

## *Dr Sherwood Tucker DDS MAGD*

Hi, I am Sherwood.

When I think back to a much earlier time in life, it always amazes me how I became a dentist.

When I graduated from high school, as far as I was concerned I was finished with school.

So when an opportunity came along to join the United States Air Force, I jumped on it.

While I was in the Air Force, my training had me lined up to be a nurse's assistant. However, due to some strange circumstance, a story for another time, I was sent to dental specialist school after which I ended up in the Philippine Islands for 2 years.

During that 2 years working in the dental clinic assisting the dentists, I became so interested and excited about dentistry that I knew exactly what I wanted to be.

After I was honorably discharged, I spent a few years working at various jobs and completing my undergraduate work after which I was accepted at Northwestern University dental school.

After graduation, I went right in the private practice in Pennsylvania. I often wonder if this was the right thing to do at that time but as it turns out things worked out pretty well.

It certainly wasn't that way from the beginning but fortunately I was wise enough to take many continuing education courses and fortunate enough to meet a Texas dentist who taught me what it takes to have a successful dental practice.

It was an easy but from that point on I never worried about new patients or free time or money. As a matter of fact, I discovered that the last time I scheduled with patients, the more productive I was.

In fact, I love to play golf so Monday and Wednesday I worked from about 9 to 6, Tuesday and Thursday from 8 to noon and did not schedule patients on Friday Saturday or Sunday.

Fortunately, I found 2 ladies who were excited to work in a dental office. In addition, once I learned to trust them and let them handle most everything except working on the patient, things got easier and

easier. Of course, I paid them twice as much as any other dental assistant in town, but they were well worth it.

There are many things that I learned by spending time with other successful dentists learning how they were able to provide their patients with top-quality work and at the same time be proud and happy to do it.

Take dentures for example. When we graduate from dental school, most dentists have a rudimentary knowledge of making dentures. However, once out in practice we discover it is not as easy as it seemed in dental school. In my case, I learned all the reasons why most dentures don't work very well and how to fix that so that patients were happy with dentures.

There are many other things that I learned that made my life easier and patients' happier but that's a story for another time.

In the late 90s, I sold my practice in Pennsylvania and moved to Florida. This was my 2<sup>nd</sup> practice that I started from scratch but the results turned out to be much different. Once I open the doors it was a very short period of time and I had all the new patients I ever needed or even wanted.

Approximately 10 years ago I sold my practice in Florida and I took a job on a remote Indian reservation in South Dakota and I have spent a good part of that time learning all the ins and outs and the whys of getting new patients and social marketing.

Now I am in a position to share this information so that I can help out other dentists who are struggling to build their practice and worry about new patients as well as other various problems.