

Ep #138: Craig Spodak - Creating a Bulletproof Dental Mindset and Practice



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Dr. David Phelps and Evan Harris

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Ep #138: Craig Spodak - Creating a Bulletproof Dental Mindset and Practice

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Dr. Craig. S: So we have to redefine leadership as it's not this born quality or this hyper-charismatic gregarious figure. It's how you show up in the world, are you looking out for the best interest of people before yourself.

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Dr. David. P: Good day everyone this is Dr. David Phelps of the Dentist Freedom Blueprint Podcast and with Freedom Founders Mastermind Community. Got a great interview. One that I've really been looking forward to for quite sometime because this gentlemen, I believe is a giant industry, he's a decathlon dentist and I think decathlon owner, decathlon community leader, decathlon husband and parent. So many things that are exciting to read about his resume. Let me just bring him right on. Dr. Craig Spodak, sir, how are you on today?

Dr. Craig. S: I'm fantastic. It's really good to be here. I appreciate the invitation attend. Thank you.

Dr. David. P: For people who may not know you or maybe have heard about you but don't know much, Craig, I'm gonna give

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your bio, and there's a lot in here but it's important. I think people already know who you are because we gonna dig into some of this. So bear with me here 'cause it's all important information.

So Craig, excellence in the practice of Dental Medicine is a proud tradition in the Spodak family. Dr. Craig Spodak is a third generation dentist who earned his Doctor of Dental Medicine degree from the acclaimed Tufts University, graduating with highest honors.

He joined his father, Dr Myles Spodak in his practice in Delray Beach, Florida in 1998 with a dream to change the way patients experience dental care. He inherited the company in 2006, and immediately began to develop a new vision for the modern dental practice with a goal to deliver comprehensive dental care with a 13,000 state of the art LED, Gold Certified facility. We'll talk about what that is in moment.

His dream was to change the way patients experience dental care, and he worked tirelessly to reinvent the patient perception of just how great a dental appointment could be. All phases of dentistry are performed from a team of 9 dentists in 18 operations and surgical suites.

In addition to having an on-sight lab with lab technicians and a Master Ceramist who provide same day dentistry. He also provides a strong importance on living out of the company's core values, which enables a team to provide patience with the highest caliber of comprehensive dental care while consistently exceeding expectations.

Dr. Craig is a pioneer for eradicating childhood tooth decay, and found the All-Star Smiles Foundation with Marlins All-Star fielder Giancarlo Stanton in 2016. He's

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also committed to helping other dentists uncover costly fees they're paying for a 401(k) plans. Was recently featured in Tony Robbins' new book Unshakeable: Your Financial Freedom Playbook.

As the brand ambassador, he's introducing the world to a next generation 401(k) plan. Also, something very interesting ... because we both believe a lot in the same financial philosophies. Dr. Craig is also committed himself to expanding his own professional skills. He's garnered various advanced credentials, including becoming a top 1% provider of Invisalign.

He also lectures nationally about the benefits of his teeth straightening method. Beyond his professional interests, Dr. Craig is very active in the Delray Beach community and currently serves on the Board of Directors for the All-Star Smiles Foundation that he co-founded with Marlins All-Star fielder Giancarlo Stanton. As president of the Pro-Dentist Network on the Board of Directors for Aid To Victims Of Domestic Abuse, and served this chairman of the Delray Beach Planning and Zoning Board, is a National Lecturer for Creating Team Culture in business.

Is a fitness and Motorsports enthusiast, a champion in ecological responsibility, an accomplished private plane pilot, and is conversant in five languages, Craig you wearing me out here man.

Dr. Craig. S: "Oh my God bro, I gotta chill that one out. It's all true but I've.

Dr. David. P: You're blowing me away here, but he was also featured on the February 2017 cover of The Progressive Dentist Magazine, which I have a copy of that. Was named the 2012 business person of the year by the Delray Beach

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Chamber of Commerce, home with his lovely wife Zaicha. He lives in Delray Beach, Florida with their two children Sage and Gavin.

I think that's all I can do folks. I think that's a wrap today. We're gonna have to call this one quits. You took it out of me. Craig seriously, you're an All-Star my friend and I know you don't need to be pumped up here. That's not why I came on. You're a very humble man. You give tremendously in so many ways. We wanna dig into the how you do those, but let's go back to the start. A third generation dentist, you came in, to practice with your father when you graduated from Tufts in 1998. Eight more years practicing with your father, you took the practice over in 2006.

So, third generation in this, and now you've got some vision about changing patient's perception, changing their experience. Take us back to 2000 ... well, not 1998 to 2006, that was before you built out the current facility. You and your dad ... and you know then it's at that point, when did you start building out this vision? When did the inspiration hit for you to do something different?

Dr. Craig. S: So basically I graduated school in 1998, worked directly for my father, and 1998 to 2006 were really good economic years in Florida. We had the dotcom boom and then we had a real estate boom. Some money was flowing and the SMP was rising. We all know that the Dental industry follows SMP. It's a lagging indicator but if the economy is booming, dentistry is pretty much booming.

So, those were good years and the practice wasn't really doing much better year after year. In fact, we were quite

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stagnant, and I really didn't have too much freedom to express what I wanted to create in the practice. I was single at the time. I became a pilot. I was having fun. I was kinda working to live and not living to work.

In 2005, I actually met the girl that became my wife. She's my wife now. I never really thought too hard and long about my future until I met her, and then when I met her I said that, "Geez that, I'm not gonna make enough money to support a family on what my hygienist is making right now." So, I wasn't really doing too well.

My dad. after much deliberation in 2006, finally handed me over the keys. He basically said, "Listen Craig, I'm out of here in a couple of years. I'm gonna be done. I don't wanna work anymore. So why don't you just pay me some egregiously high percentage of my production. Because I'm only gonna work for two or three more years. So you can afford it do it." I was like, "Oh, it sounds good." We do it, hands me the keys, we have the biggest collapse in the financial market ever right at that time.

But it was really a blessing that I took over the ownership of it, because we started implementing ideas right away. My vision was always dentistry is what? \$150 billion industry? I'm I saying that right Dave? About that?

Dr. David. P: I think it's gotta be close to that Craig, if that's not the right number. Yeah.

Dr. Craig. S: So, when you think about how it's practiced, it's a cottage industry and most of it, is practiced in small strip malls, and it doesn't really have what I consider to be the practice that is commensurate with the scope and art and legacy of what dentistry could be.

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So my dream was ... I started watching retail and obviously Coffee and McDonald's were not something I grew up, or really aspired to be at one point, but looking at how the Starbucks story and how it shaped consumer behavior and shaped retail behavior, and dentistry as my buddy Fred likes to say, "It's not health care, it's retail." So, if we're taking cues from our retail compatriots, they started investing significantly in the experience of their product and service, not just the result of what ... not just the product or service.

So I took cues from that. I dreamt to just re-invent what a dental experience could be. I longed to create what I had at Tufts in school, where all my specialists were under one roof. And we had that academics feel, we're learning from each other, and one of the very best technology that was out there and I knew that I needed more people to share and use economy as a scale so that I could afford to have all the bells and whistles that I thought were the best thing for patients.

So it has really brought other desire to create something exceptional for patients. It was all from a desire to add more value to patients than anybody else. And I considered the fact that I may make less money doing it in this fashion, but I said, "Even if I make less money, I'll rather express myself this way."

So it was really born of providing the most amount of value to the patient. That's what I wanted to create for dentistry, and that's what I did. It was a rocky endeavor. I had no idea of the odds that were that were stacked against me. I was very naïve and over confident. There were the banks that came to tell me that it was not a sound idea. Most banks rejected me and I finally

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convinced one to do it, and could go into more but the rest is history.

Dr. David. P: So with the banks you have this ... so as soon as your dad gave you the keys ... 2006, virtually soon after that we the downturn financial crash 2008 and we know that story. So what year were you going to the banks and trying to make this vision become reality for you.? What year was that?

Dr. Craig. S: So 2006 I took over the practice. We were doing \$800,000 in combined revenue. That was dad and I. Two full-time dentists, and two or three hygienists and maybe five employees, not really knocking out of the park. I slowly started adding associates and there was really no rhyme or reason. I was just trying to grow it I a neat ... Growth was my main thing. I just wanted it to grow because I recognized to build a multi-specialty facility, the feeder base was the dentist, the general dentist. So I knew I had to have a certain requisite size in order to keep all the specialists busy. So it wasn't growth for the sake of growth, it was growth very strategically to provide that multi-specialty facility.

So I run the practice from 2006 till 2011. Grew the practice from 800 to about 5.3 million in gross revenue during that time. Having specialists expending hours, building out more space where I was. And I went to the banks, on 2011 I bought the land. It was a really bad economic time here. No one wanted to buy anything. Matter of fact, the land I currently built the building on, I had offered the guy like a million, two for the building. He told me told me to go fly a kite and I forgot about it, and I saw it advertised for 800 grand. And I offered him 500 and he took it. So thank God he rejected my first offer.

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So I bought that but planning it was 2012 and that was a dark time for the dentistry. Now there's tons of banks, the same banks that rejected me, send me flyers for 110% financing. That's when I went to the banks in 2012 there ... 2011.

Dr. David. P: So everything cycles and it depends on where you catch the wave in the cycle. Are you catching the wave or you are in the trough? You can make inroads in both places, Right? There are strategies to use when you're in an economic downturn because you took it ... in a way you took advantage of that. Having been kind of fortunate except the guy who turned down your first offer, but later in that downturn of trough, you made a good purchase there. So that time it worked out well for you.

How many times adversity leads to the biggest wins I think that we have, if we'll ride those through. I mean, if you ride through, if you stay focused ... it's not easy, it's not fun at times and there's gonna be a lot of sleepless nights going through some of this. But your perseverance obviously also it paid off.

Dr. Craig. S: It was a little sleepless for quite a while. I don't wanna permanently paint the picture that everything's just roses and sunshine. There's no mythical place you arrive at in your journey. There's new challenges and challenges that arise that just change over time. So, I think but happiness is in the solving of problems. I think, you just trade out the quality of your problems.

I had bad quality problems before like, "Holy crap, how am I gonna go from \$5000 a month in rent to a \$38,000 mortgage payment. And now it's just like, "How do I innovate, how do I keep specialists busy, is this a good

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thing for me to do, things like that." So, definitely still challenges but better quality problems now than before.

Dr. David. P: Well, you are obviously very visionary and that had to have been built in you from birth. I think part of that is part of your DNA. As you said before you got married and realized that you had some responsibilities. You were doing well. I think every young person, you're just living some life, right?

Dr. Craig. S: Yeah.

Dr. David. P: There's nothing wrong with that, "I'm living some life," but all of a sudden the switch flipped for you. You said okay, "I gotta get serious here 'cause I got some ... my wife. I'm gonna have a family, I gotta get serious here."

So the visionary is there in you, what about the business principles. When did you start diving in those or had you already been studying those? When did you get serious about, "Okay, I gotta look at this as a Biz," you started studying Starbucks, McDonald's, you started studying a lot of people, I know that you read a lot, when did that start or was that always part of part of regimen?

Dr. Craig. S: It's hard to tell. I always remember, I went to a very challenging high school, I went to one of the top 10 best high schools in the country. It's Pine Crest School here in Fort Lauderdale. And I think I got a real good ... just a good background on education, how to study, what to study. I just remember having really good study habits and recognizing that there was a need to have to read books of business nature on my own. because I wasn't getting the inspiration that I really seeked in the dentistry space. So, I think there's an issue with most dentists, we

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tend to think that if you are not in dentistry you just don't understand what we are dealing with.

And I think there's just more commonality to dentistry to other businesses than less. So I'll go on chat rooms very active on chat rooms as well, and people like, "Whoa, the guy doesn't deal with dentists," and I'm like, "Well, that's great, 'cause that's where innovation comes from. So I just started reading books. I read Tony Hsieh's Delivering Happiness, The Story Behind Zappos, Could Be Great by Jim Collins. And I just found so many parallels in dentistry. And I don't wanna paint myself as a non wet fingered dentist, 'cause I don't wanna lose my street cred. 'Cause I see patients everyday in the operatories today, I'm just taking a break talking to you, but you can do it all.

I think people in dentistry tend to paint with blood brushed strips, "Oh, he's a business guy," or some people will say, like, "Oh, that guy has 10 operatories, that's like target." So I'll write, "Well, I have 18 operatories, what does that mean?" He's like, " Well then you are cosco" Well, is that true, I mean, am I really cosco? I don't think I'm cosco but I think there's room in dentistry to express yourself no matter what you want to do. If you wanna have two operatories, you and a hygienist that answers the phone, that's cool too. If you wanna open up a practice like mine, I think it's all an individualized expression of what you wanna manifest and create.

So, I think there's space for all of us in dentistry, but that recognition of growing something big and leading a big team, I really wanted to be surrounded by a lot of team members, 'cause I knew that would be a real challenge. I said, "Who am I gonna have to be in order to lead 30, 40, 50 people, 'cause it gets hard, you could lead two or

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three, it's pretty darn easy, but having 50 people that all require your leadership forces you to become a more dynamic leader, which in turn I think has made me a better friend, a better parent, a better husband to my wife. I don't mind being in the pressure cooker, 'cause I like to grow in life.

Dr. David. P: Let's focus on that from there, 'cause I think that is the rule of the core to everything in life, Craig you just said, leadership. And there are tons of people speak that on it, there's great books out there, yet I think that most people and I'll include myself, when I was younger, I was all about mechanics. I was all about tactic strategies, improving my clinical skills and just being faster at what I did. I did not pay much attention at all to leadership. I thought, "Well, I am who I am. I am a good guy, I have ethics, I have integrity. Isn't that enough?" That's not enough, that's not enough. So, if I ask you this Craig leadership, is that something that's inherently born and bred in to somebody, or is that something that can be learned and acquired?

Dr. Craig. S: So, I think, when we talk about leadership, it's important to point out that there's this connotation of leadership that people ... I have this idea that it's some tall charismatic person that's out and front waving the sword. And like, "Come follow me," and is gregarious and all that stuff, but there's many forms of leadership and I was just lucky enough to be meeting this, Simon said again, he had a great example, he said, "Leadership ... everything is really leadership. Like when the elevator doors are closing and someone is running, charging towards the elevator, and instead of pushing the open button, you shrug your shoulders and say, like, "I'm sorry," figuratively, or you

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stick your hand in the doors and let them open back up, that's leadership.

So, we have to redefine leadership as it's not this born quality or this hyper-charismatic, gregarious figure. It's how you show up in the world, are you looking out for the best interests of people before yourself, that's leadership. Do you care about others more than yourself, are you putting their interests first, that's the most pure form of leadership to me. And sometimes having the big personality of being gregarious works to your disservice. I think there's a lot of examples in dentistry, dentists tend to be introverted, which I think can serve really well in their leadership capacity, that there are fewer words and more action and they're inspiring by their actions not their words.

So, you don't have to stand up in your morning hurdle and say, "Follow me in to battle," like, "Burn the ships and be like Spartan. You can actually just be a baseline that comes in everyday that looks after his people, that when the hurricane hits you say, "You know what, the office isn't doing well, but I'm gonna reach to my own pocket and pay you all," or, "I'm gonna look at ... Sally has to have a mastectomy, anybody raises money, I'm gonna double it." It's about putting other people's needs first.

And I think now more than ever, we are in leadership crisis globally and locally. And what people most need, what millennials need, what everybody truly needs, is someone to say, "I believe in you, and there's nothing that you can break that I cannot fix, and I got your back, and I'm here to support you." We all need that, and that's just huge because there are sound ROI principles to that level of leadership to actually putting people's needs ... helping

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people feel safe and supported will actually make them much better, much more efficient, much more productive. So, even though it feels good and will create lots of fulfillment for you, it is actually sound business as well it's not just woo crap.

Dr. David. P: Yeah, people put a lot of focus which there needs to be on management, management which is dealing with processes and systems and automation, but leadership is really empowering other leaders, right? And for you to be able to do what you do, to build a facility, to have all the people that you are ... as you said responsible for, but also you are gonna have to empower them to give you the time to do what you do, to be a community leader. Do I have time for your family, do I have time for your own hobbies, your own fitness, you've got to be empowering people. Yes you gotta be a leader but, I think, Simon Sinek says it well, he says, "Leaders eat last." Right?

So that's what we have to do as good leaders while we are still empowering other people. How does that work on your team, because you are managing, right? You're leading a large group of people. You brought together dentists and support staff to support all of the specialists in dentistry under one roof. Gosh, aren't there some ego's there? I mean-

Dr. Craig. S: Oh my gosh, huge.

Dr. David. P: That's what I think, that's what I see, and yet you rise to the occasion everyday and I know it's not simple, I know it's not easy. If someone is looking at them saying, "Gosh, Craig Spodak has grown this big multifactorial facility giving it to people. What does someone have to know

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before they can jump in to that, what should they really know about that Craig?

Dr. Craig. S: Well, that's a really good question and so thanks for asking it. So, one thing that Chuck Blakeman ... 'cause I lecture at Chuck Blakeman. Chuck Blakeman likes to say, "Stuff needs to be managed, people need to be led." People can't be managed, this idea that, you're gonna manage people by a process and stuff like that, that just cuts off their humanity. But one thing that I would say, I hear a lot of people will call me and say, "Hey, I wanna do what you're doing, so can I pick your brain? Can you help me do what you did? And I'm like, "Well, what is it about what I did that you want?" "Well, I want the idea that I don't have to work per-se like, I don't have to work and I have people making money for me."

And they perceive that there's more money, and more profitability and more time. I had more time and more profit at certain points in my career that were not as large as this. I feel like if anything, you have to want it for the right reasons. I'm a big Tony Robbins fan and thanks for mentioning, he put me in his book, that was pretty cool. Tony has this beautiful thing. He talks about the science of achievement, the art of fulfillment. And it's beautiful because achievement is scientific, and we're scientists as dentists so we can very easily say, "If I just do this and do that, and hire an associate and then I'll get that." We know how to build that level of achievement, but fulfillment is what we're all seeking.

We as Americans, we're trapped into this idea that a little bit more money, a little bit bigger mortgage, have that boat, maybe a bigger house now, a little bit more and it's gonna be great. And I think that many dentists are looking

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at me saying, "I just want what you have because then it will give me extra money and then that money will give me fulfillment," but for me, it's the art of the fulfillment is doing what you want, when you want and how much you wanna do it. I can't not be at work right now, I have to be here today, but there's no other place I wanna be, and I felt like that everyday.

It's not all roses and sunshine, but there's days where I don't have to see patients, and I'll tell my wife, "Hey, I'll meet you for lunch 'cause I'm gonna get out of work at 12:00, and it's 12:00 O'clock, and like, "You know, I'll just stay another hour," 'cause I'm like, I like it, I love my people, I love being with people, I love the energy around it, and I just get fulfillment from my job, so it's not a process to set me free, it's actually expresses my identity, allows me to express myself. So, the building, and the people, and I surround myself with people to express who I am. And I love them, and I wanna be around them. So, it's actually like being around 50 friends. If I don't find them friends, then I don't want them here. If they're kind of negative people or they feel like it's just a job and they don't have any fulfillment, I don't really want them here.

So, to answer that question, find out what it is that's going to make you fulfilled. A very well-know dentist, he lectures all around the world, he says, "I wanna pick your brain." I say, "Well, what's up." He's like, "I wanna try to build what you build." I said, "Why?" He like, "Wow, that's interesting. What do you mean why? I wanna sell it." I was like, "Okay, for how much?" He's like, "Well, a lot of money." "Okay, then what?" "Well, I'll be in boat and I'll drink champagne." "For how long?" "Never really thought about that." "I mean, how long can you sit in a boat and drink champagne? Two weeks, three months? I don't know but

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this idea that you've done and then you can just check out, and be fulfilled, I mean, that does not work, that's been shown than you can golf yourself to death."

Retirement is not this mythical place. I'm sure you're in a position where you don't have to do what you're doing right now, but you wanna give back, and you wanna leave a legacy and produce, and I think that's what I get to do everyday. So, I'm very conscious about the gifts I get to give and receive on a daily basis, and I feel blessed that I get to do it. I have to do it but I've made myself think that I get to do it. I've changed my have-to to get-tos.

Dr. David. P: Yeah, significance is what we all really aspire to achieve in our lives, and that legacy, the succession, what we live behind, what good works, what are we are we building behind. But when you're coming out of school Craig, and you've got a quate a million dollars or more of debt, at that moment it's not about figuring visions or legacy, it's about survival mode, right? And why? At that point is, I just gotta put food on the table and if I've got a young family and I'm coming out of school with all this debt, I just gotta get them in, I just gotta make some money.

And the thought is, as you said, "Well, this time will pass, and so I'm gonna make a lot of money, so I can then live my dream life." As you said, go drink champagne in a boat, what people think there's this golden life after you do the work. They don't understand that you should be doing both at the same time, and there is no such thing as retirement, should be no such thing as retirement in the world.

So, what do we tell, I'm speaking to you together here, what message do we give to our young docs who went

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into the industry with some kind of vision of what it was gonna be like, and I don't know how they're coming out of school today, but I think that vision's been changed somewhat because of the debt, of the opportunities. You're lecturing a lot, what do you tell them? How are you helping them see the world for what it can be and not what they're seeing, what their limited view point at this time in their life.

Dr. Craig. S: The survival life idea is really just a mental construct. You're gonna survive even if you default on your debt. So, you're making a mountain out of a molehill. I hear the 500 grand ... I also have a Facebook chat that you and I are both on, and someone said, "Hey, I'm gonna be at school, it's gonna be \$550,000 worth of debt, should I do it?" I think you were on that chat, and I said only if it's ... and he's like, "I've wanted it." I'm like, "Well what do you wanna do with it?" "I've always wanted to be a dentist. I've wanted to do it my whole life, it's exactly what I wanna do and goes for the money, I just can't justify spending that much money." And I wrote back, I said, "You know, listen, ROI is not the only metric, I mean marriage is not a good ROI, kids are not a good ROI." I have young kids ... you have kids, have they give back all the money you've spent and then some, has your marriage provided a positive ROI? I mean, some people have had five marriages.

So, I think ,yes, money is very important, this is guy is not gonna go broke. I don't know too many dentists that go broke. If anything, dentists are poor savers. When we spend too much, I don't think we go at a business, we just are used to every year ... and I'm guilty of it as well, every year you make a little bit more money. So, maybe every year you make 7% or 8% more, so you spend 11%, 12%

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more, and you get stuck behind that. If dentistry is what you want and that's your passion, I say absolutely, go for it. Absolutely go for it. The debt and the survival is a state of mind. We're all just surviving temporarily in this time. We're all gonna die, maybe today and tomorrow, God willing 50 years from now, but we're all just buying time. So, live the life you wanna life. Don't worry about the ROI. If it's what you wanna do and you're filled by it, you'll be excellent at it. If you don't wanna do it, you're saying, "I just want an ROI," then don't do it, there are better uses of your money, you teach about that, but there's, "I wanna do this."

I figured it'd be nice to have more free time, but I don't want an entirely passive life, I would feel lost. When I couldn't work for my father, my dad only opened the practice four days a week, and he wouldn't let me use any of my entrepreneurial ideas, I became a pilot. So, I was up all night toiling over instrument flight plans, and doing big flights and ... so I curated a certain amount of problems in my life 'cause I couldn't have problems in my practice life. We had no patients, we weren't doing squat, so half the day I'd just sit there, and it was before the internet anyways. So, I'd get home and say, "Let me express my self, let me get some good problems. How do I fly a plane, a single engine Cessna from here to New York," that's stressful.

So, I think certain people, and I'm one of those people, if you don't give me challenges, I'll make challenges. So, it's better you give me healthy challenges than make something fictitious. I might as well do work for good than do work for busyness.

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Dr. David. P: Yeah, well said. Craig, health care across the board has been changing dramatically in our country. Dentistry, no exception. We know what the issues are out there, and I'm not trying to put you in a box here, but I know Delray Beach, it's an area of affluence. And I'm not saying people need to try to do what you wanna do as you said earlier, you've gotta have the right vision, the right expression, do something.

But what about dental care that seems to just ... in the last several decades has just taken root and wore the same forms and people are just getting beat down by that. Is that something that's rank and file across the nation, if your not in Delray Beach or a place of high affluence, do you need to be participating and how do you deal with that?

Dr. Craig. S: Good question. Let me start by saying this. I did a lecture out in Southwest Florida about two years ago, I was speaking for Invisalign at the time, and I'm driving. I drove 'cause it wasn't that far. I passed by a whole bunch of stores and things like that. I got to a lecture, and someone said the very same thing. They said, "Hey, you practice in Delray Beach, this is ..." I don't know what town it was like there or whatever, and I can't remember exactly, I'm just making that up, but, "We practice here and they don't accept Invisalign here." And I said, "Okay, as a female dentist, I'm like, "Well, how far from this Ramada or ... " we were speaking in Ramada or something like that, "Do you practice?" She said, "Oh, really close, about a that way." I'm like, "That way or that way?" She goes, "Yeah, to the right." I was like, "Okay, well, on my drive over, I just passed by a Mercedes benz dealership, about ..." Then she's like, "Oh yeah, it's with maybe a quatre mile of me." I said, "Well, don't you think that Mercedes benz

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does demographically search to show that there's an economy here that could support buying a luxury item like that." And she says, "Oh yeah, that's an interesting factor."

The reason why I wanna bring that up is because maybe you do live in an area that does have a Mercedes benz dealership for 500 miles. But you can never exceed the expectations that you place on yourself. So, if your belief system is that, "This sucks, this world that we live in is collapsing and man is just taking over, and there's no space for a fee for service practice," guess what? You're right. I mean Roger Banister with the four minutes mile, it was physically impossible to run the four minute mile till he did it. So, Delray Beach is an affluent area, we're surrounded by affluent areas, so I lose a little bit of my street credence in saying that, but it can be done. Maybe you could out perform and out deliver and out maneuver the competition. You could out serve your people.

People are willing to pay a premium if you're willing to give them premium value. If you're willing to say every new patient before they came in, personally call them, which would take you maybe five or 10 minutes a day to say like, "Hey Ms Jones, this is Doctor Spodak, I wanna welcome you personally to the practice. Our patients are family to me, and I just wanna take this time to discuss anything you may want from me as your dentist, and oh, by the way, here's my cell phone. And I just wanna make sure that we don't have just a transactional relationship but a lifetime relationship 'cause that's what I value. You'll be the busiest guy in the block. It's people are unwilling to do that. It's the who moved my cheese thing. It used to be you could hang up your shingle and patients would flood

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in, now people like, "Oh, do you have Saturdays? Oh, can I do an evening? Do you have Sundays?"

So, people are demanding more, and if we're not willing to be obsessed with adding more value and we wanna commoditize the patient, they're gonna commoditize you. So many times I ask people around town, "Who's your dentist?" "I don't know, but he's right by the Chipotle." That guy is a commodity. If you're not remarkable don't be upset that your patients treat you as a commodity, but we are the ones that dictate that. Starbucks sold coffee that cost \$3 and \$4 back when coffee costs \$0.5. They changed the game, and Starbucks actually changed the game for dentistry too 'cause it all of a sudden went from a low-end retail establishment to this really luxurious place. We can hangout. They actually know your name and you could buy a Michael Buble CD at the same time.

Starbucks really made people, people are just different now. They're upset like when you see it kicked off a flight, it didn't really matter now, its viral. United Airlines beat me up. So people are looking for experience not just the service, not just the actual thing. They're calling your office, they're saying they want a filling, but they really want a relationship, they want to feel loved, valued and cared about. So, if you're just saying, "I gave the feeling ma'am, like what's your problem?". They don't want just that, they want you to love them, they'll love you and you love them. I know it sounds real woo-woo but that's the way people are gonna survive in this economy is add more value than anything else. And you don't have to be on those plans, you may have to at a certain point to see the initial flow of patience but it's to speak it, it can turn off no matter where you are. You can adapt and evolve to be so remarkable that people are willing to do that.

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Dr. David. P: Craig, what's the best advice you can give to young dentists who don't own their own practice but coming out with some amount of school debt. The best way for them to learn and get a fast track, what should they look for? So, I'm talking about some type of associate position, what should they look for in making those first few years really count? We talked about not making it all about the money, that you will survive, but many will look at the money. Is that the best choice or they're better alternatives, where to seek the best place to get your hands wet and really see the bigger picture of dentistry?

Dr. Craig. S: I think the first thing is success leaves clues, so model people who are successful, and now we have more access to that than ever before. I would read books, I would learn from everybody, even people doing it wrong can teach you about it. Learning what not to do is just as valuable as learning what to do. So, if you're in an associateship and it's going really poorly, it's really good for you because you've learn what not to do. I don't like it the way this doctor does that or this doctor does ... so people always think that the only value is moving ahead, but I think learning what went wrong is really important. So, seek it, be after that if no one's gonna be bring in the hustle for you, you gotta bring it yourself. You gotta be very intentional about what you wanna create. Never be a victim of circumstance or feel victimized. Always take the power, you are resourceful. You can actually manifest great things, not talking about like, "Oh, it's gonna be great, it's gonna be great." You can actually change your circumstances.

If you wanna make something happen, you gotta work for it, and things may not fall into your lap exactly how you want, but you'll see over time that everything that doesn't

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go your way actually opens another door. So, I do believe in that positivity, and I do believe that you can create your own success, your own luck in many ways. Things don't go all well for me. I've been in a lot of different challenges in the business, I lose specialists that tell me they're gonna be here for a lifetime and had specialists literally tell me that, "This is a marriage buddy, you and me getting married and this is it." And two years later, they're like, "Hey bro, I'm off." And I'm like, "Oh, what? What do you mean? You gave me your word."

So, it's challenging but I'm thankful for my challenges. I don't resent them because they make me dig deeper, and really what I wanna be in this life is happy, and as we talked about earlier, happiness is the process of solving problems. So, don't resent your problems. Don't be crushed by them, don't be crushed by it. We kick our own butts more than anything else, anything that happens we just kick our own butts. And if you're stuck in the space of survival and how is it gonna happen, what type of message are you sending your team? You know what I mean, like, "I don't know how we're gonna pull it off, we just came through a hurricane, I got my butt kicked financially, I'm paying the team." And I told him, "This is not the right time for us to be doing this, profit's a little down but I wanna invest in you because this is our family and you were there during the good times, and this is a bad time and I'm gonna pay you guys for the time that you're out."

And that leadership is what makes people believe in you, build the engagement and long term trust that is required to build the business, and I don't do it for ROI, do it 'cause it's good for my soul and it nourishes me to do so but there is ROI behind it. So, when you do something nice

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for people, I do believe it nourishes them and fosters good will and that good will turns into money. That's future money for us.

Dr. David. P: Craig you got a pod cast Bulletproof Dental Practice. You've got a lot of great content on there, I've flipped through, I've listened to some of them. Where else can people find you, follow you, contact ... what would you give there?

Dr. Craig. S: Like you, I'm pretty much an open book, so my Facebook page, like your Facebook page is always about sharing and collapse the different parts of my life, business, family, personal ... it's all a blank slate because invariably in helping anybody else, I'm helped in the process and I don't believe that learning is a one way street, I'm constantly learning. The Bulletproof Dental Practice podcast is fun, I wanna have you on that, hopefully you'll join us. I wanna know more about Freedom Founders, I'm very interested in that. And then also I lecture with Chuck Blakeman at the Get Off The Treadmill Summit, that's gottsummit.com. We do that a couple of times a year. Chuck's awesome, I know that he's a friend of yours and yes, your messages are very coincident, which is great, and just yeah, Facebook, Instagram, hit me up, Craig Spodak, on either one I'm always an open book. I'm always willing to help. I don't do consulting but I'm able to help you if have a simple question or ... I'm always willing to help. I love our profession and I wanna help in anyway possible, I wanna give back.

Dr. David. P: Well, you're doing that in many many ways, and I wanna thank you number one for just taking your time out today to spread your message, give an encouragement inspiration to others, those people that are hurting, and I

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think a big change of environment in terms of who people surround themselves with, and that the media, the information the consume plays a big part in what you just talked about in the way you see world, and you're either a victim or a victor. Circumstances will always change for all of us in many different ways, but it's how we think about that and how we choose to live lives that's important.

You're one of those standard people and I just wanna thank you again for all that you do, not just today but 24/7.

Dr. Craig. S: Well I wanna thank you for the same, I watched all your stuff and the minute I heard you and got to know you through social media, I'm like I like this guy, this is a guy that inspires me. Your talks, your way of being is nourishing, it gives people faith and inspiration and this is what people need. All of us need that. You need it, I need it. We're all human and we need that level of inspiration. There's a lot of negativity as you said and that just brings it down and makes it harder, it's like running through quicksand. You don't have to do that.

Dr. David. P: Yeah, absolutely. All right, Dr. Craig Spodak. Thank you so much sir, it's been a pleasure, been a lot of fun.

Dr. Craig. S: Thank you David, appreciate it.

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