



19 September 2023  
Dear Prof Wood

I write this letter as a retired prosthodontist with many years of experience. As I look back on my career, I often say: "I wish had been told this when I started on the path of my career in dentistry."

We live in an exciting era where knowledge is available at our fingertips. I never had the benefit of Google, YouTube, ChatGPT and others. Today, anything you want to know is available at the press of a button.

The only constant in life is change but, as with any ocean current, it is how you set the sails. It is how we deal with the challenges we face that is important. Problems are a sign of life. The reality is that we really don't know what we don't know and that is where tapping into the experience of someone else becomes invaluable.

Artificial intelligence is becoming the norm in this day and age – and so I turned to ChatGPT to ask the question: "Why does a dentist need coaching?"

I got a fascinating answer from ChatGPT which I will share with you here.

**Dentists, like professionals in many other fields, may seek coaching for several reasons:**

**Improving clinical skills:** Dentistry is a constantly evolving field with new techniques and technologies. Dentists may seek coaching to stay up to date with the latest advancements and improve their clinical skills.

**Patient communication:** Effective communication is crucial in dentistry. Dentists may receive coaching to enhance their skills, especially when discussing treatment plans, explaining procedures and addressing patient concerns.

**Practice management:** Running a dental practice involves various aspects including financial management, team leadership and patient scheduling. Coaching can help dentists streamline their practice management processes for better efficiency and profitability.

**Patient satisfaction:** Happy patients are more likely to return and refer others. Dentists may seek coaching to enhance patient satisfaction by providing a positive experience, reducing anxiety and ensuring quality care.

**Career growth:** Dentists may aspire to grow their careers by taking on new challenges such as opening multiple practices or specialising in a particular field of dentistry. Coaching can provide guidance on career development strategies.

**Work-life balance:** Balancing a demanding dental practice with one's personal life can be challenging. Coaches can help dentists find ways to manage stress, delegate tasks and achieve a better work-life balance.

**Goal achievement:** Like anyone else, dentists have personal and professional goals. Coaches can assist dentists in setting and, ultimately, achieving these goals, whether they relate to clinical skills, income targets or personal development.

In summary, coaching can benefit dentists by helping them improve their clinical skills, manage their practices more effectively, enhance patient relationships and achieve their career and personal goals. It's a way to invest in continuous improvement and professional development.

I end off by saying that "If you do what you always did, you will get what you always got!" Something has to change. The change begins with us. We have to be brave to embrace change and enjoy the benefits.

I encourage my colleagues to take this recommendation of coaching and mentoring seriously.

Yours sincerely,  
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