

JUST A (CLINICAL) MINUTE

Dr. Ron DiRezze

In this edition of ***Just a Clinical Minute***, I would like us all to take some time amidst our covid craziness and reevaluate and assess first why we are dentists, and second what we can do during these times to connect with our patients and create better lives for them.

In 20 years of practice I have always been under some sort of stress. No truer words have been spoken in 2020! I am bearing the brunt both personally and professionally these days for our crazy covid world. We have guidelines handed down by our regulating bodies that on any given day someone, be it patient or team member wants to circumvent, expand or tighten up those guidelines for whatever the reason. My practice efficiency suffers, and my overall happiness suffers because I am the dentist, the complaint department, the HR department, and the guideline implementor.

These times are unprecedented they say. To date I've had 2 staff members quarantined, I have another 2 staff members facing surgery before the holidays, we have a 'second wave' which is keeping patients away, plus we have what we already knew in June that our hygiene would fall apart in November.

HOW IS A DENTIST SUPPOSED TO SURVIVE?

We survive by going back to the drawing board. I've been here before. We all have. No matter how you define your dip, you've been here before. When I was in a hole I've always managed to bail myself out. In 20 years of looking back and analyzing how I climbed out of my hole, I can tell you with 100% certainty that I bailed myself out with Clear Aligners.

This was not by philosophy or strategy, but it has been a constant observation. Now, I offer a conclusion after analyzing myself and my practice traits over a long time. Simply stated, I had the time to FORGE my relationships with my patients during slow times such that I was able to share my philosophy of care and my philosophy of occlusion and hence my Clear Aligner production increased. In my office, patients accept fillings, crowns, and root canals almost automatically. They are, after all, in a dentist's office. But anything that changes their lifestyle, or anything deemed a little larger ticket item takes effort and energy to educate the patient and to allow them to see what you see.

Allow me to put forth a couple of personal challenges or goals for the next few months or whenever you experience a downturn in your schedule. In your slow times I urge you to forge your relationships with your patients. New patients or established patients it makes no difference; Acquaint or Re-acquaint, just spend the time. Pull up a chair with them. Sit with them. Explain your philosophy of care to them. Let them know who you are and confirm with your patients that you are the expert of their oral care. Things get missed during a recall exam. Things like philosophy of care and big pictures get missed. Little things like fillings don't get missed. Not that fillings are not important,

but this is a chance to reconsult with all your patients about their health, well-being, and function. A chance to remind them where they are now and where you could go together in their oral health.

I would secondly like to challenge you to be proactive with your patient care and consider clear aligners for their health and function. Look for wear, cracks, abfraction lesions, and lower anterior crowding. The differences you can make in the periodontal status, the occlusion, the function, and the quality of life for your patients are astounding and professionally satisfying.

Once you put aside the time to educate your patients you will see discussions open up about clear aligner therapy in patients you never thought would ever want their teeth aligned. Clear aligner therapy has numerous advantages these days compared to straight wire treatment. Some of those advantages are social acceptance, no allergies, no emergencies, and adult oriented faster treatment times to address their chief complaint.

Given the advantages of clear aligner treatment in the general practitioners office, and the method of diagnosing based on health and periodontal/occlusal function, the incorporation of this treatment modality during these unprecedented times can certainly dig you out of a slump now, and set a new course for you and your practice in 2021 and beyond.

****Please check www.rondeauseminars.com frequently for updates to our upcoming clear aligner courses for dentists and staff in April 2021 or contact Lee Larstone for more info (lee@rondeauseminars.com).***



Dr. Ron DiRezze, D.D.S.
Shelby Family Cosmetic and Restorative Dentistry
51221 Schoenherr Road, Suite 102
Shelby Twp., MI 48315
586-726-0030
ron@shelbydental.com
www.shelbydental.com

Dr. DiRezze is a general dentist in his 20th year of private practice. He practices in a fast paced, busy office incorporating the latest in technology while still adhering to proven textbook theory. He is on the Board of Directors for the American Academy of Clear Aligners and a lecturer for Rondeau Seminars.