

# Helping, Rather Than Criticizing, a Colleague May Lead to a Lifetime of Referrals

**D**entistry can be a gratifying occupation. As implant dentists, we know the joy of providing an improved quality of life to patients who have been “dental cripples”. However, the human service element, a desire for perfection, empathy for patients with discomfort, continuous scheduling, constant multitasking, and a relative isolation from other dentists creates a demanding work environment.<sup>1,2</sup> These daily realities cause us to experience elevated stress levels that often manifest as physical and psychological health issues that exceed those found in the overall population.<sup>3,4</sup>

Researchers have shown that positive psychological factors, such as job gratification and work engagement, act as buffers against work-related stress.<sup>5–8</sup> It has also been found that clinicians who exhibit greater job control, in terms of skill, discretion, decision autonomy, higher perceptions of trust, and positive interpersonal contacts with patients and colleagues enable a positive work atmosphere.<sup>9</sup>

As members of the American Academy of Implant Dentistry, we must strive to provide our patients with the best treatments possible. Often, providing the best treatment includes recognizing our limitations. Although many cases can be efficiently completed within one office, others are more complex and can be improved by capitalizing on the expertise of our colleagues. General Practitioners, Maxillofacial Surgeons, Periodontists, Prosthodontists, Endodontists, and Orthodontists each have a role in the dental implant arena. I encourage all practitioners to focus on their unique abilities, and then to rely on others to assist in areas outside of those skills. Helping, rather than criticizing, a colleague in need may create a lifetime referral

source while benefiting both doctors, as well as the patient.

Striving to be the best at our core capabilities, while encouraging colleagues to do the same by working in cooperation, will result in enhanced job satisfaction and improved patient care. Let's encourage one another to achieve perpetual personal happiness by working within our means and supporting one another in our daily practice, as we are all integral parts of the implant dentistry team.

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