

Providing quality implant treatment for patients is a joy that is laced with the responsibility to provide the best our profession has to offer. This is not to say that our treatments must be perfect—this does not exist in the practice of implant dentistry—however we must strive to provide the best we can for our patients. We need to work either as individuals or as team members to assure that implant treatment is safe, effective, and esthetically acceptable.

We can all play a part in providing quality dental implant treatment by being there for the patient with skills that are attained through proper education, experience, and counsel from those who have attained the necessary skills, knowledge, and judgment. These counselors represent the leaders and teachers of implant dentistry and are charged with providing the “truth” based on research and evidence-based clinical observations.

Attaining the proper education is a continual process for not only the novice but also the highly experienced clinician. New developments occur with each passing day and to put blinders on and practice as we did yesterday will fall short of providing the best we can for our patients and profession.

The novelist Anatole France wrote, “An education isn’t how much you have committed to memory, or even how much you know. It’s being able to differentiate between what you know, and what you don’t.” This translates into clinical judgment for practitioners. This judgment defines our “comfort zone.” Working within the comfort zone makes for successful treatments. Every Implant Dentist has talents that should be used in daily practice, but we must also be aware of when we do not have the necessary skills to provide some treatments. This is not something we need to feel “less adequate” about, but rather it should bring us to the reality that as practitioners we can either observe, treat, or refer. When we practice within our comfort zone we are confident. When we reach out of our comfort zone without the proper educa-



tion and judgment, we can find ourselves on that slippery slope leading to treatment failure. This is not to suggest that when a practitioner has less than a desirable result that he/she exceeded the skill set because there are so many factors involved in failed treatments. Nor should we be stagnant and neglect to push our comfort zone. We can effectively expand our comfort zone through proper education, experience, and acquired judgment.

I encourage each of us to truthfully contemplate our comfort zone and practice confidently within it. This will assure safe, effective, and esthetically acceptable treatments for the patient and benefit the profession. We also have the opportunity to expand our comfort zone by attending the AAID’s 59th Annual Meeting titled “Navigate Zones of Implant Dentistry: Complications, Confidence, Comfort” in Boston, Massachusetts, October 20–23, 2010. Come for the education, experience, and camaraderie.

Keeping these thoughts in mind will lead to successful treatments that act as confidence builders for our future growth.

James L. Rutkowski, DMD, PhD
 Editor-in-Chief
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