Multi-Generational Workforce

By Ryan Rutar, NDHA President

How many times have we thought to ourselves, “Dang that young employee is always in a real hurry to leave.” or “That older employee doesn’t know what he/she is talking about.” Is this just me?...I don’t think so. We all have our misunderstandings of trying to figure out the different generations that are working in the dental office. Would you be interested to know that millennials consider it a reward to get off work early? How about that Baby boomers love credit for doing something well? When we understand how the different generations think, we have an easier time understanding what motivates them, and where they are coming from.

Now days we are getting into a place where there are multiple generations within the work force. The Millennials (Born 1981-2000) are starting to come into the work place, replacing the Traditionalists (Born 1900-1945) and Baby Boomers (Born 1946-1964) that are leaving the work force. We still have the generation X (Born 1965 to 1980) in there that are making up the 4th work group in the dental office. For the first time in history we have up to 4 generations working together. Sometimes it can run smoothly and other times it can be rough waters.

Since most of the work force consist of Baby Boomers, Gen Xers, and Millennials, these will be the 3 generations that I will focus on. If you are a Baby Boomer (ages 53-71), you came about from your parents coming home from war and being one of the large generations to come around. You saw your parents work hard and were considered the “Me” generation, because for the first time in history parents were able to give their kids about anything money could buy. You were one to change the trajectory from the traditionalist era into a more liberal view point from civil rights, to woman’s rights. You were
Surprisingly every generation looks upon the next generation as entitled and spoiled and not up to the job. I think that if we take the time to understand where people come from and how society may have shaped them in the era that they grew up in, we may better comprehend how to work with people of different experiences. Baby Boomers have wisdom, so be sure to ask them and use them. However, make sure you are worthy of the title and don’t take it for granted. Gen Xer’s are great independent workers and will find a way to do it more efficiently. However, you work in a group, so take the time to hear people out. Millennials are anxious to learn and develop any way that they can. They are excited to help and will need your reassurance to succeed. However, you can’t be in a hurry to skip to the top, you have to follow the steps and gain experience too. It’s not all about how much you know in books. If we remember we are all different and can use those differences to make a better experience for all workers and patients, the waves will be a lot smoother.

**Ryan Rutar**

Ryan D. Rutar, RDH, BSDH, MA  
NDHA President & Delegate
• **Employer of the Year Award:** recognizes an individual who employs a dental hygienist and has created/maintained a supportive workplace for the dental hygienist. Recipients of the award should display respect and recognition of the dental hygiene profession and have served as a mentor, advocate, or educator to the dental hygienist.

• **Advocate of the Year Award:** recognizes an outstanding and enthusiastic individual for their efforts in advocating for the profession of dental hygiene at the local, state, or national level. This individual shall display enthusiasm and passion in sharing the advancement of dental hygiene and has a history of volunteer efforts to advance and improve the dental hygiene profession.

• **Future Leader Award:** recognizes an NDHA member who exhibits a strong commitment to the dental hygiene profession and has demonstrated leadership in ADHA within five years of graduation from an accredited dental hygiene program.

• **Community Service Award:** recognizes a dental hygienist for his/her professional contributions to the betterment of the community through volunteer activities. These outreach endeavors should be focused on improvements to others oral health and well-being, but considered contributions are entirely of a voluntary basis where the nominee did not receive compensation.

• **Dental Hygienist of the Year Award:** recognizes a dental hygienist who has distinguished him/herself by outstanding leadership and commitment to his/her peers through the dedication of extraordinary time and professional skills to advance the practice and future of dental hygiene. The Dental Hygienist of the Year award is given to a person who has obtained the following achievements: Holds a current Nebraska dental hygiene license, has practiced dental hygiene for at least five (5) years, be a current member of NDHA for at least five (5) years, has maintained ADHA membership for a minimum of five (5) years, has served as an officer or committee chair at the local or state level for at least three (3) years, and exhibits evidence of leadership and advancement of the dental hygiene profession.
The additional item contained within this legislation is the creation of the expanded function dental hygienist. This individual will be able to perform specific restorative functions upon the completion of board approved education and testing.

It is most important that I specifically address the timeline of these new items to be added to our practice act. The legislation is supposed to go into effect Jan. 2018, however the board of dentistry must have a set of rules and regulations in place before we can begin to provide these services to our patients. It is also stated in the legislation that education and testing should be completed for many of these new items. This means that you CANNOT provide these services until those items are developed by the board of dentistry and once you have completed the necessary education and training. Please do not provide these services until the rules and regulations are in place for the newly added items and until you have completed the board approved education and testing.

This brings me back to "who are we becoming?" This is the moment of simmering. Just as you would place all of the ingredients for Chili a crockpot, all of the spices need time to melt together to provide you with a scrumptous meal, then it is necessary to cool and then reheat to obtain the full effect of all of ingredients. The chilli would not taste the same if it were not given the proper amount of time to simmer.

Dental hygiene is at this point, the process of simmering or "crockpotting" as leadership expert John Maxwell would call this process. Creating the future of dental hygiene is similar to the process of making chilli. First we need a vision, a shared vision. This vision was not clear at the start of the process but as time passed the vision continued to evolve and expand into a "disney-like experience." At this point in the simmering process we must remain steadfast with patience, and realize that the time will come that we will finally have a finished product to guide us into the new practice act. Waiting for the finished product will be worth it.
Mindfulness
Ain’t Nobody Got Time for That... or, do We?

By Karen Fiala, NDHA Immediate Past President

I know, I know you’re busy. Work, school, kids, practice, parties, dates and games. The list goes on and on. I am right there with you, and I just laughed a little thinking about how I have had to adapt and change to better manage my busy life. Trust me, planning ahead was never a strong point of mine and when I start to feel overwhelmed I don’t just forget something important on my calendar, but I also forget to check in with... Me.

I took a trip to CVS this summer to get some Wine and, while waiting for my on call “Wine Expert” Ryan Rutar to get back to me on what he thought of a couple of options I sent to him, I found this TIME Magazine simply titled Mindfulness: The New Science of Health and Happiness. So I snagged it, snagged my wine and probably a pack of gum and headed home. Flipping through the pages, I found a lot of really “Zen” looking models doing yoga and meditating in beautiful settings. But aside from the esthetics of the photos and graphics the content was really great and I learned a lot from the thoughtful and easy to implement tips.

I want to share a few tips I think a busy Hygienist can use starting today to bring some awareness back to ourselves and maybe help our patients feel a little more at ease during a stressful appointment.

The Power of Breathing. 1 minute.

It’s not sophisticated and it’s so simple that it is hard to think that breathing can really affect our health and well-being. As RDH’s we also realize all of the other factors that
The benefits of Mediation have a long history, but the quick end of it is this. "Meditation trains your mind to focus on the moment instead of worrying about what occurred in the past or what could happen in the future." (TIME 2.) The key word here is Train your mind. I think that most people give up on meditation too soon, because we don’t think we are doing it right. Throw out that notion and keep trying, the conditions may not always be ideal, but taking a few minutes to tune in can still benefit you daily in really positive way.

**The Meditation**

If you have a quiet, dim place. Go there. A hallway, stairway, car… bathroom. Sit in a position that is comfortable. And close your eyes.

1. 1 minute deep breathing (see steps from previous section)
2. 1 minute: Stop counting your breath and fall into a more natural pace or rhythm. Pay attention to how the breath feels, how in expands in your chest, belly and shoulders. (TIME 2.)
3. 1 minute: Stay Focused. Continue to be aware of breathing and Visualize the thoughts racing through your mind as harmless floating clouds. Visualizing helps you to “acknowledge your worries without responding to them emotionally.” (TIME 2)
4. 1 minute: Relax. Release your focus on breathing and just sit. “Remind yourself that there’s nothing to do, fix or change.” (TIME 2)
5. 1 minute: Give Thanks. Think of something you are grateful for, then recognize how you are feeling. Relaxed muscles and steady heartbeat. Open your eyes and get back to it more cool, calm and collected. (TIME 2).

The practice of meditation is still one I am working on and I am not good at keeping track of my time. Ha! Just ask my coworkers. I like to use my phone for timed guided meditation to help me practice. I will share mine and a couple others at the end of this article.
So, the next time you are getting ready to record the things you are thankful for, you might even think of that one patient on your schedule that makes you cringe a little at the sight of their name. Think of that person, and TRY to find one thing you can hold onto that offers some redemption! It might be that they actually brushed before coming in this time, or that the flapping-in-the-breeze tooth just “Fell out on its own” and you don’t have to keep looking at the poor thing anymore. Whatever it may be, you can take it and have a chuckle and keep going.

There are so many ways in which mindfulness can help to bring happiness and a sense of peace or control over your precious space and time. Just a few minutes a day can start to make a positive impact. The tips above are just a few that resonated with me and where I am in my pursuit of self awareness and growth. We all have a journey and it is easy to get distracted, I hope you enjoyed learning a little about these strategies and can start to implement them in your lives. I am definitely no expert, but I like to share things that I hope can bring people joy and spread a little love to the universe.

Thank you for making it to the end of this article!

Apps for Meditation

One App I have tried is called Calm: Meditation. They have access to some free content and offer a subscription service to unlock it’s full content. It is good for the basics and I like the breathing exercises it has.

Another way to get some guidance is to download an audiobook that has several different chapters or themes for meditation. A search online will offer a vast selection. You might have to meditate on a choice about meditation.

If you are an Apple Watch wearer, then you have probably also seen the Breathe app there too. You can set it up to cue you throughout the day to take a 1 minute breathing exercise. It has a visual and a tactile component that help you to deepen your breathing and ease tension.
NDHI needs your help to hit our fundraising goals. We want to raise $3000.00 by the conclusion of Annual Session in 2018. There are a few different ways you can help us reach our goal so that we can begin to offer some really great scholarships and grants to YOU! We are excited about this year’s campaign. We were inspired by NDHA President Ryan Rutar’s theme of making waves and came across the Starfish Story.

The starfish story is about a child who notices that there are a bunch of starfish stranded on the beach after the tide rolls out. As the child carefully picks up one starfish at a time and throws it back into the water in the effort to save as many as he can, a man watching the child makes a comment about how many starfish are there and that he can’t possibly make a difference for all of them. The child thought about what the man said, and picked up yet another starfish and tossed it back in the water saying that “I made a difference to that one.”

The NDHI board was so touched by this story and it’s message about not giving up, but to persevere through adversity and overwhelming odds with hope and good intentions. Reading that story, I think that we can identify with the vulnerable and hopelessly stranded starfish. Until we were rescued by someone who saw something in us and gave us the encouragement we needed to breathe Life into us again to continue to drive towards our goals personally and professionally.

The Starfish Campaign was developed to honor those special people who made a Difference in our lives when we needed it most. Starting a Fall Session, you will be able to purchase starfish and name it after the person or people you want to honor and to thank for their positive work in your life. When Annual Session rolls around in April 2018, NDHI will have a display of starfish near our silent auction table! I can’t wait to fill up the display with all of the starfish.
October Update

By Nicole Benigno, Panhandle Component Chair

Hello Everyone!

Out here in the panhandle we are currently working on setting up a fall meeting. Keeping fingers crossed for sometime in November of this year connecting from our usual sites in Scottsbluff, North Platte and we may be having the speakers for the meeting in Chadron!

Fall session is right around the corner here and hard to believe that it is almost another year in the books. Looking forward to having the opportunity to learn new information from the speakers and gathering with fellow hygienists at the Scottsbluff site.

I still feel like a spring chicken in the grand scheme of all things considered dental hygiene only being out of school for six years now. However, I want to briefly touch on recent experiences that have rejuvenated my soul for dental hygiene as a career. August I was blessed to travel to the wonderful city of Chicago to experience my first RDH Under One Roof conference. Prior, I had no clue what this group was about or that I could honestly say I knew of its existence but here is what I took from it. After working six years as a hygienist I was reminded that I chose this profession as a career; like so many fellow hygienists have too. It is not some eight to five job that we just show up at, do our thing and leave at the end of the day. This profession is about serving others making a difference in their health ultimately impacting their forever lives not just the hour or so you get to spend during the appointment. When you think of it that way how blessed are we as a profession get to impact others’ lives in such a positive manner! Not only the purpose of a passion for serving others; on an educational aspect I was reminded that continued education whether it be refreshment of already gained knowledge or exposure to new knowledge the importance to take the opportunity and time to listen, absorb and regurgitate what we learn. We, like our patients, need those friendly educational reminders from time to time of