

DECISION

VS.

CHOICE

**HOW TO DRASTICALLY INCREASE CASE
ACCEPTANCE AND CREATE LOYAL
LIFELONG PATIENTS**

**Discover what matters most to your
patient and find a way to make it happen.**

DR. BRIAN HARRIS

A MOMENT OF **CLARITY**

Two years ago, I found myself sitting in the waiting room of a local Jiffy Lube as they changed the oil in my wife's SUV. To kill time, I started reading a worn out copy of Sports Illustrated. I finished the article and was sitting in silence trying to figure out the best way to politely say NO when they walked in to tell me my air filter is dirty and that I NEED to change it. Every time I go to get my oil changed it's the same pitch... "Sir, I just wanted to come show you how dirty your air filter is. It's really dirty... we recommend that you change it to keep your car running efficiently." Really? Do I really NEED to change it? What if I didn't? Is it really that big of a deal? Would it really effect the performance of the car if I don't? Are they just telling me it's dirty because they are wanting to up-sell me and hit their monthly goals? Either way, I'm not falling for it this time. Just then, the door opens and "Dave" walks in and sits two chairs away from me. He leans back in the chair and crosses one leg over the other, but what he says next catches me totally off guard.

“Mr. Harris... beautiful car, how do you like the new body style?” I was expecting the hard sell on how my brand new car was going to explode if I didn't change the air filter or that my windshield wipers were going to cause an accident because they were defective. We exchange in some small talk for a few minutes and then he continues; “Mr. Harris... it's our job to keep that beautiful car running efficiently for you. Some of our customers come in regularly for just a quick oil change and want to keep things simple, while others are looking for ways to be proactive and keep their car in tip top shape. Either way, we are here to help you, **just let us know how you want to do business with us.**” Holding the air filter up with one hand he says, “This is your air filter... it's not in horrible shape and you can probably get another six months out of it, but a new one would be ideal. If you would like us to change it out for you today. I also noticed you are running conventional oil, which is a great product, but if you are looking for something that will do better in this 110 degree heat, most of our customers are running synthetic. The CHOICE is yours Mr. Harris, we are just here to serve you.”

So what do you think I did? Did I change the air filter and upgrade the oil? Or did I stick with my plan of not falling for it?

Dictionary.com explains the difference between making a **DECISION** and making a **CHOICE**.

DECISION

The act of or need for making up ones mind.

CHOICE

The right, power or opportunity to choose.

At first glance, it may seem like the definitions are exactly the same, but there is a difference. The key to case acceptance is to stop forcing your patients to make DECISIONS based on logic and facts, and empower them make CHOICES based on their emotions and what they want for themselves. In this short eBook I will lay out some simple things that I do to empower my patients to CHOOSE and how it has helped me create success in my practice.

THE PRESENT

HOW WE TREATMENT PLAN IN PRIVATE PRACTICE

1. "Complete" and "Thorough" exam discussing recurrent decay, caries, diastemas, fractures, deep pockets, restorations, failing and leaking margins, shadowing and the different phases of treatment. We could also possibly take some intraoral camera photos.
2. Give the patient all treatment options with the pros and cons of each option.
3. Give the associated cost for each procedure on a dental software print out and present it to the patient with fees and the insurance breakdown.

CURRENT VERBIAGE

"Mr. Jones, I see that your upper molar has a mesial fracture in it and if we don't fix it soon it could lead to a root canal and a crown and be really painful."

"Mary, it looks like you have some leaking margins around a filling and we need to replace it before the cavity gets any bigger."

"Joe, if you would like to close the spaces in your teeth we can do a porcelain veneer to cover the tooth and to be bonded in place."

THE DILEMA

EMOTION VS. LOGIC

CONFUSED CONSUMERS DO NOTHING

If someone walks out of your office without scheduling or they "need to talk with their spouse," it means that they are confused, therefore they are doing nothing. You asked them to make a DECISION by using logic and reasoning and they are not sure it's what they want to do, so they do nothing. You are confusing your patients with dental talk and logical explanations of what they need.

In 2002 Neuroscientist Antonio Damasio studied a small almond shaped section of the brain called the AMYGDALA. He discovered that this part of the brain is responsible for making decisions in life.

His research proved that humans make decisions based on EMOTION and then we justify them with LOGIC.

This is the reason we need to stop telling our patients what they need and start finding out what they want. Let them make the CHOICE. If you try to convince your patient that they need something using facts alone, it's not an effective way to communicate.

They may NEED veneers to restore their chipped teeth...but they **WANT** them to have confidence again when they smile. They may NEED periodontal treatment to restore health but they **WANT** it to have fresh breath and self confidence with their significant other.

THE FUTURE

STOP TREATMENT PLANNING AND START TREATMENT COMMUNICATING

The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new.

-SOCRATES

In order to maximize case acceptance, you need to be willing to make changes and get outside your comfort zone. Here are six steps to mastering case acceptance and building strong and lasting relationships with your patients:

- 1. CONNECT**
- 2. BREAK DOWN ALL BARRIERS**
- 3. DISCOVERY**
- 4. ASK WHAT MATTERS MOST**
- 5. FIGURE OUT A WAY TO MAKE IT HAPPEN**
- 6. NURTURE THE RELATIONSHIP**

STEP #1

CONNECT

RESPECT is earned

HONESTY is appreciated

TRUST is gained

LOYALTY is returned

BE YOURSELF

- No scripts
- No agenda
- Sit In front of the patient in a relaxed position
- Welcome them to the office and ask what you can do to help them
- Listen

STEP #2

BREAK DOWN ALL BARRIERS

SAMPLE VERBAIGE

"My main goal today is to figure out what it is that you want, and find a way to make it happen"

"My patients work with me in different ways, some come in and want to do everything in a few visits as possible while others like to segment treatment into phases. When it comes time to discuss your needs, just let me know how you would like to structure it."

"At some time today we will talk about the cost of treatment. At that time I want you to be open and honest about what you want to spend. My ultimate goal is to help you get what you want, and do it within a budget that feels comfortable. If we start getting outside that comfort zone, speak up so we can rework the game plan."

"If we recommend something today that you know you need but you are not ready to move forward yet, just let us know. We are here to serve you and work within your budget."

STEP #3

DISCOVERY

PHOTOS are the key to successful patient communication. Do less talking and explaining and more showing and educating.



Use normal words... avoid dental language.

Instead of saying you have a fractured tooth, say that part of the tooth is cracking...and then show them.

Instead of talking about recession and deep pockets, let them know that the gums are pulling away from the teeth and they are losing some bone around the teeth.

Find out what they want and show them what it would look like. The 20 min mock up with resin is a great tool for diagnosing. Less explaining and more **SHOWING**.



STEP #4

ASK "WHAT MATTERS MOST TO YOU TODAY?"

"Selling is talking people into things they don't want. Servant selling is bending over backwards to help them determine what's best for them"

- Rory Vaden

Just ASK and when they tell you... **LISTEN!**

STEP #5

FIGURE OUT A WAY TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

I was once taught that the goal to successful treatment communication is to figure out the patients budget before you present treatment. Remember... not everyone wants to drive a Mercedes... some people are shopping for a Honda so stop trying to sell them the Mercedes.

Verbiage I use:

"Some of my patients like to get everything done in one visit so they dont have to keep coming back, and others like to split things up in a few appointments and work within a budget. What makes the most sense for you?"

"Do you have a certain budget you are trying to work with? "

** Never be offended if someone wants to negotiate fees... it's a sign that they are ready to buy! It's your job to figure out the best way to meet them where they are financially and get it done. Get creative.

STEP #6

NURTURE THE RELATIONSHIP

Success in business compounds over time just like interest does with money. Take time to nurture relationships. Put in the time now and it will make a massive difference in the long run. Here are some of the things I do to keep my relationships strong with my patients:

1. Text them that evening to make sure they are doing ok after any treatment. "Care Calls" are dead..."Care Texts" are the key:)
2. Write a thank you note to every new patient that you see. Mention something personal from the visit that day, It will help you remember and connect with them and it will let them know you really do care.
3. Call patients by their first name...**ALWAYS**.
4. Give out your cell phone number. Being available in a world full of automated systems is huge.

Let's Remember:

Stop TREATMENT PLANNING and Start
TREATMENT COMMUNICATING

DECISION

Stop having your patients make decisions.....

CHOICE

Empower them to make choices...

brian@harrisdental.com

[@drbranharris](https://www.instagram.com/drbranharris)
