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## Learning to find your stretch zone

by Dr. CJ Mertz

One of the first principles our clients learn is "never play to the level of your schedule book -- always play to the level of your dreams and goals." It's really no secret why each year 80% of chiropractors in the field fail to reach their goals. *They haven't learned to find their stretch zone.*

Imagine you are starting a practice from scratch. What do you suppose happens first, promotions or service? Promotions, of course. So your *purpose* is first served through your promotions. This practice principle says "promote first, serve second."

Invariably your promotions lead to serving patients. Then, for the vast majority of DCs, (unknowingly) the *process* of **service** becomes a conflict with ongoing promotions (the chiropractor's first and primary purpose). The fact is, most chiropractors you meet will never break 100 adjustments per week.

There are three zones a chiropractic team can experience: comfort zone, stretch zone, and panic zone. When you play to your schedule book, you are practicing in the comfort zone. The worst habit a chiropractor can have is to let his or her practice book become the "plan" for the day. Remember, virtually everything on the schedule today happened from your team's effort yesterday, and the days before that.

Growth happens in the stretch zone! Each morning, you have to decide what you'll commit to act upon and what you are determined to make happen before the day ends.

Today, how many written testimonials are you going to ask for? How many new patients are you willing to attract? Going to invite and schedule for next week's workshop? Committed to convert to care? How many patients will you "WOW" with a gift of love and appreciation today?

This is just a short list of quality actions, which when thought about and dedicated to before you start your day, lead you into the stretch zone. This principle says "promote in the upswing."

First, you must define the actions that determine your emotions.

The previous set of questions all have answers that should be thought of as *acts* of **promotion**. On occasion, your practice will grow so quickly, the service to your patients will seem overwhelming just by itself. When you couple this with ongoing acts of promotion, it can swing you into the panic zone. Simply pulling back 10-to-20% is all that's needed in order to regain your rhythm in the stretch zone.

Personally, I believe if you are not reaching the panic zone at least two or three times per year, you are not fully applying yourself in the stretch zone. Your town, your team and your practice require you to stretch.

When you have created the habit of stretching yourself beyond the schedule book every day, you are becoming a practice champion. You must see your practice as the headquarters of the lifetime, family wellness movement in your community. This will steadily be accomplished by pushing yourself beyond the comfort zone (just doing what's scheduled today).

I have had the real blessings of coaching more chiropractors over 300 patient adjustments per week worldwide, than any other consulting group. The key is having each chiropractic team find the stretch zone and being willing to commit to enter it before each day begins.

Playing to the level of your dreams and goals means you are maintaining a level of capacity to serve beyond that which is currently scheduled. So, if you currently perform 200 adjustments per week, you must have a practice capacity of at least 240 adjustments per week (20% over current volume) in order to grow. You must see increasing your capacity to grow is a fundamental aspect of your purpose.

Growing beyond your capacity will *always* lead to a practice reset. Do not "run into" your capacity or you will "run out of" the vacuum necessary to grow. Promotions, service and capacity are the core elements that make up your stretch zone. Which one do you do well? Which one really needs new attention?

Don't let another day pass you by practicing inside your comfort zone. That will only continue to reproduce what you have already built. By learning to develop these core skills, you will be able to consistently practice in your stretch zone and experience record breaking growth.

*(Dr. CJ Mertz is the founder and head coach of the prestigious Waiting List Practice chiropractic training organization. [See the WLP 300 patient per week opportunity on the back page of this issue.] For more information on WLP coaching services, please contact The Waiting List Practice at 877-TEAM-WLP. Dr. Mertz extends a limited invitation to let him establish your own personal "stretch zone." Call him today to find out more!)*