# Issues of Development

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*Peter Drucker writes, "Any orga-ization develops people; it either forms them or deforms them." All organizations develop people in one direction or the other. They either help persons grow or stunt them.*

*A dental office has an implied choice. If it wants to operate in a Pro-Active Health Model as opposed to a Crisis Driven Model, it must become internally what it wants to offer to those who come to it for care. Behaviorally it has no choice but to become congruent. This impacts the organization operationally. It starts with the dentist and his/her developmental relationship with the team.*

*From time to time, my work in coaching dentists and teams has led me to ask dentists and their team members alike: "So, what's in your job description? What do you get paid to do?"*

*Development needs to be an integral part of understanding them-selves and their role in the lives of others. If I may digress, many dentists react to this with: "That is not what I signed on to do when I decided to become a dentist. No one told me I would be in the 'development business.' I thought I would just be fixing teeth."*

*Within the framework of Dr. Pankey's Cross of Dentistry there are at least three acknowledgements of the responsibility of development. One is in the Know Yourself arm of the cross, another in the Know Your Patient arm, and the third in the Know Your Work arm where he mentions the importance of knowing your work technically and psychologically. This is foundational.*

*Behaviorally we know or need to learn that we cannot take another person where we have not been ourselves. To me, this message is trying to tell us that we, as dentists, need to be willing to expand our job description first, prior to asking another person to expand theirs. Lead by example! It is a continuous process of discovery – continuous learning moments with self and others.*

*What do we know about developing ourself and others? Really we know quite a bit. We certainly know what not to do, and the don'ts are often easier to spell out than the dos. But let's be congruent and focus on Strength! First, to become more of who we are, it is essential to begin with acknowledging our strengths and using those strengths as often as possible. A major thrust of Development is to arrange things so people can do a lot of what they do well.*

*Another way of putting it is, we develop the talent and manage the weaknesses.*

*Do not ignore the weaknesses, but rather find strategies to accomplish the goals without hampering the use of strengths. By the way, this is learning new behavior for most of us! Dr. Peter Drucker says of great companies, "They get their strengths together and make the weaknesses irrelevant." One can expect adults to develop manners and behavior and learn new skills and knowledge based on strength. It is their most effective way of learning. We do best to use people's personalities the way they are, not the way we would like them to be. Second, take an expanded view of learning, growth, and the development of people. When you think about yourself and others, think career and longer timelines. One has to learn specific skills for a specific job, but development is more than that; it has to be for a career and for a life. The specific job must fit into the longer-term goal. To be continued…* ■

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