

## The Lesson From Legends

Patient education, as you know it, is dead. In the past 20 years, the average retention of patients hasn't improved despite the onslaught of newfangled brochures, posters, ready-made research articles and PowerPoint software programs that have flooded the market. There is, however, a smaller group of chiropractors whose retention continues to grow through the roof. One simple lesson from practice legends reveals the secret to their success.

Many years ago, I had the honor of training with a circle of ten practice legends following a seminar I was giving for a state association. They hired me to interview them so they could find out what they may have in common. They were very different people, yet each chiropractor was averaging over 175 adjustments per day. I began the interview by asking common questions about strategies known to lead to practice growth. The questions included things like office layout design, practice hours, external promotion, team training, literature, fees, etc. After 45 minutes and a great deal of note taking, they realized that not more than five out of ten of these legends had any of the strategies mentioned in common.

Then, I stopped the interview for a moment and told them a story about my practice. I recalled a very frustrating time, seeing about 35 adjustments per day, when it dawned on me that I was talking about anything and everything under the sun with my patients. Whatever my patients wanted to talk about and a lot of things I never wanted to talk about were included in these adjusting “conversations.” It created a bizarre combination of feeling burned out but still having the purpose to build my practice. One day, I had an epiphany and decided, from that moment on, I would talk chiropractic only, to 100% of my patients, 100% of the time. In less than six months, my practice went from 125 adjustments per week to 125 adjustments per day. Then, I asked these legends if any of them had a similar experience. To my surprise, all ten out of ten of them raised their hands high!

One after another proclaimed the day they had made up their mind to talk “100% tic” and how their practices took off. Every one of us could feel the hair on our forearms tingle because we had landed upon the one single truth they were hoping to find in this interview. They demanded we continue the interview only to further detail the process of mastering 100% tic. After open dialogue, we discovered each legend talked chiropractic to a minimum of 90% of their patients on each adjustment. This by itself was a huge breakthrough.

Following some more discussion, we learned each one of us had trained ourselves to say something chiropractically powerful and principled in one minute or less. This allowed each doctor to stay on time with their adjusting and still keep their commitment to 100% tic, 100% of the time. The concept for talking for minutes at a time per adjustment was dead. Everyone agreed that all this led to was off-purpose talk and too much information. Their own observations reflected a dramatic increase in patient motivation, retention and referrals with their newfound commitment to 100% tic, 100% of the time. I remember a few of the legends saying they never imagined themselves seeing 100 adjustments per day; now, they average 200 adjustments per day and absolutely love it.

One practice legend in the group stood out head and shoulders over the rest. Even as an incredibly humble man, he was seeing 300 adjustments per day. As the interview continued, I talked about the power of repetition and the need to lead patients into their future care. Then, I asked him for his thoughts on the subject. You could hear a pin drop in the room. After thanking everyone for all their amazing insights, he then revealed three decisions that he has lived by in his practice for the past ten years. First, it turned out he was the only one in the group that actually did 100% tic with 100% of his patients, 100% of the time. Second, he determined ten principles or “phrases” he would repeat again and again with great intent and a deep sense of passion until his patients could say them back to him. He believed the lack of disciplined “tic” and the lack of passionate repetition was the missing link of successful patient education for the majority of chiropractors in the profession. (I agree 100%).

Then, he commented on the power of future pacing his patients. He said the more his “tic” was framed in the future, the better his patients responded. He only wished he hadn’t wasted the first ten years of his practice, fumbling around trying everything else. In the thirty minutes remaining in our interview together, the only thing these ten legends wanted me to do was train on how to better do “future driven, passionately **repetitious** tic.” Since then, I have developed an entire talking “tic” training program, including written materials, DVD’s and CD’s that my clients simply devour. Not surprisingly, the lesson from the legends lives on and continues to help build the most successful practices in the world.

If this was easy, everybody would already be doing it. In truth, it takes vision, dedication and hard work. I am encouraged every day through my clients’ successes that patient education has had a revival in chiropractic. Don’t be afraid to ask for help - the best chiropractors in chiropractic all have a coach. Until next time...Practice with Passion.

*(Dr. CJ Mertz is the Executive Director of ChiroUSA as well as founder and head coach of the prestigious Waiting List Practice chiropractic training organization. See our 300 patient per week opportunity on the back page of this issue. If you would like more information on WLP coaching services call Tony Shinn at 877-TEAM WLP)*