

COMMITTING TO EDUCATION

A wealth of resources is available to practice owners to help them reach their goals. All that is required is that you reach out and take advantage of them. It's not necessary to reinvent things or make them up from scratch. Someone out there has been in your shoes and has shared a blueprint for how to succeed.

It's important that the commitment to gaining insight and guidance for success be not just yours but also that of your team. You and your team are a cohesive unit and need to grow together if you want the practice to grow.

There must be a balance in this growth between clinical and business management aspects. Clinical training is important, but lots of dentists have great clinical training. What makes you unique will also be a result of how your business management efforts are faring. The practice needs to differentiate itself from the others in order to be a great success this year.

Geier J: Make 2019 your breakout year. *Dentaltown*, Dec 2018, pp 56-59

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VICTIMHOOD

Changing our perceptions



BACKGROUND

When we consider ourselves as victims, we begin a habit of choosing momentary sympathy for our situation over taking steps to overcome it. Victims choose to do nothing, which is the path of least resistance. It's possible to reject the role of victim and shift into a survivor or even a winner role. This involves changing our mindset and perception.

PERCEPTION ALTERS REALITY

Each individual experiences a different version of reality. We rely on our senses to interpret the world around us and make sense of it. Because the data can be overwhelming, our brains take mental shortcuts and select the information we see as relevant, then choose those parts of the input that fit our current set of beliefs. Because we tend to have a fragile worldview, new ideas threaten the structure we've built.

Even though each of us believes we're seeing the same version of reality as others, we also believe that our view is the right view. We need to recognize that our identities are tightly wrapped up in our interpretation of reality. This gives us the power to rewrite what we experience.

STEPS TO OVERCOME VICTIMHOOD

Three techniques can be used to incrementally shift our mindset from that of victim to that of winner.

Eliminate Negativity

If the problem is a staff member who self-identifies as a victim and focuses on negativity, the first step is to let that person go. People rarely change because it requires a high degree of self-awareness and willpower. The individual would have to perceive there is a problem and want to change. The best way to deal with a person who has selected victimhood is to remove him or her from your environment so that the negative outside force doesn't destroy you.

Embrace Suffering

Life isn't neat and predictable and we will all have random problems in our lives. This randomness is only important because of the response we make. We can feel sorry for ourselves or we can choose to frame a challenging situation as an opportunity for growth. Working under a moderate level of stress can actually make us tougher and more confident in our ability to handle similar problems in the future.

Although reframing a problem as an opportunity is self-deluding ourselves, it offers the opportunity to improve our degree of optimism, which is the desired effect. Self-delusion is limited, however, because growth only occurs at the edge of our comfort level—it doesn't help to be too far beyond that point.

Think Positively

When a negative thought occurs, we tend to believe it conveys reality. However, most of the problems that our head entertains never happen. Have you ever had a patient say he worried about the dental visit all week long, but it turned out it wasn't as bad as he had feared?

Clinical Significance

Victimhood offers no gain other than temporary sympathy. Self-pity can be addictive because it gives us an excuse to delay acting on situations and is our default response. But the result of doing nothing is a feeling of hopelessness. To make the world a better place, it's important to change our perception of the world by reframing bad situations as opportunities for growth, thinking positively, and inspiring others along the way.

When we choose a positive thought in the midst of random chaos, our mood is instantly changed. The technique is called

gratitude meditation and has been used for centuries by Tibetan nuns and monks to control their emotions. It involves focusing on the positive elements of your life. Think of the things you have: a warm place to sleep, a loving family, and plenty of food at every meal. Millions of people in the world can't claim those blessings. In addition, you should spend a few moments thinking of 3 people you appreciate. You can practice gratitude daily by thanking your assistant for every task completed, regularly complimenting your staff, and rewarding their efforts.

Toth R: Victory over victimhood: Three steps toward a better mindset. *Dentaltown*, Nov 2018, pp 90-92

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