Some thoughts on expertise and wisdom in practice

By Dennis J. Tartakow, DMD, MEd, PhD, Editor in Chief

“I may not always do everything right, but I always try to do the right thing!” This was an extraordinary thought that Dr. Arlene Sack shared with me many years ago. It forever became the guiding principle throughout my years in practice, a set of values instilled even greater understanding and confidence in your patients.

• We all assume we say the right things at the right times and have the right answers for our patients. However, how many of us listen to what we say to our patients? Too often we forget to say the simple things such as: “Thank you!” or “What problems are you having today?” or “How can I help you?” or, especially, “I appreciate your confidence.” Consider tape-recording some of your conversations with patients to get an idea of the dialogue. This can be a great learning technique for your staff members.

Guiding concepts

• Trust without accountability is really blind faith. Does your office have a system of accountability? Does each staff member know that he or she is accountable and that you have clear expectations of everyone? Do you monitor results or hear what is being told to your patients? Let them know that it is their job to let you know if they are telling our patients, “Doctors cannot be trusted.” As in every profession, there are individuals who cannot be trusted. However, most doctors are caring and committed, and that is the message we should be sending. Think of the “Eleventh Commandment”: Thou shall not speak ill of our fellow colleagues!

• Do with diligence; practice with courage, conviction and, above all, attention to details.

Finally, keep in mind the five “A” principles: aware, alert, anticipate, action and avoid. These words may prove beneficial:

“The Greeks didn’t write obituaries. They only asked one question after a man died: ‘Did he have passion?’” (“Serendipity,” Miramax, 2001).

Do you have the passion needed for success in your practice?

OT Corrections

FORESTADENT was spelled incorrectly in a headline on Page 10 of Ortho Tribune, AAO Daily (Special Edition). Ortho Tribune regrets the error.

Ortho Tribune strives to maintain the utmost accuracy in its news and clinical reports. If you find a factual error or content that requires clarification, please report the details to Managing Editor Kristine Colker at k.colker@dental-tribune.com.

Image courtesy of Dr. Earl Broker.

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