

Practice Leadership Program™

Module 2

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Build Your Practice Muscle

Similar to when you start an exercise program and must first visualize how you want your body to look and function you must first visualize how you want your practice to look and function. After you visualize you must then believe it is possible and then you must get to work and demand action on the part of those muscles.

1. **Visualize** - how you want your practice to look. If you already have an office, picture the way it will look physically – from the paintings, the wall colors, carpets and individual rooms. If you do not have an office yet begin picturing yourself in the office of your dreams. What it looks like, where it is, what your desk looks like, how your diplomas are displayed. (One time a young patient, an 8 year old boy was staring at my diplomas and he asked me, “Are those your trophies?” His mother laughed and I think she was about to explain to him that they were called diplomas. I paused for a second and was about to do the same when I thought about it I replied, “Actually, yes they are my trophies.”)

My point with this story and the subsequent realization on my part is that your diplomas ARE your trophies – so display them with pride. However, do not sit back and think that they will do the work for you. Look at your diplomas the way a newly awarded black belt should. I have heard it said that when a student achieves the status of black belt, a good teacher will say congratulations and then, “Now you are ready to learn.”

Many martial artists will become dismayed at first, thinking they have reached the pinnacle only to find out that their hard earned achievement just qualifies them for a higher level of work. Doctors, it is the same with us. Once we are awarded our black belts – our doctorate degree it does not mean our work is over. Quite the opposite, it means we qualify to work at a whole new level! When I see young doctors faces when struck with this realization I acknowledge their initial discouragement by lightheartedly saying, “I know, this was not in the brochure was it?”

Seriously, you must realize, and the earlier the better, that one’s work is NEVER done! The trick is to take your knowledge, to take your wisdom and work smarter not harder. You want to get more *bang for your buck* and not waste precious time or energy. This Practice Leadership Program™ will help you on your path to be more effective and less wasteful of time, energy and money.

In Module 1 you were instructed to begin working on you. This module will focus on the initial extension of you- your office and subsequently, your practice. Both are alive and it is YOU that breathe life into both!

CAVEAT: I suggest you consider strongly where you want to practice with great deliberation. My biggest mistake was not doing this and over a 10-year period I started 4 practices from scratch! While this was tough and draining from a practice point of view it was a boon for me regarding this program.

I am able to share various perspectives with you that having started four practices have given me. Whereas, starting just one would have been a blessing and easier from a practice standpoint, it would not have given me the knowhow that I am now sharing with you.

The first of which is: unless you yourself also want to start a program like this 10 years from now the best thing you can do to save you money, time and energy is to **start a practice once!**

Draw your vision here in pencil.

Draw a picture of your office – inside and out.

Write down the address or location.



Write down how many patients you want to see weekly and the kinds of patients that are being drawn to your office.

List what your expertise is.

What is your office's reputation?

Describe the feel of your office in vivid detail.

2. **Believe** - you will have that practice. One of the greatest sayings ever coined was, “Whatever the mind of man can conceive and believe it can achieve.” Napoleon Hill, author of *Think and Grow Rich* in 1937 and advisor to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt created this magnificent tapestry of words after interviewing the 500 most successful people in the country in an attempt to uncover how they became successful.

The keys to this powerful mantra are those three words: conceive, believe, achieve. Once you conceive and have visualized the practice you want you then must believe in all you heart that you will get it and are getting it. I feel that when you conceive something you create the outline. Then your intense belief colors it in. The more intense your belief the more vibrant the colors, the more life you breathe inside of your vision. I feel that writing what you want and who you want to be helps solidify the belief factor into your nervous system and allows it to manifest more quickly.

Here is an excerpt in the Wall Street Journal October 5, 2010 called How Handwriting Trains the Brain. Forming Letters Is Key to Learning, Memory, Ideas.

In a 2008 study in the Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience, adults were asked to distinguish between new characters and a mirror image of them after producing the characters using pen-and-paper writing and a computer keyboard. The result: For those writing by hand, there was stronger and longer-lasting recognition of the characters' proper orientation, suggesting that the specific movements memorized when learning how to write aided the visual identification of graphic shapes.

Other research highlights the hand's unique relationship with the brain when it comes to composing thoughts and ideas. Virginia Berninger, a professor of educational psychology at the University of Washington, says handwriting differs from typing because it requires executing sequential strokes to form a letter, whereas keyboarding involves selecting a whole letter by touching a key.

She says pictures of the brain have illustrated that sequential finger movements activated massive regions involved in thinking, language and working memory—the system for temporarily storing and managing information.

To reiterate, I strongly believe that writing does help the brain and it helps to wire what you are writing into your nervous system. Kind of like how the old time school teachers would have a student who misbehaved write 100 times I will not light Jenny’s hair on fire or something along those lines.

I suggest we use these modern neurological truths and old fashioned empirical methods a little more positively and proactively.

Write down seven times: I believe I will have the office of my dreams.

Then write seven times: I believe my office is a _____(you fill in the rest)

Example: I believe my office is a healing sanctuary for people to reach a higher level of health and to actualize their potential. My office is a comfortable place where people feel safe and secure. My office is a home away from home for my patients and a place where their questions are answered, their pain is relieved, and where they are taught true health principles and are given hope

3. **Action** – work on building the practice up and trimming away the fat. You should work six days a week in the first two to five years of your practice. That’s right, you have to slowly gain momentum and every time you stop you lose momentum. Until you have the practice physique you want and have developed the practice muscle memory to take some time off without losing your hard earned gains you must keep at it six days a week.

This mean getting up early in the morning and either going to breakfast business or networking meetings, going to the gym and getting to know everyone or volunteering someplace to give health talks, spinal screenings etc.

When you are not seeing patients you must GET OUT of the office and be meeting people. There is an old business saying, “Poor people should take rich people out to lunch.” What does this mean? It means that until you have the practice you want, the income you want or the healing prowess you want you should take those who are at where you want to be – out to lunch and ask them questions. Learn from the people who are doing what you want to be doing. Before you ask people for favors; grant them first! Ask your lunch guest if there is anything that you can do for them.

You may be thinking, “Hold on, what favor can I grant to someone who has what I want?” Let me answer that with the story of Solomon and the bee.

As the story goes, King Solomon was sleeping in his garden when a bee landed on his nose and stung him. Angrily, he awoke. The bee apologized for his impetuosity saying that he mistook the great king’s nose for a flower. Solomon laughed and forgave the bee. The bee, full of gratitude, promised to repay the king one day. Solomon smiled, wondering how the little bee could possibly repay him.

Later that day, the queen of Sheba brought many riddles to test the legendary wisdom of the great king. Solomon answered all the riddles with ease. The final test was 40 bouquets of flowers, 39 of them were fake made by the queen’s best artists. The test was for Solomon to discover the real flowers. The flowers were all perfect in appearance, touch and fragrance. The king was stumped and about to be humiliated.

Then, apparent to only Solomon’s keen eye, he saw the little bee buzz into the room and land on one of the bouquets. Solomon stated that these flowers were the real ones. Everyone was amazed and this is how a little bee helped the wisest, richest man in the world who had shown mercy towards him earlier in the day.

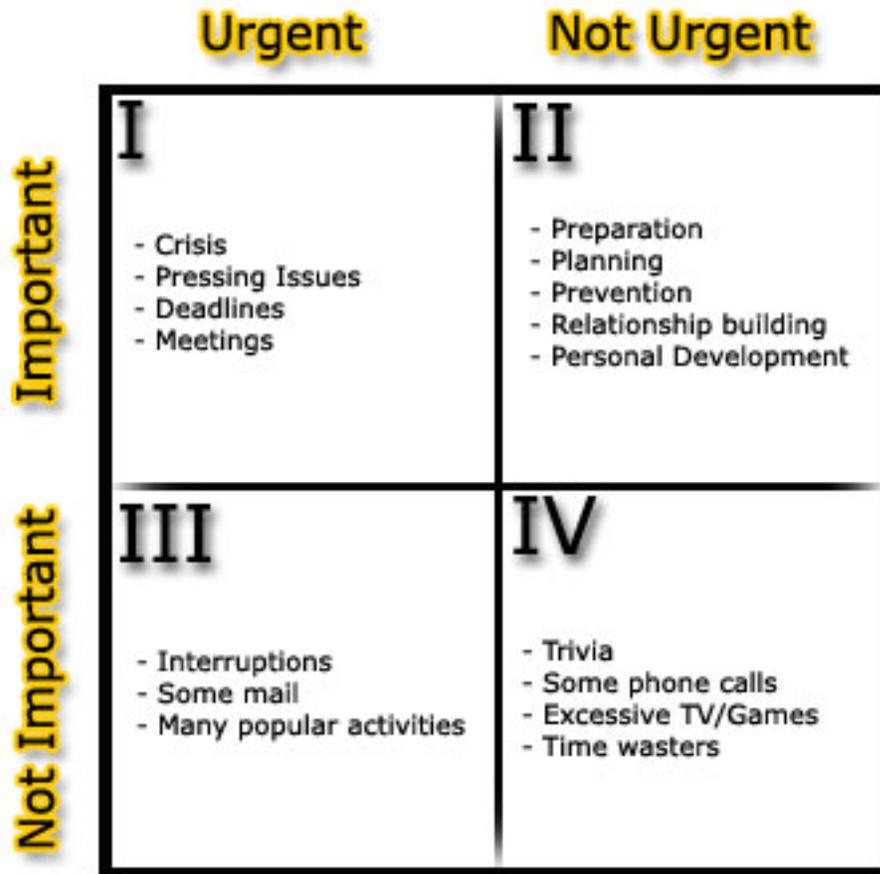
The story of Solomon and the bee is a great example of forgiveness and humility and illustrates how even the rich and powerful can need the help of the meek and industrious. The moral of the story is that no one is so insignificant they cannot help and no one is so great that they cannot use help.

There is power in understanding your current place in the world. You will grow in stature when you let go of the ego that allowed you to get through school and humbly ask people for help in building your practice and your business acumen. Like I will say often in this program, your ego is like a cocoon. You need your protective ego to get you through chiropractic or medical school, then you must slay your ego to grow into a successful healer. You will never, ever be able to soar to great heights if you stay imprisoned in your ego.

So keep on keeping on. Do something six days a week to promote your practice and increase your knowledge and healing skills. This is how you build your practice muscle.

Trimming the fat means avoiding useless, time wasting activities. These are what Stephen Covey called in his fantastic book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* – Quadrant IV activities. (I suggest you add to this list useless thoughts and feelings also)

Here is his chart:



You want to avoid Quadrant IV activities and build on Quadrant II activities. Quadrant II is Practice MUSCLE building. Quadrant IV is Practice FAT storing.

You want to build your Practice Muscle and trim away your Practice Fat. You want to spend the majority of your time performing activities that are important and not urgent and limit your time in activities that are unimportant and not urgent. While a little down time and diversions are acceptable these are useless and add nothing to your mission.

NOTE: True rest and relaxation is also a Quadrant II activity. Covey calls this the seventh habit known as “sharpening the saw.”

On the other hand, Quadrant IV activities actually can cause you to feel more fatigued. For example, a little TV watching is acceptable as downtime and there is nothing wrong with that. However, haven’t you noticed that after a certain period of time you start to get very lethargic and don’t want to do anything except continue sit in front of the *idiot box* as it is called. Why is this?

It is basically established that television puts your mind into a passive state, almost a trance, which is why we become susceptible to the advertisements. Some studies have suggested that our brains actually work less when we watch TV then when we sleep, at least we dream when we are asleep. So you see by cutting down on time wasting and passive diversions and using that time actively instead to invest in your personal or professional development you are on your way to a more successful practice and life for that matter. Even if you cut down your trivial TV time by an hour a day and instead do something productive like exercise, spend family time, help coach a little league team or if you are going to watch something watch an educational DVD. This hour investment will pay off down the road. In fact, you can even do something good for while you watch TV. When Bruce Lee would watch television he would lie on the floor and contract his abdominals to still make it somewhat productive while enjoying a show. So, I suggest you do that or even stretch. This way you can enjoy some TV watching and still be doing something good for you. Remember, nothing bad happens when you do something good.

NOTE: You are undoubtedly familiar with the saying, “The best way to learn something is to teach it.” Most people are not aware that the word doctor is derived from the Latin *docere* which means, “to teach” and doctor is basically Latin for teacher. So by all means *teach* these healthy TV habits to your patients. It will improve their health, give them another reason to be thinking about you throughout the day, which is the key to practice building, and ingrain these habits into your psyche.

Only you can decide if what you want is worth this hour a day investment. Only you can decide if you are going to make improvements or excuses. Only you can decide how your practice will look in a few years. Will you be engaged in Quadrant II important and not urgent or proactive activities dictated by you or Quadrant IV not important and not urgent activities that are basically useless and relegate you to being a spectator in life.

So tell me, in five years will your practice be lean and mean, as the saying goes, or will it be bloated and gasping for air?

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Here is what your practice will look like after 2-5 years of Quadrant II activities:



Some examples of Quadrant II activities:

Going to seminars

Planning your week

Working your plan

Time with family

Learning new healing techniques and business procedures

Meeting people and promoting your practice and promoting the other person's work too

Personal development such as exercise, meditation, spiritual services, volunteer work and any character building activities



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Here is what your practice will look like after 2-5 years of Quadrant IV activities:



Some examples of Quadrant IV activities:

- Excessive television watching
- Most electronic games
- Trivial socializing
- Trash reading
- Gossiping

You want to calmly perform actions that are important but that are not urgent. You don't want to be spending your day in Quadrant I putting out fires. Although as we all know this is sometimes necessary. However, the better and more polished you get at this Practice Leadership Program™ the less time you will need to spend doing crisis management.

Quadrant III activities are also necessary evils, including interruptions such as phone calls although since the time of Covey's publication we have been blessed with one of the greatest gifts to the achiever – Caller ID.

Essentially you want your activities to be proactive and in Covey's Quadrant II arena. You want to be planting seeds always. You can no more stop promoting yourself and your practice than Coca Cola or McDonalds can stop advertising. Yes they are two examples of products that are antithetical to our produce but the business principles still apply and are universal to all – the good, the bad and the ugly.

There is a popular version of a quote by Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Build a better mousetrap and the world will beat a path to your door.” While this is true, people still need to know about the mousetrap and where your door is. This Program is about you becoming a better mousetrap for sure but it also about teaching you how to enthusiastically let the world know about you and where you are in a dignified and professional manner. This requires you visualizing what you want, believing you can get it and are getting it and then doing little things six days a week until you achieve it!

I feel this saying best signifies these ideas: **Keep flowing, keep growing and keep glowing!**

4. **Nutrition** – As you continue to build your Practice Muscle you must feed your practice healthy and positive sustenance. Since your practice emanates from you, make sure you are healthy and positive; your staff is healthy and positive and your office is healthy and positive.

The first step in feeding your practice is to make sure you are getting treated yourself. I treat many doctors and they often tell me the week before they get treated their practice dips down, with patients rescheduling or no showing. They realize their practice is reflecting their decrease in energy. After they get treated their practice goes up. I believe this is because their practice knows they can handle more now.

NOTE: Make sure your patients are aware of this truth regarding their lives. Have them notice how their lives flow better and they become “luckier,” when they keep their regular appointments with you. After all, it just makes sense that when you are in alignment your life falls into place also.

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This goes for your staff. Make sure your staff is getting treated on a regular basis either by you, which is best, or another doctor. You want them energized and singing your praises through first hand experience!

This Practice Leadership Program™ is based on sincerity and truth, and the truth is that if you and your staff are good patients, you will attract good patients. When you practice what you preach there is a depth, there is a sincerity that is powerful and unshakeable. When you, your staff and the very walls of your office reverberate this sincerity you can be assured that you can now stake your claim in having a healing center exactly how you want it. This is how you create the practice you want and your patients need instead of having insurance companies create your practice in the manner that best suits their needs!

5. Maintain that **positive mental attitude** from Module 1– Expect the best and realize if you are doing your best then know in your heart that things are working out for the best.

You cannot build the practice physique you want with a negative attitude filled with doubt and despair. I joined my first gym when I was 13 years old and I immediately noticed that the people with the best physiques really enjoyed working out and I used to wonder, did they look good because they like to workout or did they like to workout because they looked good? What do you think?

The main point that I want you to take from this observation is that they trained hard but they were also laughing and joking around and shouting encouragement to others until it was time for them to get serious when it was their turn. This is the attitude you and I should have as we develop our practice to look how we want it to look – sleek, strong and durable. Work hard but be relaxed about it and if you want to have a great practice help others to have a great practice too. Above all, have a great attitude. Nothing bad can happen by having a positive mental attitude and being optimistic about your success. Be in a good mood and good things happen. Work as well and as hard as you can.

WINNING

I have a goal and it dictates my day
Meaningless trifles submerge or are tossed away

My mind is clear and knows what to do
I won't stop at one, when for the giving is two.

I am certain it is mine, for who deserves it more
Betrayed for it once, I must now even the score

Visions fill my heart's chambers with glory
Of victorious battles etched into my life's story

The mind runs the body and I, the mind
I program it for victory, which undoubtedly I will find

For the one who works hardest will be unstoppable
So I must slave and sweat more than was thought possible

Victory must be there, in the air and the food I taste
If victory is not expected, then half-hearted training is a fool started waste

A loser can become a winner, for everyone is equal
It is the want and the will that separates the champions from lesser people

Let the ignorant scoff, as they idle at home
My reward will come, when I am seated on the winner's throne.

6. **Balance** rest and work – The final aspect to developing your Practice Muscle is to do different things on alternate days and relax, thereby letting the work you did take hold and develop. **Let** your practice grow and don't try to force your practice to expand. Have what is called – Relaxed Productivity.

For example, you know not to train your biceps everyday. If you do you will over train them and they will not develop. Actually you will get the opposite results you desire because you end up tearing them down. Likewise, if you are always pushing and trying to build your practice and promote yourself you will actually tear down your practice, burn yourself out and end up repelling people. Perform the practice building movements in this program as intensely as you can then afterwards relax and give what you did time to respond.

Recreate means to recreate yourself and you need to find your individual rhythm to balance work and rest. For example, in the beginning you are only taking off one day a week but make sure you do no work that day and truly rest. Then when you have the practice humming, every two months give yourself a four day weekend. Then after 5 years, take a week off every 3 months or whatever works for you. I heard of a dentist who would work seven days a week for six months then take six months off. The essential aspect is that you balance work and rest and let the seeds you planted flourish, and you do this by learning to leave them alone.

You must also find balance within each individual day. To help you to develop your daily rhythm keep this mantra in mind. Everyday make sure you:

Think, Do, Review, Relax

THINK: Start off your day and think about what you want to accomplish in your life, this year, month, week and this day. You do not need to think of all them daily!

DO: Stop thinking and just get out there and do it. No more thinking otherwise you develop what the late tennis great Arthur Ashe called “Paralysis from over analysis.”

REVIEW: On the way home think about your day and what you did great and what you can learn to do better, or never again.

RELAX: Put it all out of your head and know you made people's lives better today. Enjoy yourself, your friends and/or your family.

“Start each day as if it is your last; end each day as if it is your first.”

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Office

After you FIRST invest and put energy into developing yourself and your practice you must put energy into your office, SECOND! Your office is a living, breathing entity with a life and energy of its own. You are its creator. So, let's get into how you can create a healing sanctuary for you and your patients.

*Office environment

First thing patients notice is the greeting. So make it office policy that whoever greets the patient, the receptionist, office manager or you, gives a warm greeting to the patient immediately upon arrival. Don't have the patient sit there unnoticed. No one likes to be ignored, especially someone in pain, also it does not send out a convincing message that you really care about the person. There will be more on this important topic later.

The second thing patients notice is the cleanliness of the office. It gives patients a sense of security to see a clean, well-kept office. We are all familiar with feng shui principles and a dusty, dirty office is not conducive to healing or to inspiring patients to come in. Make it a point for everyone to chip in and keep the office clean looking and clean smelling.

That's right, smell is important. Smell is the only sense that goes directly to brain so make it a pleasant one. Use a pleasant disinfectant, Reed diffuser or aromatherapy machine - no candles. Ask your liability insurance and local fire department why this is.

Here are several other factors that help an office exude a healing atmosphere and are conducive to a successful practice.

1. See patients at scheduled time. Respect their time and they will respect yours. This is a major source of aggravation and #1 complaint of patients.
2. Convenient location. Yes, if you are a great healer patients will go through hell and high water to find you. However, it is better to be a great healer who is easy to get to.
3. Have ample parking. People will shy away from places that are annoying to find parking. They will have a tendency to find any excuse not to go there.
4. Soothing music. Oldies, jazz, classical and some new age is best. If your practice is geared towards a younger crowd you can play more modern music but I would be careful with this.
5. Friendly, harmonious environment. No gossip. I would fine anyone a dollar who talked about someone who wasn't present, even if it was nice. Then, with the money I would take the staff out to lunch. Nothing can kill the feel of an office like petty gossip, jealousy and backstabbing. Teach everyone who works with you this:

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“Great minds discuss ideas

Average minds discuss events

Small minds discuss people”

Eleanor Roosevelt

*Office look

If you want to have an energetic office make sure you put energy into your office. A fresh coat of paint, new carpets, paintings and decorations, new air conditioners all add energy into the place and it will reflect in everyone's attitude. Do a little at a time so that there is always something new being added or something old being taken away. Decorate the office for holidays, it adds a personal touch and again it adds some new energy to the place.

Along with adding things, know when to throw stuff out. Keep the energy flowing and get rid of anything that causes your office to become stagnant.

*Reception Room

Remember this is never called the waiting room. That has only negative connotations; whereas, the term reception room is more positive. Naturally, this is only positive if it truly is receptive. In *The Journal of Emergency Medicine* February 2012 the investigators hypothesized that: Wait times have been reported to be one of the most important concerns for people visiting emergency departments (EDs). Affective states significantly impact perception of wait time. There is substantial evidence that art depicting nature reduces stress levels and anxiety, thus potentially impacting the waiting experience. The study then reached the conclusion that: Visual art has positive effects on the ED waiting experience.

What does this mean to you? It means make the patients' experience in their reception room (it's really their reception room not yours) as relaxing and inviting as possible.

Do as the study says, have nice artwork preferably about nature hanging on the walls. Also, have a little table with assorted teas available if you are comfortable with people handling hot water. Have some healthy snacks like raw almonds. If you really want to go the extra mile have a fish tank.

However, a less expensive and a "get your patients talking" alternative is to have those perpetual motion devices out there. They are interesting and in my opinion they subconsciously prep your patient's mind for the equally scientific yet magical treatment they are about to experience in the treatment room. You can go to <http://www.officeplayground.com/Kinetic-Perpetual-Motion-Toys-C21.aspx> for a few examples of these devices.

Make the reception room as warm as you can and it will help you to do your job. Every little bit helps and a relaxed patient is easier to treat than an agitated patient. Remember this adage that I had hanging in my reception room: "A doctor's office should be a place that makes you feel good."

In the first Module you learned to keep your mind positive and earlier you were reminded that to build your practice you must have positive energy going into all aspects of your practice. Well this goes for your office environment too; you have to keep your office positive and it starts in the reception area and what people read.

In my office I have *Chiropractic: An Illustrated History* by Dennis Peterson and Glenda Wiese and I also have *You'll Be Better The Story of Applied Kinesiology* by Dr. George Goodheart. Patients will often read this one especially and come in to me and mention, "I read that AK can help with allergies. I did not know you could help with that. I'm going to bring my son in." I generally reply, "That's a good idea."

Like owning a restaurant, you must keep putting energy into it otherwise it will feel like a morgue. Keep your office feeling alive and vibrant and above all else...clean!

Don't get me wrong, what will predominantly build your practice is you and your treatments along with your heartfelt love and concern for your patient. I have been built a practice in my office during construction with no walls and in another office that could have been on the Health Departments most wanted list.

However, the essence of this program is to allow you to have as many factors in your favor encouraging people to come to you so that you can improve their condition and so they are comfortable to forego the insurance model and pay you for your service just as every other working relationship does. Psychologically, people are better able to reason your fee if the place looks nice and clean along with your excellent care.

It does not need to look like the Taj Mahal. This can turn people off if they think they are paying for your crystal chandelier. However, your office should look the part of a successful, slightly upscale space congruent with the service you are providing.

Let me give you an example, I met a guy who owned a restaurant that served top notch food and while it was a little pricey for the area, I felt it was well worth it. However, while the food was at a certain price range the décor was plastic chairs and chintzy napkins. Do you see from a sensory perspective how this would did not fit?

Here you are eating, and paying for, this upscale cuisine while sitting on cheap patio furniture. Sadly, the restaurant with the really nice guy for an owner went out of business. When he told me he was closing up he mentioned that the location, just slightly off Main Street was the reason for his failure. The next restaurant was an Irish Restaurant and Pub where everything was in alignment: the food, the price (also a little higher than the other local places) and the ambience all said, "This is an Irish restaurant and here is the food, the drink, the sturdy wooden booths and ambience." It did great business and I bet still does.

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So you see it is imperative that you send a clear signal to patients about you and your office. You need to have consistency with your office, décor, pricing and service. This module is about you realizing that your office is an extension of you and you must formulate in your own mind how you want people to perceive you and what you do.

*Dress

Everyone dresses professionally, period. Your office is not a nightclub or an ashram; it is a place where everyone should feel comfortable so make sure there is no inappropriate attire. Strive for a quiet dignity whether the dress is a white lab coat and tie or more casual. If you want everyone wearing the same custom polo shirts you can go to places like Staff Shirts <info@allseasonsshirts.com>

*Answering the phone

Place a mirror on the phone. Make sure your person answering the phone is smiling. Whoever is answering phone should be very happy when it rings. In most cases it is the lifeline of the office. You can have a game where you put a dollar in the aforementioned gossip fine lunch jar every time the phone rings.

Do not put people on hold until you get their information. Be pleasant. Be warm, the person is probably in pain. Do not be distracted.

As you learn to confidently enjoy a practice, free from the shackles of insurance oppression, you will need to handle initial phone calls in a manner conducive to helping the patient to see why the way you run your office is the best way for everyone.

Initial Phone Call

Dr. Health's office, how may I help you?

I want to make an appointment.

Certainly, I can help you with that. Your name is?

Mr. Smith

Hello Mr. Smith, my name is Donna. What is it that's troubling you? (Get the patient invested. Also notice how the conversation is focused on the patient and unlike most other doctor's office the first question is not... what insurance do you have?)

Uh I hurt my back

Oh. Ok, well you'll soon be in good hands. When would you like to get in?

As soon as possible

(Even if this is your first patient in your career you must give the impression that you are packed. You can be the greatest doctor but if you seem wide open it can send the wrong message)

Let's see what I can do for you...I can get you in tomorrow. PAUSE...there's a 10 o'clock in the morning or a 4 in the afternoon, which is better for you.

Oh neither one really

SILENCE.. Well let's see, there is a 12 next Monday.

Oh, You know what I can make the 4 if I change an appointment.

That's great. What could be more important than getting yourself taken care of, right?

You're right. I'll be there. Oh do you take my insurance?

Yes, we work with you with all insurances. How it works is you pay for the treatment after the doctor takes care of you and we give you the receipt (never call it a superbill, for obvious reasons) to submit to your own insurance.

Oh you don't just do it?

We have found that it is much easier for the doctor to focus on helping you if each patient submits to his or her own insurance company than for us to submit to a hundred different ones. This helps to keep our costs down to you because we don't need to hire additional staff just to do what the you can do easier with the insurance that you chose. This way you're just paying for the doctor's expertise.

Well how much is the visit?

The initial visit is \$200 (whatever you charge) for an approximately hour long (50 minute) visit with the doctor. This includes your examination and treatment. The following visits are \$100 (half the price) for half hour (25 minute) visits.

\$200! An hour! Why does she need an hour? My last chiropractor saw me for ten minutes and charged \$30.

If you don't mind me asking how did that work out?

Well I'm still in pain.

Dr. Health needs to spend time with you and figure out what's wrong and which treatment is best for you.

I like that idea but that's expensive

(SILENCE), Really, may I ask compared to what?

Well I just can't afford that.

Well that's a shame because she is the best

I've heard but I don't have the money.

(SILENCE), If you like, I can have the doctor find someone more in your price range. Or, Mr. Smith, Did you know we do accept credit cards? (Optional: You heard right Mr. Smith, Dr. Health is the best and as you know you get what you pay for and you deserve the best don't you?)

Oh OK. I'm really hurting I'll be there.

Great, You'll be happy you did, and don't worry Dr. Health will take great care of you and give you answers. May I have your phone number in case I need to contact you?

We will see you tomorrow at 4. You can download the new patients forms from our website or you can come in 15 minutes early and fill out the forms. Do you know where we are located?

OPTIONAL: Mr. Smith if something opens up today would you like me to give you a call? Is this the best number to reach you at?

Like any relationship do not use trickery, do not use force and do not be desperate. What I mean by this last one is do not change your office policy for anyone. Be willing to send a patient somewhere else if there is conflict right away. Believe me the relationship wouldn't have gotten better. Always maintain your dignity whether you are just starting out, are well established or are now switching to a cash practice.

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*Greeting the new patient

A big hello and warm introduction will do wonders in getting the doctor / patient relationship (the subject of the next module) off to a tremendous start!

Whatever the receptionist is doing can be put on hold for 10 seconds. It is best if whoever greets the patient walks around and hands the patient introduction forms on a clipboard with a nice Dr. Your name pen (not one that says the name of a bank or drug company).

Greeting the new patient

1. Big smile and warm hello using patient's name and introduce yourself.
2. Unless you are on the phone stop whatever you are doing and put enthusiasm into your greeting...and mean it. This patient is the reason you are here! If you are on phone either put them on hold or just excuse yourself for a second and give the warm greeting. Whoever is on the phone will be impressed by this rare show of compassion in a doctor's office. (Sad but true)
3. Ask patient how she is feeling and did they find the office OK.
4. Ask the patient if they have downloaded the forms or would like to fill them out now
5. Instruct the patient to bring the forms up when finished.
6. Establish a warm but no nonsense relationship right away. Be like a good parent - caring but be strict.

Height & Weight

I suggest you use the old fashioned doctor scales. They are probably the most accurate and project the secure feeling of being in a doctor's office. I tried a space age scale that also measured body fat % and that did not work out well.

Another great way to make an impression on the patient while providing a unique and valuable service is to measure their proper shoe size. Have your assistant use the Brannock Device made in Syracuse, NY (315) 475 -9862. Sadly, this service is not performed much anymore and proper shoe size is paramount to overall health. A patient of mine required a hip replacement apparently from wearing the wrong shoe size for 30 years! Feel free to share this story to new patients.

Have your assistant explain how improper sized shoes can affect the muscles of the legs and cause feet, knee and hip problems along with affecting pelvic and spinal alignments. I guarantee your new patients will tell their family and friends how thorough your office is. Give your patients something to talk about. This is what builds your practice!

*Scheduling

A very successful chiropractor told me that he makes sure his staff, “never books two divas back to back.” Since he works in the theatre district in Manhattan he is being literal but his point is crucial to all of us. What this means is that there are some people whose nature it is to be demanding or as some people say, “high maintenance.” You and your staff have to know who these people are and be careful not to drain the doctor by putting people with, shall we say, difficult personalities back to back. A burnt out doctor is no good to anyone. You must schedule patients with difficult personalities next to those who are easier going.

Also you must block patients so the doctor can get into a rhythm. You do not want the doctor treating three patients then having an hour gap then one patient then another gap. You want to have back to back patients until a break is needed then back to back patients again. This allows the doctor to establish a rhythm and it allows patients to see other patients. This also helps patients to have confidence in their doctor who they see is busy.

You also rarely give the patient the exact time requested. I know this sounds odd but every time you deviate from this you will regret it. What appears to happen is that subconsciously the patient begins to assume the role of dictating his appointment time and then tries to dictate other aspects of your practice. As I said you have to be like a parent with your patients – loving but you are in charge. Offer the patient two times, one in the AM and one in the PM. If your patient asks for a 3 o’clock and even if she is your first patient in practice you say that you have a 2:30 available. NEVER give the time requested! You will thank me as you maintain control in your office by avoiding the temptation to spoil your patients. Spoiling makes for *rotten* children and *rotten* patients.

Lastly, consistency is important to healing and to office flow. So have the patient come in as close as possible to the same time every week. Let the patient know that “this is your time until you are better.” Do you see the psychological benefits to this? They have the consistency of knowing that, let’s say 2 pm every Monday is their time to be in your office... until they are better. The power of this truth to your practice and your patient’s well-being cannot be fully appreciated in this text. This is a practice builder for you and a health builder for your patient.

*Cash Procedures

It's not really just cash, although certain restaurants have that policy and that's what they get, no questions asked. This is not recommended, however. You simply want to get paid by the person you did the work on at the time of service whether it is a check, credit card or cash.

In reality it is the way every other business works! Get rid of the inferiority complex about asking to get paid for the hard work you did. (Make sure you did work hard!) Feel free to confidently ask, "Will you be paying by cash, check or credit card?"

Make it easy for patients. Accept credit cards, even American Express. They charge you more but it is better than the discounted rate you receive from insurance companies.

If the patient is coming in more than once a week have him pay for the whole week up front, not at the end of the week. This leads us to the first rule of payment for service:

Let no one walk out the door owing you money!

There is a principle in business that the value of the service decreases after it is rendered. If you allow a patient to leave owing you money her mind will play tricks that you really weren't that good and you charged too much. Especially if she walks by a store window and sees something else she would rather spend the money on.

Make sure patients pay at the time or mail you a check ASAP. This keeps the relationship clean.

Give them their receipt (I know it is called a superbill, but always call it a receipt to your patient. No one likes to get a "superbill.") with all your information on it and make sure you have properly filled in the diagnosis, and marked the correct procedural codes. If they do not pay then and there, hold on to their receipt until next visit.

Lastly, it is one thing to have the confidence to have what is called a cash practice but you also want to make it as financially feasible for your patients as possible. It is helpful to let your patient know about Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA) through their employer and Health Savings Account Programs. (HSA)

Have your patients check with their financial adviser. If they don't have one perhaps you can recommend two in your area. Again you are giving more than they expect and helping them and the financial planners. The more you give the more you get. This is another example of increasing your service and making yourself more valuable. This makes you a leader in your community!

Here is some basic information about FSAs and HSAs

Flexible spending account

A **flexible spending account (FSA)**, also known as a **flexible spending arrangement**, is one of a number of tax-advantaged financial accounts that can be set up through a cafeteria plan of an employer in the United States. An FSA allows an employee to set aside a portion of earnings to pay for qualified expenses as established in the cafeteria plan, most commonly for medical expenses but often for dependent care or other expenses. Money deducted from an employee's pay into an FSA is not subject to payroll taxes, resulting in substantial payroll tax savings. One significant disadvantage to using an FSA is that funds not used by the end of the plan year are lost to the employee, known as the "use it or lose it" rule.

The most common type of flexible spending account, the **medical expense FSA** (also **medical FSA** or **health FSA**), is similar to a health savings account (HSA) or a health reimbursement account (HRA). However, while HSAs and HRAs are almost exclusively used as components of a consumer driven health care plan, medical FSAs are commonly offered with more traditional health plans as well. In addition, funds in a health savings account are not lost when the plan year is over, unlike funds in an FSA. Paper forms or an FSA debit card, also known as a Flexcard, may be used to access the account funds.

Health Savings Account

What are the benefits of an HSA?

High Deductible Health Plan:

Costs less than more "traditional" copay plans.

Provides quality health insurance.

One calendar-year deductible per family.

HSA Savings:

- Used to meet your deductible.
- Tax deductible off of gross income.
- Grow tax-deferred.
- NEVER taxed when used for qualified medical expenses.
- Rolls over year after year -- no "use it or lose it".
- Portable, goes with you wherever you go.

HSA Savings can also be used for:

- Health insurance premiums when you're between jobs.
- Qualified long-term care premiums.
- Medicare premiums and out-of-pocket expenses.
- Living expenses after age 65. (pay ordinary income taxes)

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This module is about your office being an extension of you. Decorate the office as you like and make the work environment as professional as you can while being warm and inviting. The most important aspect is that you make it how you like it not and not how you think someone else would. Be honest with yourself, you have to anyway because being a phony never works out well. You are in your office more than anyone else so make it pleasant and comfortable for you, first and foremost.

You and your office should have a quiet dignity while being a place of healing. Invest in your office in terms of equipment, aesthetics and functionality.

Invest in your office just as you should in yourself. Be a walking advertisement for the lifestyle you are promoting and let your office promote you also. Show the glaring need for what you do. In general, patients do not care about chiropractic, applied kinesiology, SOT; they care about themselves and if you are the one they are hiring to take care of them, they care about YOU.

You want to instill uniqueness about you and your office that keeps your patients talking about both in an enthusiastic way. Obviously, the high quality of your care rates #1 on the list. However simple little things help fuel the fire and it does not always need to be a full court press regarding chiropractic.

For example, I like to use a hologram in my office where a nickel appears to be floating and when the patient reaches for it they wave past the image. I then have them look deeper into the hole and see where the nickel really is. I then make the analogy that this is what has been going on with their prior health care. People were mistaking the mirage for where the problem was when in actuality they needed to look deeper to see where the problem is really coming from.

I initially bought these to explain what I do to the children I treat but as it turns out it works great for adults to comprehend why their low back pain might be coming from their upper cervical or cranial region. (The hologram I use is 3-D Mirascope from Toysmith)

Kinetic perpetual motion toys are also good because when people see these things that defy logic I will make the comparison between this and my applied kinesiology and chiropractic treatments. They both seem impossible and mystical and yet the proof is right in front of us, and both are based in science! We are all big kids and a picture, or a demonstration, is truly worth a thousand words!

This is not about promoting chiropractic or applied kinesiology or any system. It is not about having chiropractic posters and spinal x-rays plastered all over the office. It is about promoting you and why YOU are the best doctor for your patients. I am not saying for you to talk like a braggart saying you are the world's best doctor. But you and your staff must instill in your patients that you are the best doctor in the world for them! Even if you refer them to someone else who perhaps can accomplish something that you couldn't or who is a better fit for this patient you are still the best doctor for that person because YOU made that vital healing connection.

This Module is about making your office a healing haven for your patients and for yourself. Make it a beautiful sanctuary where the patients feel that they matter; where they feel they are important and that they know they are in the right place. Make your office the kind of office you would want to go if you were being treated. Keep insurance out of the health care equation and allow the doctor/patient relationship to be at the center of the healing process and for your office to be the place where this all happens.

Rules For A Successful Office

Cleanliness — everyone chips in to keep the office as neat and clean as possible. Act like patients are coming to your home.

Courteous- treat everyone the way you would like to be treated. Remember patients are in pain and may act out. Be like a good parent – strict but loving.

Energetic- be full of positive energy. We are all here for the patient and this is where they come for help with their problems, not to hear ours.

Smile- this is a happy place and it all starts with a smile.

Respect- treat everyone with respect and make sure you are being treated with respect. Dress, speak and act respectfully.

Relax- work hard in a calm manner. Enjoy relaxed productivity. Remember, a problem cannot exist if a solution did also exist.

Teamwork- we all need to work together in a spirit of harmony to make this the best healing office it can be.

We must all hang together or most assuredly we shall hang separately. ~Benjamin Franklin

