

## Ep #103: How You Can Differentiate in an Era of Commoditization



### **Full Episode Transcript**

**With Your Hosts**

**Dr. David Phelps and Evan Harris**

**[Dentist Freedom Blueprint](http://DentistFreedomBlueprint.com) with Dr. David Phelps and Evan Harris**

## **Ep #103: How You Can Differentiate in an Era of Commoditization**

You are listening to the *Dentist Freedom Blueprint* podcast, with David Phelps and Evan Harris. Navigating you through the uncharted waters of a turbulent economy with straight-forward advice to, transform your practice into a self-sufficient cash machine, compound your net worth assets, and multiply, multiply, multiply your passive cash flow streams.

Dr. David Phelps: Good day everyone. This is Dr. David Phelps of the Freedom Founders Mastermind Community and Today the Dentist's Freedom Blueprint Podcast, back with you today with what's going to be really a fun in depth and I think really inspiring interview with somebody that I have followed for some time in dentistry, somebody who has become I believe one of the real thought leaders, very influential and not just because she was just born and got that way, but because she has gone through the path, the struggle and has not only in her own right become a real center of influence but also is aggregating many other thought leaders and really helping today with some of the issues, the problems, the obstacles that every practice owner faces, every entrepreneur and business owner for that fact. It's really great to invite and to have today on my podcast, Ms. Bonnie Hixson. Bonnie, how are you doing today?

Bonnie Hixson: I'm doing great David. Thanks for having me.

Dr. David Phelps: Super Bonnie. Well let me ... A lot of people already know who you are but I always want to make sure that we start with the basics, so let me just give a little bit of information about you Bonnie if I may and we'll dig right in. Bonnie's dedicated to helping strong clinicians and dental professionals build successful businesses where the best dental care can be delivered. She's the founder and publisher of the Progressive Dentists magazine and facilitator of the exclusive pro-dentists network.

## **Ep #103: How You Can Differentiate in an Era of Commoditization**

She works closely with many of the most knowledgeable and respected dental and business expert to bring their messages to dental practices throughout the US and Canada. She thrives on helping teams define their purpose, differentiate their practices, improve practice profitability and live a life they love.

Bonnie that's something that I know so many really sharp clinicians and their teams who work really hard to be the best they can be in terms of the service and treatment that they deliver to their patients, but still I think today the big problem is we now resoundingly across the board are, managed care is reducing the profit margins, dictating fees to many of our colleagues. Corporate clinics are competing almost on every block and not only in the major metropolitan areas today, but also now spreading out to the secondary and tertiary markets and I think our colleagues today in general feel a lot of frustration about, gosh is this really what I signed up for? Is there going to be an end to this? Am I really going to someday be able to live the life I really wanted to? Speak to that just a minute. Is that what you hear? Is it all doom and gloom or where are the bright spots today?

Bonnie Hixson: I mean you make some really good points in that first section of our conversation. Things are changing really, really quickly and there are a lot of threats out there or perceived threats. I think there's a couple of things, mindset is a big part of the way you react to whether corporate dentistry is taking over, whether a solo practice can still survive. It really is about watching the market, the areas that you're in, knowing what your community of, and people really need and then responding to that in a way that's genuine and authentic to you.

Yeah, things are changing faster and faster all the time. We'll never go back to what many might still refer to as the golden age of dentistry where you just hung a shingle and it was easy and people

## **Ep #103: How You Can Differentiate in an Era of Commoditization**

just came because you were there. I don't think we'll ever go back there, but as we look at the opportunities and the positive directions of some of those changes, I'm not sure that we would want to.

Dr. David Phelps: I think you're exactly right. I will say Bonnie, that for me, that mindset of looking at change as an opportunity, that's not something that came to me naturally at all. I will say that just like many of our practicing colleagues today, I worked really hard in practice. I took all the top NCE courses, really made my dental game if you will, as top tier as I could, and yet that didn't seem to fix some of the issues that I know that I felt like when I was in practice. A lot of that had to do with the fact that I, as an entrepreneur I felt like I had to do everything myself. I really didn't know what leadership meant. I heard the term of course Bonnie, but I don't think in my own right I knew years ago what that meant.

I had a staff of typically all women and I'm not saying I was the best at "managing" the staff, which I don't even think is the right word today. I think we would use a different word like inspire and empower, but see I didn't understand that. Today we really have to determine how do we differentiate our practices in a world, in an industry today that is becoming much more commoditized. You just said it. Things are changing.

Things will forever change and if we can adopt a mindset that looks for the opportunity, because Bonnie tell me if I'm wrong but the vast majority of business owners, and again I'm just being very general here, but just say business owners. We can go specifically into dentistry, same percentages. The vast majority are I think just kind of a little bit head in the sand, slugging it out and not really aspiring to make the change. They're hoping for a better day, hoping things will work out. There's a small percentage who step up to the plate and say look, change is going to be there. As you said a moment ago, there are opportunities if I embrace the change.

## **Ep #103: How You Can Differentiate in an Era of Commoditization**

That's a hard thing to do, so let's talk a little bit about that, that change is the hard thing but there are opportunities and what you found in your work, in your own evolution in terms of what an enterprising practitioner can do today to get above the fray. Instead of feeling like they have to wear all the hats and struggle and pull everybody up a mountain, the way I felt. How can we change that scenario today and in the same token, differentiate our practices?

Bonnie Hixson: I think there's so many different ways that you can look at dentistry today and if you ask any dentist who's been in practice for any length of time, there's probably four or five common answers that you'll get when you say, why did you choose to go into the dental profession? It's a generous mindset I think. It's a creative mindset. There are people in dentistry that are here because they love the influence and the positive effects and outcomes that they can have for patients.

Some of the best hearted people I've ever met are in dentistry. That being said, as you get through the competitive process of just getting into a dental school program and then finding yourself the day that you have that certification, that you are a bona fide dentist and walking in and going, wow. Okay, now I'm either an entrepreneur, as well as a dentist and clinician, or I'm going to be an associate and I'm going to work for someone.

There are paths that until you get through that educational first steps, I don't think many even think about anymore. I don't think anyone goes into dentistry today saying I'm going to be a rockstar entrepreneur, but it can happen. It's just a matter of creating a path for yourself and realizing that there's so many opportunities to be unique and to be different and that the profession, the market, the industry, financial landscapes, those things don't dictate your opportunity as a dentist anymore. They're part of the equation that you have to be aware of and know how to navigate and that's

## **Ep #103: How You Can Differentiate in an Era of Commoditization**

where building a network of mentors and other people to help you establish that footing is so important.

Dr. David Phelps: You know Bonnie, that's ... I think again that's easy for us to say and easy for me to say today because again, back when I was in practice there was this feeling that as an educated clinician who had gone through all the studies, the graduate school, licensing, board exams and even continuing on after that, into significant continuing education course, that we're kind of rugged individualists.

That's why we got into dentistry. We wanted to kind of be the controller of our destinies, so we feel like we've gone through these hoops. We've kind of passed the tests if you will and if we can do it solo, that I'm smart enough and I've got the stamina and the work ethic that you know, I can just plow through this. It's hard I think a lot of times for us to actually admit that we don't know everything, especially about business and leadership, how to build a team that we can empower. We can know a lot about dentistry and the actual technical aspects that we do, but the rest of it is something we didn't learn in school.

If we're not open to affiliating ourselves with a network of people who can help us with that aspect, it is kind of a linear progression if you will. It's hard, and we're going to talk about this later, but it's hard to get off that treadmill, right? It's hard to get off that treadmill, and that treadmill to me, seems like the incline is getting steeper and that treadmill's starting to go faster and if you're young enough, maybe you think, well I can do this, but as the years roll on ... Talk to some of your elder colleagues and they'll say you know the back starts to get tired, and the neck and the physical stamina is just not there. So we've got to change some things there.

Bonnie Hixson: Yeah, and the great thing is there are so many ways to make those changes. It's just a matter of as you said, where do you

**[Dentist Freedom Blueprint](#) with Dr. David Phelps and Evan Harris**



## **Ep #103: How You Can Differentiate in an Era of Commoditization**

start? Where do you begin? I agree. In talking with the hundreds and hundreds of, you know thousands of dentists over the years, I know that dentistry can be a very solitary profession if you allow it to be. It is a matter of ... You know you come out of your clinical education, and that's an ongoing thing throughout your career, but navigating the human aspects of dentistry is where the biggest complications lie. You can be the best clinician in the country, but unless you've got some systems in place and have a clear definition of what do you really want out of this practice and what does your team get up and get excited about coming to work for everyday and how do your patients feel when they're in your practice, if you don't have a handle on those things, all the clinical education and expertise in the world isn't going to help you to differentiate yourself in this new environment.

Dr. David Phelps: You know Bonnie our mutual friend and author, speaker, Chuck Blakeman, someone who I know who with whom you have developing some new programs ... We'll talk about that before the interview's over, but I found Chuck Blakeman through his book, "Making Money Is Killing Business," and "Why Employees Are Never a Good Idea." Through that I've actually followed Chuck quite a bit. He really digs into I think the keys that most of us in our businesses, our practices are missing.

He talks about the fact that we need to solve obstacles instead of problems. I kind of talk about the problems. I made a term up. I call it Monday morning syndrome. Let's say the doctor and doctor with his or her team, goes to a great conference, a great seminar and it's team building and there's new systems and some new protocols. It's everybody's on fire right, and then you go back to practice and Monday morning hits and the doctor walks in the door and slam, Monday morning syndrome means all these problems that come up almost every day or weekly, that never really get solved at the core. It's just, there's no systems, there's no

## **Ep #103: How You Can Differentiate in an Era of Commoditization**

protocols. The doctor has, with a lack of leadership, has not built and empowered a culture, a team that can run without his or her direct ...

Bonnie Hixson: Involvement.

Dr. David Phelps: ... Sort of ... Yes. Thank you. Yeah. You know exactly what I'm saying. Let's talk a little bit about that. With all of your work experience in helping colleagues today, is this something that, do you think most doctors can do on their own if they had a couple good books? To take it and lead the team? Or is this something that you feel really needs some help and orchestration by somebody who's really good at developing leadership and a culture within a practice.

Bonnie Hixson: Anything that any of us become good at because we work at it and we dig in and we get it done, and you've got to practice to be perfect, right? It's funny that you mentioned Chuck Blakeman. I know you did a podcast with him recently. I also first came to know Chuck after reading his book which was "Making Money Is Killing Your Business." He's now, he writes for INC magazine. He's a great thought leader on entrepreneurialism and business but he also is a regular contributor to the Progressive Dentist magazine. As you know it's ...

All we talk about is the business and the human side of the practice. We don't talk about anything clinical, simply because there's a million resources for that. This is kind of where we live and breathe and his new article, which is actually online right now, so if anybody wants to get a little bit of a taste of what Chuck Blakeman talks about, he's written an article called, "Why You Keep Solving the Same Problems that Never Go Away." That's exactly what you were just talking about.



## **Ep #103: How You Can Differentiate in an Era of Commoditization**

Leadership isn't something that we're born with. Even the strongest leaders out there, maybe they're extroverted or maybe they're just good people people, but no one's born a strong leader. It has to be something that you develop over time. It has to be something that you're dedicated to becoming. It doesn't mean that you're the boss and you know everything. It actually is quite the opposite and I can tell you that, you know we talk about our own struggles over the years, and the best things that ever happened for me were when I realized that being the leader doesn't mean I'm in control.

I'm absolutely not in control some of the times and that's a great thing because it's a matter of empowering people to do the things that you're not good at or that you don't ... Maybe that are not your strongest areas of the business. Letting people who are good at those things take hold and drive those towards a common purpose. The leadership aspect of being effective in a practice, dentists absolutely have to set the tone. Whether you're a leader or whether you shy away from that leadership role, you're leading by example either way. You've got to set a tone.

You have to know what your culture is really about and make sure that you get a team who understands. What's your vision? Where do you want this to go? Where do you want to take this practice as a business and as a means for caring for patients in a community? If your team's not on board or they don't even have any idea what you're all about, you're never going to have that unique differentiating patient experience that everybody wants to have. You just really got to get clear on what you're about, how you're different and how you're going to get there as a team.

Dr. David Phelps: Yeah, it's really an exercise, if you will, and I don't mean just a one day exercise at one time, but always evolving. What I did with my team, and my team today is different than the team I had when I was in practice in a location, in a brick and

## **Ep #103: How You Can Differentiate in an Era of Commoditization**

mortar. Today my team is all virtual. Some people say, wow that's great because you never have to see these people. I go, well that's not the point. It gives us all individual flexibility, but still responsibility so it's even more important I believe if you're working virtually to bring on the right people and you can only do that if you yourself as the leader, as the owner of the practice has that clear vision.

I think again a lot of us, as practitioners, as entrepreneurs are excited and we have the energy and we want to go, go, go and we want to go to the next, to the next, to the next and we want to climb this big mountain and create, create, create, but if we don't have a really true vision ourselves, then how can we do that? I really believe that going through the exercise, and again, I didn't try to do this by myself Bonnie. I will say just what you said, is that I know where my strengths are but I also am very quick to admit where I have weaknesses or areas that either I'm not as good at doing or even if I can do some things, I don't like doing them.

Why should I do that? Why can't I bring on other people that are really good in areas, because there are all kinds of people that are talented and have skill sets that would love to be in the right culture. They're not looking for just another paycheck but they want to be with a team that has a vision, has a mission, where people bring accountability, responsibility and they all empower each other.

I know I'm speaking from like, I got all this figured out. No, I'm always still figuring out. That's why I connect with the thought leaders and I connect with the people like you and the Chuck Blakemans because I want to learn more. I want to learn how to be even a better leader today because my whole goal Bonnie is I want to have as much impact in the world if you will, and I'm not trying to change the world, but how can I have more impact if it's just me? If

## **Ep #103: How You Can Differentiate in an Era of Commoditization**

it's just my little ideas inside my head and I never bring that vision out to other people and get them excited to see if there's buy in.

If they have buy in and together we create our core values, together we create the vision and through that, through those core values, through that vision, we filter all of our ideas, or we filter decisions that have to be made. That's where we can empower our team to say, if the team, if I know my team is bought in, we have the right culture. Now I trust them to probably make decisions at least 80% the way I would, and that's good enough. Except in the mouth and that's where, as the dentist I will put my expertise and I will put my entire focus, but everything else, why can't I have a team that can do these things and do it at least 80% the way I would do it which is good enough outside the oral cavity. Would you agree?

Bonnie Hixson: Yes. That's so important to realize, that there's no ... What's perfect to you may not be perfect to someone else. The best thing that you can do is to just define what you want out of your team and make sure that you've had some time that you've spent. Bring someone in. I'm a huge proponent of bringing in outside expertise and outside eyes on your business, because you get so close to it that what it looks and feels like to you may not be what it looks and feels like to other members of the team or to patients coming into that practice.

I'm a huge proponent of working with people who can help you get really, really clear on your vision as the dentist first. Get really super clear on what this practice is about. Why are we here? Why do we do this? What does it look like? What does it feel like? What is every patient experience like? Once you know that for yourself, then let's start building that out and making sure that your team understands it and it's clear and they can opt in to share and promote and build that vision.

## **Ep #103: How You Can Differentiate in an Era of Commoditization**

If they're just guessing what you're all about or they think they know where you want to go, that's where miscommunication steps in and that's where frustration starts to really build, and well I thought this is what we were doing. And it's really not. Again, we're not any of us born natural leaders, so I highly, especially as we're getting into this new year type of mindset, it's a great idea to bring someone in who can help you get focused as the dentist on where are we going and then give you the tools to help you bring your team along and make sure that everybody feels like an important part, but they know exactly what the part they play in that practice will be. It's huge in terms of attitude and it's like you said.

People who just come to work for a paycheck really have no business working in a dental practice. This is a people business and if you don't care about something other than the paycheck, there's a problem. So many things that you could do just to really figure out what it is that makes you different, what makes you stand out in the community that you're in and what is it about your practice? Is it a solo practice? Is it a boutique type of a fee for service practice? Do you focus only on whether it's sleep dentistry, or we've got some really unique business models that help, that focus on health and wellness that are emerging. There's so much opportunity to really find what makes and inspires you to be able to create a model that's viable in this new environment and really build a successful business around it.

Dr. David Phelps: You know Bonnie, when Wal-Mart was rolling out their stores and expanding, you know some years ago and they typically went into the secondary and tertiary markets, right? Rather than starting in metropolitan areas, that was their model. When they would roll into town, a lot of the other smaller retailers who had been a significant part of the economy and the market of these smaller towns were really, really scared. To be frank, a number of them did go out of business.

## **Ep #103: How You Can Differentiate in an Era of Commoditization**

In a lot of respects, dentists today feel the same ways as corporates coming to town or has come to town already and we can't compete. We can't compete. But I think you take another side of it. You say look, there's a service segment for everybody and where do you want to serve? You said it just a moment ago. How do you differentiate? Who are you? Who do you want to serve and what segment? There's plenty of people that need access to care that maybe is not our ideal patient, and that's okay.

Now, and I'm not calling corporate Wal-Mart, okay? I'm not saying that. Corporate does some very, very good things, but here's the thing that I've learned, that dentists, the owners, the leaders who are taking the opportunity to step up are saying you know what? Put a corporate model across the street from me. Put it up across the street from me. You know why? Because that just allows me to differentiate even more so. Don't be afraid of it. Just say great. You know what? They're across the street? They're going to serve a certain kind of patient. In fact, sometimes patients that come in our door or come through our marketing or referral system maybe are not quite the right patient, and now we have a place where we can authentically send them if they don't meet the criteria that we set for our culture. Don't look at it like a scarcity model. It's more abundance. Go ahead.

Bonnie Hixson: I'll tell you that there are a number of dentists within our Pro-Dentists network and just subscribers that we interact with on a regular basis who have said that the best things that have happened for their practices is when a large corporation set up across the street for exactly that purpose. If you're really working on creating a specific niche type of a practice in your market, having someone who is the same in every market, you know to draw that Wal-Mart correlation. A corporate chain in one location's going to be pretty much like it is in any other location.

## **Ep #103: How You Can Differentiate in an Era of Commoditization**

If you're different and truly unique in the experience that you provide and the culture that you've established, the areas of specialty and clinical focus that you have, you're fine because it's going to be different. It's going to be an entirely different patient that you appeal to. Differentiation by definition means that you have to be willing to stand out. You don't want to be just like every other dental practice. As soon as you're clear on what you provide and how you're different, you play to those strengths and you make sure that everyone knows about it.

People will identify with one type of a business model or another. You just have to recognize the fact that by being unique or different in some way, you're not trying to please or appeal to everyone. There's a specific type of patient that you're looking to attract and of course your referrals will be your greatest source of new patients, just because people who love to be there know other people who would love to be there.

Dr. David Phelps: Exactly. Exactly. I always wondered in my practice, Bonnie why my staff didn't just always understand exactly what I was thinking. I thought ESP and telemetry was supposed to go hand in hand with dentistry. My leadership style was typically, quickly spoken words. Thinking that everybody just automatically got my vision. I was always a high energy guy but that didn't translate into communicating the vision.

Knowing what I know today, and again I'm just kind of going back and summarizing what we talked about because I'm thinking about again all the great people we know in dentistry that are great clinicians but I talk to them as you do every week. Again they're fearful, feel like they're working harder for less today and I don't want that to continue to happen. Again my emphasis with you today Bonnie and you said it so well, is yes your clinical skill and



## **Ep #103: How You Can Differentiate in an Era of Commoditization**

continuing education and the technology you bring and the ability for you to treat different kinds of cases, yes that is important.

But equally important at least if you're in your career just a few years, you've got to develop the human side. You've got to embrace a culture and a team that is with you because you can't do it by yourself. If you try to do it by yourself and we're talking about differentiating. You say well I am differentiated because I've taken XYZ courses. I can do implants. I can do cosmetic. That is not enough because your patients aren't going to see that.

Their buy in, your patients' buy in to you as a great doctor and a treating office is the whole culture, the whole experience which starts with your marketing presence outside your office, the website. It starts with the way your office looks. It starts with the way your front desk staff on the intake, on the phones all that's experienced once they get in the practice. That's where you differentiate. Yes, you may be great clinical skills but that's only about 10% of it. The other 90% is what most doctors are missing. They think, well how can I differentiate because we are being commoditized. No you're allowing it to happen.

Bonnie Hixson: Exactly. You're still in position of control of your destiny. That's the thing if I could tell anyone who is fearful of the changes that are taking place in dentistry, it's not set in stone. There is no end game that you don't have some sort of a path to either get to or avoid. It's ... There are options out there but I do think that being in dentistry and being so focused on the clinical dentistry for so much of the practice life, you have to ... I think it's important to associate with people, have a network of people around you who can help you build that human side of your practice and make sure that you're ...

Like you said you spend a lot of time with your team, but they don't know what you're thinking simply by osmosis because they're

**Dentist Freedom Blueprint with Dr. David Phelps and Evan Harris**

## **Ep #103: How You Can Differentiate in an Era of Commoditization**

standing next to you every day. You have to really do it by ... The best way to be successful is to design a practice that exists by design instead of having a culture that exists by default. Either way you've got one. You have a culture whether you designed it or not and having people come in to help you just clarify your vision and establish those really important key differentiators that are in your head. You know what's in your heart. You know what you want to happen, but so many of us are just not clear on getting there with our teams and with our patients. I can't stress enough the value of having people outside of the walls of your practice who can help you come in and really just drill down into that and establish something that is an ongoing, healthy environment where people love to come to work and love to come as patients to be treated.

Dr. David Phelps:        Here's where I think is the big takeaway because there's so many of our colleagues Bonnie, that are I think facing burnout. That could be as early as in their forties, or certainly fifties or sixties and just burnt out and yet feeling like you know, I can't transition out yet. I can't slow down. I can't quit because I've still got to work on my financial assets side. It's not there yet for whatever reason.

They're thinking, so I just got to slug this thing out and I don't want that attitude to be pervasive. I want you wherever you are today in your practice, and I'm speaking right to you, dentists right now, the doctor, is that you've got a choice. As Bonnie said, you've got a choice right now, and I know that the doctors who have embraced what we're talking about today Bonnie have totally changed how they feel about practice. When it's not all on your shoulders doctors, and you have a team that supports your vision and takes that load off your back so you can focus on what you love to do, then going to work, whether it's two days a week or four days a week is not that big burden.

## **Ep #103: How You Can Differentiate in an Era of Commoditization**

Right now you're feeling it because you feel like you know you got to keep doing it, but you've got to make this change. You've got to take the time, make the effort, get the help. If you're going to invest anything more and you're at that place right now and you're listening to this podcast, your next investment should be in getting someone in to help you reestablish culture, set your vision. If you'll do that, life can just change very, very quickly.

Bonnie Hixson: That's so true. You just said that so well David. It's a matter of realizing that you don't have to do this alone. Yes, it's your practice and yes it has to be your vision, but there are so many people who are not only willing but who really want to help you get to where you want to go and if you haven't clearly defined where that even is, they can help you do that too.

Plug into something. David, you've got a great mastermind network with Freedom Founders. We have the Pro-Dentists network, and if you're a subscriber to the Progressive Dentist magazine ... Again it's all business. It's not clinical and the whole purpose of that publication is to introduce you to the people in business and the people in dentistry who can help you create really high level of differentiation in your practice and help you create a practice that you really love to go to everyday.

So many ways to find the people that really resonate with the way you like to do things and just know that you're not by yourself, you're free to ask questions and I think one of the most refreshing things I've seen in the last decade of working with dentists ... You and I've been around a long time, so we can say that but I remember a time when a dentist would never come up to me and say, Bonnie I'm struggling. It happened at one point, which is a huge part of why the Progressive Dentist exists, but I get that all the time now, where people are, they're not afraid to say, hey I don't know this.

## **Ep #103: How You Can Differentiate in an Era of Commoditization**

This is something ... I don't have a business degree. I don't have a background in running financial systems in my practice. People aren't afraid anymore to say I don't know and I think that's the most liberating thing about running a business, is to admit hey I don't know everything but I can guarantee you you know someone who does. It's about really embracing the power of the network and reaching outside for the expertise and the help that ... You don't have to become an expert at everything. You just have to know someone who is.

Dr. David Phelps: So well said Bonnie. So let's make sure, I want to make sure that our listeners know how to connect with you. Theprodentists.com would be the primary website and your email is bonnie, B-O-N-N-I-E @theprodentists.com. Let's also tell our listeners what's coming up in March. Actually in my home city in Dallas, doing the Get Off The Treadmill, which is the gottsummitt.com

Bonnie Hixson: Yes absolutely. I'm so excited about that. This is a collaboration between me and The Progressive Dentist and Chuck Blakeman that we talked about earlier. He, we've got a really interactive type of a summit taking place in Dallas in March. It's March 31 - April 2 of 2017. It's a small group. Registration is limited to just 40 practices because I want to make sure that we've got some interactive time.

It's about exactly what we've been talking about today, getting clear on your vision, creating systems and mapping out your plan and then communicating it clearly to your team and to your patients so that you get the clutter out of the way and figure out how to build a practice that you love. It's with Chuck Blakeman and yes, that's the Get Off The Treadmill Summit. Gottsummit.com. Registration is open right now. It's in your hometown so I'm thinking you should be there too David.

## **Ep #103: How You Can Differentiate in an Era of Commoditization**

Dr. David Phelps: You know what, I'm definitely going to be there because I want to be around the people who are really making things happen. As I said, I am always learning. I'm always trying to up my game and I will do so for the rest of my life. I can only do that if I embrace a network of people who have gone ahead of me in these different areas that I want to explore, that I want to bring back to my team because that's again how I get to live the life I want to live, but at the same time impact the people I want to impact. That starts with my team. It starts with my team. How do I help empower them. If I empower my team, inspire my team, then they will pass that on to their families and to our clients, our patients, the people we want to serve. That's how we do it.

I would highly recommend probably a couple things. Engage with Bonnie at [theprodentist.com](http://theprodentist.com). Certainly go to and take a look at the summit, the GOTT, the [GetoffthetreadmillSummit.com](http://GetoffthetreadmillSummit.com) and the way to kind of see if that might apply to you, I'd go download or pick up off of Amazon one or both of Chuck's books. You read those books and you're going to go, aha. He is speaking to me. I promise you you will because I was just checking them off, going yup, yup, yup.

Also I won't give away all his stuff, but he talks about something I think is really cool. He talks about a business maturity date. That does not mean selling your practice necessarily. It means setting your business, your practice up with a vision of what you want it to look like by a certain date, meaning that you're not doing all the stuff you're doing right now and felling like you're wearing all the hats. That's a key element and that's what I was talking about earlier.

You get to your business maturity date however you define that through the definitions that Chuck provides you. Now you can, as long as you're physically capable you can practice way, way, way into your fifties, sixties or into your seventies if you desire. That's

## **Ep #103: How You Can Differentiate in an Era of Commoditization**

the key thing, you've got options. Now you've got options to live your life the way you want to. It's not like I've got to get to a retirement age and quit. Well what are you doing to do then? Right? That's crazy, crazy thinking but that's again, I'm going into too much depth there. I just want people to explore and connect and investigate the opportunities because I am such a strong believer and I know you are too Bonnie.

Bonnie Hixson: Well I appreciate your perspective on that. I love your excitement about it because we're excited too. The first summit that we did in Denver this year produced those same kind of moments of wow, my future looks so different from what it could just by having these different areas of focus. Yeah, I'd love to see of your community join ours for the Get Off The Treadmill Summit and I'll tell you what. I haven't thought about this, but I think this is a great time to maybe ... It's Christmas. It's the holidays, so we'll do something maybe a little special. The Progressive Dentist is subscription based publication. We're the only one in dentistry, but it's much more than a magazine. It's a community. It's a network.

Here's what I'd like to do. Right now, [prodentist.com](http://prodentist.com) website, we have a free downloadable digital edition, just for the holidays, just to give everyone a sneak peak of what we're all about if you don't know. Chuck Blakeman's article in there, "Why You Keep Solving the Same Problems," is there so take a look at that. For anyone who's listening to the podcast, if you decide to join us, an annual subscription is 99 bucks. If you decide to do that, I'll send you Chuck's book.

Dr. David Phelps: Awesome. Awesome. That's a real great Christmas gift. I think I tell people you need to jump on that. That's great Bonnie. Thank you.



## **Ep #103: How You Can Differentiate in an Era of Commoditization**

Bonnie Hixson: David, thank you so much for having me. I know we're out of time. We could talk all day about these things because I think we both get excited about it.

Dr. David Phelps: We do.

Bonnie Hixson: And love helping people. I appreciate the time with you and I hope we've been able to help inspire some people to build out their visions and become better entrepreneurs in dentistry.

Dr. David Phelps: Outstanding Bonnie. Well thank you again so much. I really appreciate the time and we'll see each other, talk soon. Okay?

Bonnie Hixson: That sounds great.

You've been listening to another episode of the *Dentist Freedom Blueprint* podcast with David Phelps and Evan Harris. The place to be to create your freedom lifestyle with more time off, security and peace of mind. Please subscribe, download the podcast, and share it with others who want to create real freedom in their lives and practices.