

Young Dentist Foundation

Arjun Kachhala explains the rationale behind the formation of the Young Dentist Foundation, and introduces his one-day seminar programme for young dentists at Dentistry LIVE

WHEN I started vocational training almost 10 years ago, dentistry for a newly qualified graduate was incredibly different. Most dentists who worked in practice expected to eventually own (or part own) their own place (or places) and retire after a few decades. The economy was predictable and vibrant and the 'business' of dentistry was very different to how it is today. Things did seem a lot simpler.

Modern dentistry was in its youth. Careers in dentistry have changed; current challenges facing young associates and practice owners include graduate debt and increasing amounts of administration respectively. Despite the fact that we face challenging and more complex times, I think this is the best time ever to be a dentist. It is extremely exciting. There are many opportunities to practice contemporary theories on leadership, business management and to utilise technologies in ways that would have seemed alien at the turn of the century.

Modern dentistry is maturing. For today's young dentists, it can often seem a confusing, intimidating and complicated industry, with no established reputable framework on where to get the best advice from. Messages and promises are leaping out of every dental magazine or publication. Despite this plethora of information, many dentists and practice

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owners I have spoken with are very confused and anxious. They have problems with the direction they're trying to take their careers or practices in, or have issues with their lack of self confidence or clarity. Other people are just plain bored with dentistry and disillusioned with their jobs, within only the first few years.

Becoming a better dentist isn't just about clinical courses and practical skills, it's about the 'soft skills' like communication and personality and it's about being able to think laterally and being creative.

Importantly, it's also about patience. I often receive emails and phone calls from young associates and practice owners on this subject. I have nothing against ambition, but too many people expect success too soon, which in turn causes disillusionment. Getting good at dentistry, seeing the bigger picture and progressing your career at a sensible pace, with realistic expectations of what can be achieved in a short period of time is far wiser.

I am always amazed even now at how little value some people put on their careers. For example, I bumped into an old friend recently who has a thriving referral practice. He looked unhappy when I asked him how he was getting on, citing that he had no drive, he had enough money and that he was very bored! We all need a purpose and direction and pursuit of money clearly isn't enough, but I fear many people go

into dentistry expecting that financial success alone will fulfil them. In my experience, having a worthwhile vision and enjoying the journey is far more nourishing.

Attributes

Vision and patience are very important attributes for any young apprentice. I believe there is a tremendous untapped potential in all of us. Most of the time, we are too busy, distracted, idle or ignorant to acknowledge this. The secret is having the correct mentality and believing that there are no limitations - 'whatever the mind of a man can conceive and believe it can achieve.' Nothing stands between us and our desires except a lack of definite purpose. Once you realise this, nobody can stop you.

This desire, having faith in your desires, making firm plans and persisting with them (despite setbacks or failures) are just some of the advice discussed in a book I would recommend as a must read. The book is *Think and Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill and I have read it three times already. Despite the questionable title, this book had a great impact on my own mentality and my life journey changed as a result. It was written almost 100 years ago and every book on management that has been written since has its roots in this original. This book gave me the foundation I needed to clarify my life/career





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desires. Ask yourself: 'What do I really want to do and how will I achieve it?' My simple advice to you all would be to start from here and see where it takes you. (You can pick the book up for a few pounds on Amazon and it would be great to hear what you think about it).

With this as a backdrop, last year I was asked to put together a programme specifically designed for the young (and the young at heart) within our profession. The more I looked into the challenges and the potential of young dentists, the more I realised the need for a body of national support, that could deliver essential guidance and support to dentists in the early stages of their career. University teaches us the basic skills but it is only the start of the process.

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It is for this reason that the new Young Dentist Foundation (YDF) has been set up. This is the first and only organisation of its kind and I feel this is an exciting opportunity to nurture our youth, because times are changing and dentists require additional skills from a single source that will enable them to cope with the new world order.

On Saturday 26 May as part of Dentistry LIVE at the QEII Centre in London, the Young Dentist Foundation will have its first ever symposium entitled 'How to succeed in high street dentistry'. We're going to provide a high quality, innovative and entertaining one-day programme specifically directed to the needs of young dentists in the early years of their career (by the way, you can also attend if you consider yourself somewhat 'older'!). Demand is expected to be high, so eventually we're hoping

to diversify the YDF into regional road shows, clinical courses and an annual conference. Industry leaders have kindly accepted our invitation to speak on subjects such as 'ethical' selling of private treatment options in a mixed practice, buying or setting up a practice, business planning, tax planning, career options and pathways for periodontics, social media for dentistry, branding, design and marketing, leadership and creating and implementing your career vision.

I was hopeful of putting together the most successful and inspiring group of speakers that could cover a wide variety of subjects to enthuse our industry's future potential!

How to succeed in high street dentistry

Allow me to give you a brief glimpse of what you can expect. Our keynote speakers **Rahul** and **Bhavna Doshi** are true pioneers within the industry and have a growing international reputation too. They were the first dentists on the UK version of TV programme *Extreme Makeover* and have their own practice and training institute at The Perfect Smile Studios in Hertford. Their ideas and success are truly infectious and they have become the benchmark for success within our industry. Their opening lecture, 'The Simple steps to a successful, fulfilled and profitable career in dentistry' is one which I have probably heard a dozen times and each time I pick up something completely new. So if you want to know about how to create a lasting vision for your career, this is definitely not one to be missed.

Arun Mehra runs a nationally respected accounting firm that specialises in dentistry. His knowledge of dentistry is unique, not surprising given that Arun and his wife also own three practices. His awareness of business planning, buying and setting up dental practices is extremely valuable, so his lecture is an ideal opportunity to benefit from his experience.

Anoup Nandra runs a mixed practice in Birmingham. He is a young up-and-coming entrepreneur with many inventive ideas about how to maximise treatment uptake in a mixed practice. Don't miss his talk if you're an associate looking for some inspiration.

Mark Oborn and **Adam Hampson** are both respected industry leaders in marketing, branding and social media for dentistry. They'll both be offering the most-up-to-date lecture on this subject in their afternoon presentations. Adam runs a successful web design firm in Nottingham and has a passion for success that needs to be seen to be believed. Mark offers the most interesting, relevant and targeted insight into social media for dentistry and is must see

for this conference.

Finally, if you're an associate looking to specialise or if you simply need more insight into your career pathway, you must hear from **Matt Perkins**. At only 31 years of age, Matt was Young Dentist of the Year at the 2011 *Dentistry Awards* and is a specialist periodontist running his own referral practice. More importantly, he is tremendously engaging and has a terrifically entertaining and enjoyable lecture style.

Achieve your goals

In closing, what has come across so strongly in the ten years since I qualified is that at times, dentistry is indeed a tough profession to be involved with. However, somebody famous once said that nothing worth doing is ever easy. Dentistry is a land of opportunity, especially in current economic times. If you work hard, have a good vision and are willing to make short-term sacrifices, you will succeed. My advice is to select your goal and pursue it with all your might. You will undoubtedly experience difficulties and make mistakes, but sooner or later you will achieve your goals.

I'm really excited about the pedigree of speakers at the conference and I know they will leave a lasting memory on all the delegates! This is the Young Dentist Foundation (for the young and the young at heart). ■

Book tickets for the Young Dentist Foundation symposium 'How to succeed in high street dentistry' at the QEII Conference Centre in London on 26 May by visiting www.youngdentist.co.uk. Tickets are priced at £149 +VAT, with a lower rate for student dentists.

Dentistry
LIVE INCORPORATING WORLD AESTHETIC CONGRESS
LONDON, 2012
QEII CONFERENCE CENTRE
25th - 26th MAY

The event is part of Dentistry LIVE - a world-class general dentistry symposium, incorporating conference tracks on implants, aesthetics, hygiene and therapy, endodontics, management, social media and much more, running on Friday 25 and Saturday 26 May. For more information on the programme, visit www.dentistrylive.co.uk or call 0800 371 652.