

# **Full Episode Transcript**

With Your Host

**David Phelps:** 

Anissa Holmes: No matter where you are, right, no matter what population that you're in, no matter what setting you're in terms of trying to compete with corporate and a ton of dentists in your community, it doesn't matter. Once you make a decision that you have this vision and goal, find somebody who can help you get there and then have confidence to start reverse engineering the steps.

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David Phelps: Good day everyone, this is David Phelps: of the Freedom Founders Mastermind community and the Dentist Freedom Blueprint Podcast. I have got a really exciting, this is going to be very energetic and a fun interview for me today because this is a person I have been really looking forward to connecting with on a basis today, on a more personal basis. I've been following this pioneer, this innovator in our industry. She is a cosmetic and family dentist, dentistry ... runs a clinic and an organization in Jamaica. She's constantly using very innovative ways to reach out to patients. She's a great marketer.

> We're going to talk about today some of the marketing that she's doing to break down the fear that many have when going to the dentist. She's a passionate dental practitioner who believes not only in treating teeth but also focusing on people, the individual. Her focus and passion is on building relationships, beautifying smiles

and changing lives. She spends numerous in continuing education each year to further her dental expertise and is always on the cutting edge of technology.

I have found through following her and seeing her Facebook page many things that she's doing out there in the world, that she is a great service to community. I think that's one of the keys, so we'll talk about service first, everything else follows that. The dedication she has, her leadership with her team, she does so much for the community and the country of Jamaica in so many ways. We'll dig into that a little bit today as well. She's been featured in the Health and Women in Business section of the Jamaica 50 edition of the Beautiful Jamaica publication, was an NCB Nation Builder Award nominee, was recently listed as one of the top 25 women in dentistry by Dental Parts report.

She's also the author of the book, this is going to give away a little bit, "Delivering WOW, how dentists can build a fascinating brand and achieve more while working less." She's an international speaker, a host of the Delivering WOW Dental Podcast, which has listeners in over 75 countries. You're a dental speaker, podcaster, author, coach. I'm going to add obviously dentist, wife and mother. Welcome Dr. Anissa Holmes.

- Anissa Holmes: Thank you so much for having me David. I'm so excited to be here.
- David Phelps: I've really enjoyed following you. I jump on your podcast, I see what's going on in the Facebook community, Delivering WOW. You're doing so many things. I think one of the things I'd like to start first with is, where have you started? Even before you got into graduate school, into

dentistry, was there anything unique in your upbringing, in your family environment? Was there a person, a mentor, coach, something that sparked who you are today?

Think back for me, is there something that led you to where you are today? Because obviously you're well educated, you're a dentist doing amazing things, but you're not a commodity. In other words you're just not a dentist, you're so much more. Was there somebody in your life or some experience that made you where you are and who you are today?

Anissa Holmes: Of course we all have a story, right David? For me it's really a coming together of several life events. In terms of me deciding to become a dentist, I can tell you it's from when I was really young. I actually went to the pediatrician with my dad and the nurse, and this is showing my entrepreneurial side, the nurse was the one who actually gave the injection. We leave the visit and I'm like, "Okay dad, why did you just write that check to the doctor?" He's like, "That's just how it is, the doctor actually is the one that gets paid." I'm like, "Okay, I need to be a doctor."

It's very interesting. From very early on, I had this in my mind, to be an entrepreneur. I actually thought that I would be a pediatrician. Growing up I think this has a lot to do, and this stems from deep inside, and it's deeper than the money, it's really about how can you help people and how can you serve people. That's been something that's been a really part of my upbringing. Throughout high school, lots of service projects, out helping. I spent so much time in high school working in actually old folks homes and things like that, sort of volunteering.

When I was in dental school I actually went to El Salvador and did mission trips there. What has brought me to where I am today is really understanding the importance of giving back, and also the importance, and I think this is where we are aligned as well in terms of your community and your listeners, is that it's very interesting because we have in my practice gotten to the point where we're doing really, really well. Everything is paid off, I'm debt free. We're doing well, but what I am really talking about now is the more money that you make the bigger impact you can make.

David Phelps: Yes.

Anissa Holmes: To me that's what this is all about. That entrepreneurial side that I had as a child, I was inspired by even people like my dad, I was actually hanging out with him last week when I was home, speaking at the ENDO Conference. He reminded me of the story, and he right after college actually worked at a fast food business as a manager, his first job. He was really not doing well. What he did is he actually said, "You know what," to the employees, it was actually a Popeye's Chicken. He's like, "Listen guys, you know, this is the worst performing store in the entire city but we're going to change that."

What he started to do was inspire, and I heard this story so much growing up. He started to inspire the team and said, "If the store does well you will do well." He started taking money out of his own pocket to give them extra. He said, "Listen, don't steal the chicken, you can have it, but if an order is wrong you're going to write your name on it and you're going to pay for it out of the pocket." He was holding them accountable. Even these life lessons have really shaped me in terms of the importance of leadership

and again inspiring people and being okay with being successful because again, once you start doing that then you can make a bigger impact and bigger difference.

David Phelps: Yeah, really, really good points. I know I was reading on one of your websites that you made a committed decision some, maybe five years, maybe it was more than that now, but some years ago, that you were going to build a life of freedom so you could have more impact, you could spend time with your family, which is always extremely important for all of us. Trying to balance these things and have an impact, not being all about the money.

> You made that commitment to having a life of freedom and I think that's why we connect so well, because that's what I'm about. You have figured this out, you made this commitment. I would say at a relatively early age in your career. Kudos to you. Now you're trying to help other, our colleagues, do the same thing. What you found and I would think was also a novel, is that I know you just got back, this is your first day back in your practice from being gone last week. You're working about one day in your practice. Obviously that didn't happen by accident. It didn't happen because we know that you're an exquisite cosmetic dentist and you treat so well.

> We know it's not because of that because you, as you said from your lesson with your dad, you found other people can help build the momentum, build the systems, build the culture, the environment that will treat people even when you're not there. You just came back, this is your one day in the practice so you're going full tilt. Things didn't fall apart while you're gone, so talk to us about that commitment, that decision, and where you were some five or six years ago when you made that decision? What

was the impetus to say, "Okay, where I am right now, I can make enough money, I can provide for the family, my part of that." What was it that pushed you to say, "I'm going to do it differently?"

Anissa Holmes: I can tell you, it's very interesting because, and I'm sure you speak to all of the members of your mastermind and your community about this, it's the fact that many times we have this false belief that as dentists we are entrepreneurs or we are business owners. But in fact what we have is actually a job, right? Which means that we have to actually physically be doing the dentistry if we want to earn a living, if we want the business to grow.

> For me that's not really what I wanted. What I wanted to do was to have the freedom to be able to practice because I wanted to and not because I had to. I can tell you, a few times, a few little quick stories. One was when my daughter was actually in a spelling bee in grade four. It was grade four, five and six, and I thought, "Okay, well she's in grade four, not a big deal. She's not going to get anywhere," this was her first spelling bee. Guess what happened David, she came in first in all of grade four. Guess what, I wasn't there.

- David Phelps: You weren't there, right.
- Anissa Holmes: I wasn't there, I was practicing. Why? Because I was like, "Oh gosh, they just sent the email about this on Monday and today's Thursday and I have patients scheduled already, and so I can't be there." It's okay but I felt so bad. Even years later she's like, "Mom, remember in grade four you weren't at my spelling bee?" Or another time, when she had a swim meet and same sort of thing. None

of the other parents were there, it wasn't a big thing where parents went, but she wanted me there and I wasn't there.

Those two life events, and we all have these events I'm sure as dentists. Everybody has this story where something happened and you weren't there. I committed to myself at that point that you know what, you have a certain amount of years with your kids, and then they're gone, and so you only have one opportunity to get it right for them. I made a decision that I would never miss anything again. I can tell you, a few weeks ago I actually was at event and I had an opportunity to actually meet Tony Robbins and take pictures with him and everything. Guess what, I missed it because my daughter had sports day. I was like, "I'll see him another time," you know what I mean? Because I had to be there for her because I now have the ability, no matter what I'm doing in the world, to make sure that they're first.

To me that's what this big why was about. It was like, "Okay, how do I get there? How do I build this practice that can run without me?" This is really where the gold is. What I decided to do is make a decision that, guess what, in three years' time, and it would take a little time, in three times I want to be able to have a practice that can run without me. I thought, "What systems do we have to have in place? What team do we have to have in place? How many other doctors do I have to have working for me as well as hygienist so that we are able to actually have that income to one, pay them really well, pay the team very well, manage overhead, take care of all of those fixed invariable expenses, and I could still make money?"

I decided that for me and my practice it had to be two additional dentists. In order to do that we started some of

our marketing strategies, which you know I'm really big into marketing, Facebook marketing. That was a key area of how we are able to grow our business so quickly, but actually after the first year I actually hired a master business coach. We put in some traditional coaching that had nothing to do with really dentistry. It was a hybrid of me doing my dentistry, blending it in with traditional really big strategies of how you can grow.

In the first year we actually tripled revenue and the next year I built a few new office that was three times the size out of profits and we had a 100, 150 new patients a months. That was how we were able to grow. This happened in a really short time because like you said before I live in Jamaica, I'm not from Jamaica, I'm from New Orleans, but my husband's an oral surgeon so we decided to move here a few years ago so that we could really make a bigger difference here where he grew up. I came here, nobody knew me. I didn't grow up here but I was determined that I was going to build that practice and so I decided to invest in myself.

I was paying a lot of money for a coach and I encourage everyone whether it's David, I know that you are a coach. I'm also coaching dentists. Whoever it is, whoever you connect with, find somebody that can help you to get to that next level and save a whole of time. I did that, I invested in myself and here I am. It actually happened a lot faster. I thought it would take three years but it didn't take three years, it took a lot less, again because of my mindset, or creating that vision and again having somebody to help me get there a little faster.

David Phelps: Yeah. All those principles I totally embrace. You're so smart. It's hard, especially when so many of our

colleagues are in debt, from school debt or practice acquisition or startup or it's so capital intensive. Debt is unfortunately a part of moving forward, so you have to use safe debt, good debt, not bad debt. You're in debt, and yet you still took the result that you knew having outside eyes, that's what a coach, a mentor is, outside eyes. Not just from within the industry but you said someone, just a master business coach who can come in and help you with that overall design.

You really begin with the end in mind. You decide, "Okay, to have freedom in my life, in my practice, I needed A, B, C," and you didn't say, "I just need to grow faster. I need to work harder." You decided, "No, no, no, that's not the right way." You need to leverage yourself because if it's all on you Anissa, as good as you are, as good as our colleagues are in what they do, if it's all on them then how much impact can you have? How much freedom can you have? It's limited, right?

There's always a cap. There's always a ceiling on that. You took the help of a business coach, you invested when you were in debt but realized that was going to be your fast track. Look what you've done in a, as you said, a very, very short period of time, in a country, in a setting where nobody knew you. Most people would say, "There's no way. There's no way that's going to happen."

Anissa Holmes: What's even more interesting David is that I am currently practicing in a third world country, where only probably 8% of the entire population can actually afford ... What we charge for our cleaning is what 7%, 8% of the country makes in one week. Let's put this into perspective here, I'm not one to be like, "Oh, I've done so well," but it really does show you, and the point of this is that it shows you

that no matter where you are, no matter what population that you're in, no matter what setting you're in in terms of trying to partner or trying to compete with corporate and a ton of dentists in your community, it doesn't matter.

Once you make a decision that you have this vision and goal, find somebody who can help you get there and then have confidence to start reverse engineering the steps. You have to definitely make sure that you're unique. For us it was all about delivering amazing WOW experiences. What are people going to talk about when you're not around building your brand? To me that was really the key. Now, where we are, we have 150 new patients a month. I would say that my second referral source is Facebook, as much as I'm always talking about Facebook, we get about 40 or 50 new patients from Facebook. But the majority of our patients, actually probably about maybe 70 of them, are coming from existing patients. They are growing the practice for us, which costs absolutely nothing. Building that amazing brand is really how you do it.

David Phelps: Yeah, amazing brand and amazing experience that tie them together, right?

Anissa Holmes: And culture.

David Phelps: Yeah, culture. As you said, so many of our colleagues that are practicing here in the states, where the level of affluence is relatively good, that we have an economy that's chugging along right now, better than it was eight years ago, yet there's this feeling of demise that corporate competition, insurance reimbursement decline is squeezing the profit margins. Yes, you're in a country

where I would say you have a much greater battle to get where you are.

Is it mindset in your opinion? Is it self-limiting beliefs that so many people have that can't break through and can't see the forest for the trees? Because again, you coach so many, what are the breakthroughs that you see when you're helping dentists who are great dentists and they work really hard on their craft, their expertise, but they haven't quite have the mindset. What do you see that is a roadblock for so many?

Anissa Holmes: I think there's two parts. One is mindset, and also being very clear about your vision and your goal, and understanding that it's your business and so you're going to design it your way. A lot of times people are worried about like, "Oh, I don't want to hurt this team member," or, "I'm afraid that my team is not going to feel comfortable if we now start tracking," for example on thing that I teach is tracking how many services that you do each month. You're tracking that daily, tracking by service goals, "I'm worried of what they're going to think." I'm like, "Guys, this is your vision. This is your business." That's part of it as well.

> The other part of it David, and let's just put it out there, let's look at the people that are getting into dental school, they are super smart. It's so hard to get into dental school now, you almost have to have a 4.0 GPA. What happens is that dentistry is now pulling people who are really, really bright but let's face it, not many are really natural born entrepreneurs. They're not like sales people, they're not hustlers, they're not people that you might find those sort of traits in traditional entrepreneurs or people that are running businesses.

It's really about, what we do as coaches, is really help people to understand that one, you do have a business, once you make a decision to actually have your own practice. You have to put in strategies to grow. You have to understand how to communicate with people so that at the end of you communicating and talking to them about what they need, they actually schedule. A lot of times what happens is that it's not corporate, it's not competition from the doctor across the street, it's not that you're not busy and you need to go and work part time in another office.

The problem is conversions. You don't know how to communicate in a way so that when you actually say, "You know what Mrs. Jones, I'm really concerned because this tooth has ... it has a crack in it, and we need to get this fixed. This is really important that we do this. Are you able to start today?" It's something like that that took me 10 seconds, that now the patient says, "You know what, I need to start today," versus saying, "Well, I'm seeing a little something and maybe you can come back." When you're passive like that or when you're not confident, I'll say it's more that, what happens is that people think it's not a big deal.

Even in how you communicate with people, it's all about letting them know in those sort of words that it's really important. Once you do that what happens is that you're able to now help them because guess what happens when you're passive, when you're passive about the fact that they have gum disease and infection in their gums, and that their bone is shrinking, and you're passive and you don't tell them. Then two years later they come back and you feel really bad because they have discovered it somewhere else or even back in your practice. You

realize that you didn't tell them. It's not a good thing, right? I think that's a big part of it as well, understanding.

Again, if it's something that you don't naturally know how to do, which most of us don't and I didn't either David. I didn't either. The reason why I know is because I hired somebody to teach me how to better communicate. That's how I know. Like most things, a lot of us are natural at many things and a lot of times we're natural and then we get someone to help us, either we get someone to help us. To me, I think that is the key. That's how you battle corporate. That's the way that you're able to, and I was talking to a doctor the other day in New Orleans, we had dinner. He's built multi, two million dollar practices. It's all about this, about the communication skills. It doesn't really matter who's around you. I think that's really a big takeaway.

- David Phelps: Yeah, it doesn't matter who's around in terms of your population to serve.
- Anissa Holmes: Right.
- David Phelps: But it matters for all of us who we surround ourselves in terms of mentors.

Anissa Holmes: Yes.

David Phelps: Because as you just said, we're not trained to think this way, we're trained to control things ourselves, to micromanage. If we don't have that confidence, that passivity you talked about will pervade throughout our practice. To overcome that we have to surround ourselves with other people, whether it's within our own industry or outside, that gives us the confidence to build a

team, to become the leaders that really we weren't trained to be.

Don't you feel like that most people that are committed can become better leaders and empower and inspire people, so you build that culture, that environment, to have that freedom that we talk about that is so important in our lives, and not waiting for some day. We all tend to wait for some day, "Someday I'm going to have all this stuff right, I'll start living my life," and then some day never comes. Those years go by and where are we?

Anissa Holmes: It really does start with that inspirational part. The fact is that you cannot do it alone. I try to outsource or delegate as much as I can in my practice. I want to do the bare minimal. Why? Because I want to make sure that if I want to be on vacation or if I'm speaking or traveling, or whatever I want to do, that the practice can continue to go on. I can tell you, a few years ago it wasn't that way. I was doing every single thing in my practice. I was doing a lot of it because I felt like they couldn't do it better than me, right?

David Phelps: Right.

Anissa Holmes: That was a mindset thing but now things have really changed. It's really becoming that leader, also inspiring your team. The first thing that I teach when I talk to dentists is, "Listen guys, you have to get your team on board." We talk about, "What is your vision? Where do you want to be personally in three years? Five years? What are your goals? What is your practice goals?"

Then find out from your team, "Team, what is it that you want to achieve?" All of the doctors that work with me actually do vision boards with their team. They're like, "Oh

my gosh, I didn't know this about my team member." Then actually what I do now David is I actually encourage them to, in this vision board training session, to share their story of why they decided to become a dentist. A lot of times they think we're so rich, and at the end of the day they don't realize, we're in half a million dollars of debt, right?

David Phelps: Yes.

- Anissa Holmes: We're just trying to make payroll. Why? Because we have a dream to be able to help people.
- David Phelps: Exactly.
- Anissa Holmes: Share that with them and they'll be on board with you. Because guess what, they have a dream too, they want their kids to go to college. They want to be able to take a vacation or to buy their first home or their first car. When you start inspiring them and say, "Listen guys, this business, if we grow it together guess what, you can achieve your goals and your dreams. I can achieve my goals and our dreams."

Guess what happens too, once we're communicating with our patients, we're changing their lives. Guess what else happens, the business is growing, is successful, so now we can start doing things like giving back to charity and really making an even bigger impact, which for me is a big thing. We have a charity that we're donating to. We actually just donated some money last week. We're treating kids all the time for free with charity days. That's to me a huge ... It's great when you can get to that point, where you're actually making a huge community impact.

David Phelps: That's so great, so many great points. The energy level meter on my dashboard is going through the roof here. I don't have to do anything here, it's off the charts. I know people listening to this podcast are feeling the same thing. You are who you are because it comes from within you, it's totally genuine. That's what you bring. Again, all of us have different personalities but we can all rise up. We don't have to be exactly who you are and people shouldn't think that way.

I had to learn the same thing, I'm more of an introvert but I had to learn how to step it up to become a better leader. It's not fake, it's genuine but we all have that inspiration sometimes, we just have to learn how to, as you said earlier, communicate. The art of communication is something we don't learn, it has to be practiced, it has to become something that we become committed and we understand the reason why communicating with anybody in our lives, our family, our kids, our team members, our patients, it's critical but I missed that class in school. I don't know where I was.

Anissa Holmes: I don't think I took it either.

David Phelps: Down to the last few minutes here. Here's a question I want to pose to you and I know you'll have a great answer. Let's say this could be for young graduates, young dentists that are getting started in career, there's so much to learn, so many things to learn. Let's say they want to own a practice, maybe they're going to associate for a little while, which there's nothing wrong with that, getting your feet on the ground. How would you say a young doctor should balance their time? We've got to learn to become more clinically efficient, always work on our clinical skills, but we need to start learning about

business, management, leadership, marketing. How would you tell them to break out those buckets with time? You're really good about obviously time management, you've figured this thing out. I know it's not easy for any of us. What advice would you give?

Anissa Holmes: David I know that you know the concept of having a default diary or a daily diary. This is something that I learned from my coach a few years ago, is really to look at, for example look at your week. A lot of times we think, "Well, there's not enough time to exercise. I'm too busy." Or, "There's not enough time to go on a date with my spouse." Or, "There's not enough time to connect with my friends." Or, "There's not enough time to run the business because I'm so busy with patients." But one thing that I discovered and I figured out a few years ago, is that you can do everything that you want to do.

You can do everything but you really have to look at your time. What I actually do I put in the things that are most important first. That's going to be things like time with my kids, time with my husband, time with my friends, because at the end of the day that's what gives me happiness in my life. Those sort of things have to come first. If it's going to be time for exercise, put that in first and that way you know that you're getting that done.

The other thing is to say next what's most important for you. Is it most important for you to learn a new clinical skill? Is that most important, or is it most important for you at this phase to learn how to grow your practice, to grow your business? You can actually do both at the same time. You can say, "You know what, every quarter I'm going to do a continuing education course." Now you can do a lot of CEs online and you can make a decision that

every Friday afternoon you're going to take a CE. You can learn a ton online without even traveling or spending a lot of money.

There's a ton of resources. I have my Delivering WOW U, which you know, which is an online community where people can learn in their own home how to run a practice and business, and they're doing that online. I would say commit that time. Commit an hour a week for example to learning about business, an hour a week to learning more about clinical. Podcasts are great, listening to audiobooks are great. While I was learning clinical skills I was always in my car, I never got into my car without listening to something, whether it was a podcast or a book on audible.com. There's a ton of business books that are out there.

To me, I think that's the key. You can do it. You can do it all. I do recommend, even with your starting out at the very beginning and it was hard for me ... It was hard for me because I was like, "I have to practice five days a week, I have a lot of bills." What I discovered is that that actually wasn't how I was going to become successful. I had to actually scale back and commit to having at least a half a day, and now it's obviously increased, a half a day to working on the business not in it. That's all of these learnings, the business skills. What happens is you learn easily how to make \$1,000 or \$500 or how to add on five extra crowns by learning these business skills. I think you can do it all.

David Phelps: Yeah, yeah. That's marvelous. Listen, this has really been outstanding. I want to make sure people know the many ways they can connect with you. We've got Delivering WOW Podcast, which is a great podcast. I recommend

people jump on there. Deliveringwow.com, that's the university. As you said, it is a great online community. I jump in there and there are so many great people from our industry, people from all areas of practice that jump on there. There's a lot of collaboration, a lot of giving on that, because that's who you are. What other ways would you like people to be able to connect with you if they'd like to learn more about what you're delivering out there in the space so well Anissa.

Anissa Holmes: Our website is a great resource, which is deliveringwow.com, which you mentioned. We do have a free Facebook group, which is deliveringwowhangout.com. I know you're a member of that group. I also have course. I have a Facebook mastery course, which teaches how you can get those 50 new patients a month while spending \$500. You can learn about that on our website. I also have Delivering WOW U, which is our online membership site. With that doctors are getting training and resources every single month to be able to grow their practices. It is also an online community as well. They would learn out more by going to getwowu.com. The website is great.

David Phelps: Yeah, it's awesome. I want to speak to that just for a moment. Someone like you who is definitely influential and of high integrity and you're doing so many great things, for folks that are listening and trying to figure out how to take the next step, you've got to get connected with good people because what Anissa does so well is she's out there in the space and she connects with the best of the best. Utilize her, leverage her by being a part of that community, because she will help you find the people, the resource you need, even if you're beginning

and you can't travel and you can't be a part of the live mastermind.

Online is a great way to go and people like Anissa who are leaders in our field are people to connect with because she will point in the right direction. The fast track is connecting with other people. Your network is your net worth. I'll say it over again, people, relationship capital is the key to getting anywhere in life. Learn from people that have already go down that path.

Anissa Holmes: Absolutely.

- David Phelps: Alright, Anissa, so great to have you today. Thank you so much for your time. We'll have you back. Next time you're in Dallas give me a call, alright?
- Anissa Holmes: Absolutely. I think I'll actually be there speaking at an even in July so we'll have to connect.
- David Phelps: Perfect, perfect. Alright, thanks. Have a great day.

Anissa Holmes: You too.

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