

## The Way You Run Your Practice—A Philosophy

While it may seem unusual and unnecessary to some practitioners, taking time to discuss your Philosophy of Practice with your staff is an invaluable exercise to promote teamwork and professional pride. **Philosophy** is defined in Webster's New World Dictionary as "the principles underlying conduct or thought." What is your philosophy concerning the art and science of Dentistry? What are your principles? What do you think about the profession? How are you determined to conduct your practice? And how do you communicate your philosophy to your dental team and seek to understand their thoughts about the practice?

The following statement is an actual example of the way one general practitioner, and his staff expressed their Philosophy of Practice after several in-depth discussions.

### **Our practice will be a place where:**

- Patients come first. Every action, every word, every effort will be directed toward making the patients feel like our reason for being. They are!
- We work as a team in which all members feel important, needed, and appreciated.
- Appreciation is expressed verbally and in non-verbal ways that say, "We need and support one another. I'm glad you're in this with me."
- Every team member pulls her/his share of the workload and then asks co-workers, "How may I help you?"
- People ask questions and are responsible for learning, proactively seeking new information instead of passively waiting to be taught.
- The intent and commitment of each team member is to give---to patients and to each other---so that doing for others is the focus of our practice. Only by giving may we hope to receive.
- Team members work problems openly, asking for counseling and mediation when necessary.
- Diversity is welcome.
- We respect each other. When a teammate suggests a way to improve the systems, organization, or work in the office, we listen respectfully, whether or not we agree. All new ideas are given a hearing.
- No idea is too small or insignificant and there is no such thing as a "dumb question".
- We hear laughter and friendly interchange among team members when time and place permit, but we also have quiet time while work gets done.
- We work **"with"** our dentist(s) rather than **"for"** him/her/them.
- We are committed to 100% error-free performance. We analyze the mistakes that do occur in order to avoid repetition rather than seeking to place blame.