When we were children we were excited by surprises because we associated them with gifts and the excitement of celebrations such as a birthday or Christmas. In adult life we come to realise that not all surprises are created to thrill and excite: some life events that descend upon from a clear blue sky create the levels of anxiety and stress which can badly affect your emotional and physical well-being none more so than when your employer informs you that you are required to learn a whole range of new skills in order to keep up with changes in the practice’s operations.

Over recent years developments in the dental sector have lead practices to review many aspects of how they operate and this had lead them to introduce new working practices, which has meant that dental team members have needed to develop new skills and approaches to their day-to-day work. The very fact that patient’s demands and expectations have changed so much means that we need to complete more openly than ever before with the other providers of goods or services who are competing for the same disposable income that patients could opt to spend on dental care. This in turn places more demands upon the dental team, not least because patients are asking pertinent and stretching questions about their treatment plans.

While it’s often impossible to prepare or change situations you have no control over, you do have power over how you respond to and handle these life events. And while there may never be a satisfying answer to why bad things happen to good people, coming to an understanding of the situation and accepting what you can and cannot change can, at the very least help you to:

• Get over unexpected challenges and succeed on the job
• Take charge of your well-being in good and bad times

We can get so wrapped up in our own needs and the desire to have them met, that we miss opportunities to connect with others. The irony is that the more we can see the bigger picture and recognise the needs of others and understand how any required changes meet their needs, the more willingly we will make changes even although at first they are inconvenient and demanding because we can see they are also logical and meaningful.

The accelerated pace of the modern professional practice rising to meet workplace demands can be tough at the best of times. But with an economic crunch adding to the strain on the bottom line and forcing many employees to do more with less, learning to catch, run with and manage unexpected challenges on the job is no longer an option—it’s a necessity. From learning to work with your manager, to making the most out of newly assigned job duties, you need to learn to channel workplace challenges into occupational opportunities.

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