teams surveys for feedback on where they feel they excel and where they would like to grow to assist me in customizing their workshop. Most team members score themselves high at delivering excellent care. Yet when I observe the team I often find the opposite to be true. I have found it often stems from a difference of opinion or understanding about the meaning of care! Which is why it is important for leadership (Doctor/Practice Administrator/Team Leads) to be on the same page and clearly define and model the waddle of what it means to

deliver exceptional care in their office.

Here are four fundamentals to show our patients how much we care!

Know Them! It is necessary to get to know your patients on a meaningful level to deliver exceptional care. It starts with being aware of the patient's needs and desires and being willing to do something to help them meet them. Caring is more than just being considerate, courteous or polite. It's an entirely different level. It means being truly concerned for the wellbeing of other. It means taking time to have a conversation with our patient.

Here are some examples of ques-

tions that can help us get to know our patients better.

- How do you feel about coming to see a dentist?
- What has been your past experience?
- What are your goals and desires for your oral health?
- What do you like most about your smile?





- What would you change if you could change your smile by simply waving a magic wand?
- What questions do you have about today's appointment?
- What can I do to make today's experience better?

We can also show our patients we truly care when presenting treatment by:

- Speaking slowly and clearly
- Presenting in bite size pieces
- Stopping data dumping
- Comforting them if they have concerns or fears
- Communicating on their level
- Being and advocate instead of a sales person
- Thanking them for being a patient

Don't Judge! It is human nature to have our favorite patients that we go above and beyond in delivering care. We pick and choose who will be our favorites based on their worthiness defined by their behavior. We are in essence judging our patients! Sure, we will be courteous and polite, but before we go all out we judge their worthiness first. It's as if they need

to meet some kind of external standard we have set in our mind. Here are a few examples of external standards, we set: being tardy, quirky personality, uptight, anxious or upset. We treat them different and deliver a lower level of care than we do for the patients we consider our favorites—our V.I.P's!

If we are truly going to care for someone we will look past the outward and go right to the heart. Instead of pre-judging people before we get to know them; show genuine interest, regardless of circumstances and personality. When we sincerely care for people, we will always be a person with whom others feel comfortable. They will feel confident that we don't have a hidden agenda and they will trust that we will listen to them without judging them.

Active listening is often the biggest validation to show that we care! Be an active listener by:

- Making eye contact
- Smiling at them
- Being polite
- Hearing them by focusing on what they are saying

Show Empathy! Empathy is essential if we want to show our patients we care. Sometimes it may seem hard to show empathy to patients who are displaying less than desirable behaviors. I am not suggesting we just fake it. Instead come from a real place by entering their world. Imagine what it feels like to walk in their shoes by asking

yourself the following questions:

- What would it take for me to act like that
- Would I feel differently if it were my mom or dad (a family member) behaving this way
- How would I feel if this was happening to me or I was in their circumstances

Any time we can imagine the situation from the other person's point of view, we lower our own defenses and, in the process, defuse their anger. Imagination influences feelings and feelings are the source of desire. It makes our actions easy and natural and real when we desire to do something. Compassion, caring, comforting, and kindness - make up the bulk of adjectives linked to patient loyalty and rooted in one's capacity for empathy. According to the Dictionary, "empathy" is "the ability to share in another's emotions or feelings." It is composed of two Greek words that mean "affection" and "feeling." When our patients receive empathy, they feel loved and cared about.

Resolve Complications! Occasionally even the best teams have patient complications arise. It is important to address complications ASAP. Be mindful of the energy and attitude you are bringing to the conversation. Focus on coming from a place or mindset of curiosity, care and concern. It is never about proving you are right and they are wrong. We never win by making

a patient wrong. Regardless of what the concern is start out by asking the patient, "How can I help you?" Then stop and listen to what they have to say. Please don't try to feel in the blanks or be defensive. Once they have stopped speaking ask the next question. "May I have your permission to give you feedback?" This does several things. If the patient has not finished sharing their concerns they have the opportunity to let you know they have more. This stops us from stepping on their words. It also gets the patient ready to listen to our response. Regardless of what you are going to suggest respond by saying, "I can help you and this is how!" Avoid responses starting with, "I can't" or "I won't" as they often generate an immediate defensive reaction from the patient. Our patients will feel we care when we utilize positive verbiage sharing what we can do versus what we can't!

If you would like to receive the white pages for Patient Communication Standards please email me at JudyKay@PracticeSolutionsInc.net and write Patient Communication Standards in the subject line.

The awesome part is that when we take the time to show our patients we truly care about them, they will trust and respect us enough to say YES to accept our care!



JUDY KAY MAUSOLF, OWNER & PRESIDENT OF PRACTICE SOLUTIONS, INC.

Judy Kay Mausolf is a dental practice management coach, speaker and author with expertise in helping others get happier and more successful! She coaches teams how to grow their practices by becoming better leaders, working together better and delivering service with more passion and fun. She provides teams with what they need to know on how to communicate positively, effectively and have a better attitude on a daily basis. She teaches teams how to get the re-engaged and accountable by building a culture based on happiness, trust and respect.

She is Past President of National Speakers Association (Minnesota Chapter), Director of Sponsoring Partners for the Speaking Consulting Network, and a member of the National Speakers Association and Academy of Dental Management Consultants. She is author of two books; "Ta-Dah! And "Rise & Shine!", and a contributing author for many dental magazines. She also publishes a monthly newsletter entitled "Show Your Shine".

Judy Kay lives in MN with her awesome husband Steve who makes her special coffee every morning and Zoe...it's all about me, 7 pound Yorkie!

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