



Gifts

Gifts can come in many forms, such as material things to fill a need, a return for a favor, or giving one just to be nice. Some gifts may come disguised, such as being born into poverty, resulting in a strong desire to succeed. Oprah Winfrey is a good example of this. Gifts can also be discovered if one is seeking to advance their knowledge, such as wisdom imparted from a lifetime of experience.

One of the most profound gifts that I have received is that of the knowledge and wisdom gained from both medical and dental practitioners who preceded me in their quest for the truth that have become mentors. Early on in my professional career, I sought out a more holistic and biological pathway of patient care. I was realizing even back then the important connection between one's oral and general health. At that time, the avenues supporting this paradigm of care were scarce. However, I did find a handful of dentists of a similar mindset, and we learned from each other as well as from those who we considered our mentors.

The Gift of Knowledge

“Wisdom is not a product of schooling but of the lifelong attempt to acquire it.” Albert Einstein

The following are the key mentors who have bestowed gifts upon me that have influenced the manner in which patients are treated within the Dental Wellness Center:

Dr. Paul Keyes: “Inform/educate patients about the nature of oral infections, specific bacterial risk factors, how tissue damage occurs, and the possibility of transmission of organisms from person to person - treat it, monitor it; maintain it.” I learned from Dr. Keyes the important interplay between the dentist as an educator and therapist, and the patient as both a student and therapist as well, each with defined roles leading to the patient gaining and maintaining a healthy oral environment.

Dr. Bob Barkley: “The health of the relationship between you and your patient is more important than their oral health, because if you don't have the former, you'll never achieve the latter.” I learned from him the importance of transparent and authentic relationships between the dentist and patient.

Dr. Robert Lee, who coined the term *Bioesthetics*, as “The study or theory of the beauty of living things in their natural forms and functions.” He taught me how a healthy mouth looks and functions, and the intimate relationship between these two components of our oral system. This

knowledge allows me to be able to diagnose and treat patients who have not yet been introduced to this ideal, and to resolve the pain that can ensue from their teeth not having a harmonious relationship with their jaw joints (TMJ's).

Each of these mentors gave me gifts of knowledge from their personal research that was life-changing for me, my patients and teammates. Their contributions have become integrated within the Dental Wellness Center's model of higher purpose that offers its patients improved health, both microbiologically and physiologically.

This is why our new patient entry process commits ample time for patient and dentist to get to know each other and have time for all questions to be fully answered, allowing for the beginning of a trusting relationship. Thank you, Dr. Barkley!

Through Dr. Keyes work, the roles of the practitioner and patient become defined, as each learns the individuality of the patient's oral microbiome that establishes their mutual responsibilities in attaining and maintaining an optimum oral environment. Thank you, Dr. Keyes!

Dr. Lee, a biologist and dentist, researched people with beautiful, natural teeth who rarely, if ever, needed the services of a dentist and found that they all shared common attributes. As a dentist trained by Dr. Lee in understanding the underlying factors behind these attributes, I use them as guidelines to improve a person's function and esthetics, relieving symptoms such as headaches, head, neck and shoulder pain as well as vertigo and tinnitus (ringing in the ears). Thank you, Dr. Lee!

My dental practice is a combination of my learning experiences through the years and the collective "gifts" received from some of the greatest minds in the field. I am most grateful to these mentors, as they have helped me to develop the type of holistic dental practice that I always dreamed of, culminating in the Dental Wellness Center. My dental team and I are proud of the many valuable services offered to our patients to improve both their oral and general health.

"If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants." Isaac Newton

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." Winston Churchill