



**Allowing You to Enjoy Life  
While Growing Your Practice**

### **Going through the day with your eyes wide open**

When you come to work in the morning, what are among the first things you do? We can try to guess, because we used to do it ourselves when we were working as clinicians. Isn't it true that the first thing you do is to check the schedule to see what's lined up for you? Well, this is about the results; you want to be able to do your procedures well, whatever they are. You also want to be able to handle your appointments accurately; diagnose appropriately and help pets. Isn't it true?

What about the process, though? What about focusing on how your day is going to be, how you are going to be in it and how people around you are going to react to what you do? We are sure you give this very little or no thought.

That's a shame though because you overlook several more dimensions in your life. So much is going on around you in the practice all the time. But unless you consciously will yourself to be aware all the time, the tendency is to go back to sleep; just going through the motion.

You are not alone in this; your staff most likely goes through their daily activities just the same way. We want to give you an example to illustrate the point.

Let's say you have a new receptionist or you give your seasoned receptionist a task that is totally new to him; a task he has to think about, plan, find information on. Basically focus on.

What usually happens is that he is totally focused on the process of getting the task done and therefore is more careful with the details.

Let's then also say that he has mastered the new task and now it's part of his daily routine. Well, now he's no longer focused on the details of the task but only on getting it done. By nature, we tend to focus on the process in an effort to master it, so we don't have to think about it anymore; just do it automatically. Think of your receptionist answering the phone – having done it so many times, she just reacts to what the caller is saying and is most likely not even aware of the desired outcome. Case in point, it was found that only 24% of phone calls to veterinary offices end with the receptionist asking callers to make an appointment!

Doing things automatically allows us to cram in more functions, but it also takes away the edge because we go through the process asleep and cannot easily adjust when things change.

Now take that and apply it to your entire professional life and you can see the enormity of the potential loss.

Without being aware of the process and the desired outcome of every process, you inevitably tend to react to circumstances, because you are unprepared and because your mind doesn't like to disengage from its automatic state.

So what can you do?

First, be aware of the fact you tend to put on your blinds as you go through the day, your career.

Second, tell yourself, will yourself to pause before starting any task, to focus on the process you are about to undertake.

Third, decide in broad brush strokes, what you want your day, week and month to bring. Use terms you can measure. Saying you want to have better days, cannot be measured and is thus ineffective. Instead saying you want to have 10% increase in client compliance that year, 5 more dental procedures this month, 3 more client referrals next week, are measurable outcomes which are much more likely for you to realize.

If you train yourself in the beginning of your day to not engage your autopilot and to know what you want from every function you do in practice, you will be a lot more alert and prepared to get the results you want. It takes practice to get to this level. But think of how much more enjoyable, and profitable, your days will be if your entire team is trained to be fully awake all the time – to focus on the desired outcome from every action and know how to get there.

We found that a really good way to stay awake and engaged and focused is to keep a journal of the process; of how your day is going. Try it.

In short, it's about awareness, decision and focus that you can learn in order to enjoy the process of your life.