

**Ep #231: Janice Doan - Taking Nothing for Granted -
Living a Life of Blessings and Gratitude**



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Dr. David Phelps

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Ep #231: Janice Doan - Taking Nothing for Granted - Living a Life of Blessings and Gratitude

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David Phelps: Good day everyone, this Dr. David Phelps of the Freedom Founders Mastermind Community and the Dentist Freedom Blueprint Podcast. Here today with someone I've been looking forward to doing an interview with for quite sometime, somebody who I have followed a lot on social media and I think she's got a story and mindset and a perseverance about her that can really I think be something that everybody, I don't care where you are in life, career, family, what it is, you're going to find some takeaways here today. So my guest today is Dr. Janice Doan. Janice, how are you?

Janice Doan: I'm great. Thank you so much for having me on today. I can't wait to share some of my story with your audience.

David Phelps: Well, I'm as interested as everybody else. So that's why I get the pleasure of writing the question and asking the questions. That's self serving because, well, I'm just like you. I love to find people that I think are doing outstanding things in life, family, business and how we all arrive where we are today and where we want to go in life. I think we all like to find people that are kind of like our tribe. So I think today it will be fun to kind of dive into that.

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But I want to start first with kind of your origin story, which is unique to you but certainly not unique to a lot of Asians, particularly in this case coming from Vietnam at a very young age. I know a number of people, in fact the number of people that are in our dental community that have the same origin story and I find it fascinating to learn more about that. So could you take us back to, this was after the Vietnam War was over and your family I assume had been helping the American side and the wars over and then what happened? So tell us about your family and what happened after that?

Janice Doan: Absolutely. So after the war my parents tried to escape, even during the war but we couldn't so we tried and attempted a few times but we keep getting caught and it didn't go through. So then after the war we attempted another try and this time we got a little bit farther away where we were actually on a boat and it was going toward... Farther away from Vietnam on the ocean but I know it was it farther along from the Vietnam country but then we got to the other area near another country. I think maybe Philipians or something like that but then the people or the officer there made us turn back. They couldn't take on more refugee at that point in time.

So they sent us back and unfortunately we had to go back and when we went back we got caught from the Vietnam troops and so they sent us into refugee or concentration camps where they separated the men from the women. So I was with my mom and my sister and basically it was just us. Yeah.

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David Phelps: So how old were you when you were put in the refugee camp, the concentration camp, about how old were you then Janice?

Janice Doan: I would say maybe two or less than that. Two years old. Yeah.

David Phelps: And your sister?

Janice Doan: She's six years older than me so maybe at the time eight or nine or seven.

David Phelps: And that's Justene, who you are fortunate to practice with today, right?

Janice Doan: Yes. Absolutely.

David Phelps: We'll talk more about how that all came about. All right. So then can I ask did you see your father again?

Janice Doan: Yes. Afterward. After we finally were able to bribe the officer and then my family had to go look for myself and my other relative and we finally found each other and we got escape and eventually I found my mom but my mom didn't know where exactly my dad were so she had to go and look for him. So it's not like we knew where each other were. We were separated and spread out because they didn't want a revolution at that point.

David Phelps: Right.

Janice Doan: So they had to separate all the men.

David Phelps: Wow. So then did you eventually then come back together as a family? Then what happened and what was pathway to come to America?

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Janice Doan: Right. So after my mom found my dad she decided to stay with him so growing up I didn't get to see my parents a lot. So I was raised by grandparents with my sister and brothers. So finally in 1991 we were able to get through the program where the American allow the... My family to get sponsor over so we got a Catholic church to sponsor us and that's how we were able to come over to America.

David Phelps: So who all came? What part of your family came together?

Janice Doan: My whole family.

David Phelps: Whole family.

Janice Doan: So my dad... Uh-huh. So my immediate family. So my siblings and I and my parents.

David Phelps: And how old were you when you stepped foot on American soil?

Janice Doan: It was in 1991 so about 10 years old.

David Phelps: Okay. And you knew not a word of English or a couple words of English. What was your situation?

Janice Doan: I had no idea where I was. I wasn't told that I was going to go to America. I was told that we're going to go to a family vacation. I was so excited. I didn't know and then we ended up in Thailand because they couldn't get us directly to the US because they didn't know where to place us. So basically, we ended up in the refugee camp in Thailand for about a month first before they can put us in the US. But when I came to Thailand I didn't know where I was and then behold the US, so many different ethnicity, it was in San Francisco, and I was like this tiny little girl and

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I was just like oh, my god, am I in a different universe.
Where am I?

David Phelps: And you tell a story, I think this maybe part of why or you can tell me but this is part of why you wanted to be become a dentist eventually and you tell a story about when you were living with your grandparents for that time when you were younger that there was time when your grandfather had to extract, take out, pull some of your primary teeth, right, with pliers.

Janice Doan: Right.

David Phelps: And how horrific that was and tell us a little bit about that and how that's kind of drove you, and how you were driven to dentistry, so take me back there with your grandparents, and then let's go back then to the day as you started... Your family started to build their life in America.

Janice Doan: Yes. Absolutely. So what happened was I was having some toothache pain and at that time we didn't have a dentist, we didn't have money, we were very poor living in Vietnam. I don't even recall ever have a toothbrush, let alone brushing and taking care of my teeth. So I just remember I was having pain and then my grandpa was like let me take a look and he was like, okay, well, something going on inside your mouth that we need to take care of. So he told me to sit down so I obey him and just sat down and next thing I know he was holding me so tight I could not breathe and I saw something coming and he's trying to reach for something in a box and it does not look good.

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I remember it sounded really bad and I tried to look and see what he's doing and he would not let me see and so basically he just strained me down and next thing I know he was pulling out a plier and he's trying to fit inside my small mouth and I was skirmishing, trying to get out of it and he wouldn't let me. He would overpower me and I start crying. I knew something was going... Bad going happen and the next thing I knew he was trying to pull out something inside my mouth and I didn't realize I needed to take care of my teeth. I didn't know that something was going bad at that time.

So next thing I knew blood was drooping over my shirt. I was crying, it was hurting. And the whole village came out trying to find out what's going on. And I remember I swear, I was like I will never ever do this again. I told myself, this is the most painful experience I ever encounter at that point.

David Phelps: So let's take that and how much of that experience and what other things influenced you and your sister Justene to go through school and seek dentistry as your career? Tell us about that. So we're kind of going back now to America, right and you're here and you don't speak the language and kind of bring us up to date as you progress forward from there.

Janice Doan: Yeah. So when I came to America the first thing I noticed was everyone in my school in my class was having beautiful teeth. They would just have braces on, everyone was taking care of their teeth, they were just very into their smile and their look and things like that and here I am with yellow, brown teeth and not very good looking. And I didn't know English so people were probably talking

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about me, pointing at me and kind of talking behind my back. But the good news was that I didn't understand what they were saying, so it didn't really effect me. But on the other side I knew I felt bad about it. So I knew that I didn't have the best teeth, I didn't have the best look, going forward, and it really effected my confidence.

So I was very withdraw, I was very to myself, I didn't have a lot of friends growing up because of that and then also I didn't do so well even though I have the potential to do better in school but it just that I didn't feel like I had anyone. I felt so alone by myself. So at that point I was going through a lot of dental work because we were able to get dental care here, so we had to go the dentist every day after to school and just wait in line at the dental office and try to get our turn to get the dental work done. So I mean, I was practically living there for months at a time trying to get the cavity taken care of and then once I was in high school I was still not confident, I didn't have any pain but my teeth were so crooked, I didn't like to smile and anything like that.

So I wanted to improve my smile so it wasn't until I was doing braces that I was able to feel more confident about my smile and that's when I was able to step out of my shell and I realized that transformation like personally that I wanted to do it professional at that point. And then at that time my sister was in dental school already and so it was nice for her to kind of show me around her dental school, what she does and I was just very intrigued by and I was like that's what I want to do.

David Phelps: Wow. That's really incredible story. And when you felt the personal transformation yourself to see what it meant to

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have a smile you could be confident about you knew in your heart that a transformational part of many people lives and so you're in high school and then you got to college. I know you went to dental school at USC, did you also go to undergraduate USC?

Janice Doan: No, I actually went to UC Irvine.

David Phelps: Okay. So when did you decide you wanted to go into dentistry, was it at the same time that you saw Justene, your sister in dental school or soon after or when did you kind of make that decision this is what I want to do?

Janice Doan: I think I wanted to do that when right after I took out my braces so that was in college at Irvine. I wanted to pursue dentistry because I saw how much it impacted my life and I realized that I can do the same for other people just having that personal experience of how it effected me in a negative way and how to change that so easily through taking care of my teeth and straighten out my smile and things like that. Things that people can do that can help them be their better self for the world.

David Phelps: And then you and your sister Justene, co-authored a book Keys for Healthy Smile After 40, which I have a copy and it's pretty relevant to me because I'm a little bit after 40. I think you wrote it for people like me. I know what you really wrote it for, is you wrote for... You wrote it for the fact that, I think you said it well in the book that as people age everything ages, hair turns gray, we get some wrinkles and of course as we know as dentist our foundational aspect changes, color changes, lots of changes. And you say you wrote to book to give people the thought process that things will change but that you

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can also improve that and maintain and so that book was written a year or so ago?

Janice Doan: Yeah. Exactly. It was in 2018, April and then it was Amazon May 1st, yeah.

David Phelps: What kind of feedback have you received from that book? Do you give it to your patients, do you give it out? How do people find you through that book, do you think?

Janice Doan: Most of the people found through our community, so a lot of the resident in my community know about the book and then a lot of patient have the book. We sell it on Amazon but also when patients start treatment I also include the book as part of their new patient package. But it's also very good feedback, it's allowed people to understand more. A lot of people didn't realize some of the things that were so common that I wrote in the book and they were just like oh, wow, I didn't realize that and just kind of going through what my story and how we got here and how the transformation both professionally and personally that we experiencing help a lot of people to... Not to give up and just to face their struggle head on better. I think it's more motivating for them then the dentistry part of it.

David Phelps: Well, there's no question that as people get to know you and certainly you can do that very easily through a book. As people get to know you then they can start to, as you said perceive that there's a connection there, right. Their story not going to be the same as yours or your families necessarily but they also understand that what you've gone through and how much passion you have about what you do where that comes from. As you said, I think we all like to be with people who have also shown they've

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gone through a struggle in life and they have now got to this point through those challenges, through that struggle.

An in this case you provide excellent dental care so who better to provide that care than somebody that understand me as a person and the fact that I may be dealing with situations or lack of self esteem or personal, financial problems, whatever it may be and you actually have a heart. I think there's got to be that connection. Do you find that to be true that in your patients they really feel like there is that connection and they come obviously because you're a very, very proficient and skilled clinician but also you've got that connection?

Janice Doan: Absolutely. 100%, David. A lot of my patient chose us because they like the fact that we take the time to educate them, get to know them. We don't just take care of their teeth, which is the primary reason why, but there's a lot of different factor in their life that not a lot of dentists take the time or have the time to really try to connect and find out what make them who they are and that's what differentiate between other dentist and us is that the fact that we do care. That we do want to find out what's going on, how their family doing, how their marriage doing, how their parenting skill going. A kid, how their relationship with their parents and with school so we take a lot of time during that appointment to not just treat their oral health but also getting to know them on a more personal level.

David Phelps: And do you think it's really important that your entire team, the entire office has the same culture and the same feeling, in other words it can't just come from you. I mean you've got to...

Janice Doan: Right.

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David Phelps: Have people around you that also embellish the same personal feelings and connection towards your patients, right, is that pretty much a fair statement?

Janice Doan: Yes. Of course. It's 100%, without my team I wouldn't be able to do what I do. So it start with me but then it also relaying that message to the staff and getting the team to be understanding of where they come from and I'm so lucky that most of my team are so caring people that they care so much that they do take the time to get to know the people that they treating.

David Phelps: You've also stated and I certainly feel this from you is that you don't take for granted coming to America, you don't take for granted gaining your dental degree from UCLA. You also... So you give back in many, many ways.

Janice Doan: Yes.

David Phelps: I know that you're a part of the Mobile Clinic, the Dental Clinic Rescue Mission for homeless people. You do a Special Patients Clinic. You're also involved with Give Kids A Smile day. This is also part of your passion, right. Because you realized when you came how little you had and whoever was there to help, whatever it was that that was what gave you that step to the next, that allowed you and your family and your sister and brother to move forward in life, right?

Janice Doan: Yeah. So I participate and give back so much because I think it's important once you get to do what you do best and you love what you do and you do so well at it and that you... Growing you have to give back. I think that everyone needs to give back and so I do a lot of charity for an organization that I'm involved with. So about two

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weeks ago I did Care Harbor, which is a free nonprofit organization in Los Angeles where I go and give free dental care to over 1,000 people. And going back there really each time reminds me of why I do what I do because I get to help the people because I was one of them.

So it was very, very aligned with my purpose but it's also a good reminder for me because when I was there, kids, adult, everyone was just so poor, so unfortunate but they have hope and I wanted to be a part of that to tell them that there's hope out there as long as they able just to take one step at a time and change their life by the way that they think or whatever the circumstances is that there is hope. That it's not... Whatever situation they're in that it's not the end of it.

David Phelps: I notice that you are also a big proponent of business, whatever business it is, that people having businesses, I mean that's a lot of the culture. I think that you and many like yourself who immigrate to the United States understand it's a land of opportunity so business is a great place to be. You've been to Grant Cardone's business 10X, tell me about that? What's your connection there? How did you find your way and really become enthralled with just business as business?

Janice Doan: I learn a lot through my sister about how to grow a dental practice so after working in the dental practice I learn how to grow. I learn how to train my staff. I learn how to do better dentistry and then I wanted to grow even from that, so I stumble upon Grant Cardone through my sister who follow him and then I started following him, and they we just connected ever since. So he have the 10X Growth

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Con, which is once a year, it's a very, very big entrepreneur event that happened in Miami and Florida and Vegas so every year I would go and I would meet and connect with so many different people, people from all walks of life that I would never meet if I just stay inside my dental box.

So I try to get out that dental box and meet and find what other people are doing so I implement their thought process of how they deal with their business and incorporate that within the dental practice.

David Phelps: I think that's so smart because you've already figured out there's so much in business that has application to what we do in dentistry and sometimes in our industry we think well, our industry is special, it's unique and it's not like anything else and that's not true is. That we can take and apply so much from other people that are different businesses and maybe think differently, maybe have done things in a different way and you can bring that back and incorporate any part of that you feel like is appropriate for what you're doing in your own dental practices.

Janice Doan: Yeah. It's about learning but also a lot of people go to conventions or events and they learn but they don't really implement or apply what they learn and so everyone apply things differently so you just have to get the knowledge and really apply to your own business to see how it work.

David Phelps: That's important point, that just going and getting more information, more education is not necessarily lead to anything unless you actual implement. Why do you think it is that a lot of people don't implement what new things

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they may learn or maybe they're resistant to change?
What's... I'm just interested in your thought on that, why do some people, not all but some people are just resistant to implementing anything?

Janice Doan: I think it's because they comfortable with how things are even though they think that they need to do more but once it come down to like, okay, let's do it, they more shy from that because they don't like to be uncomfortable. They like to stay within what they know and be good at so something that going to challenge them make them feel like scary and it's true, it is scary but that's what going to separate you from someone that's going to do bigger thing.

David Phelps: There's always that fear when you get to a certain point in life as you said you may be comfortable but the fear of trying something new and you may quote fail or you may get it right the first time and I think our culture so built on everybody succeeding and everybody getting the blue ribbon, right. And the trophy for first place and if you don't get that then you're not good enough and I think that's a big problem we have today.

Janice Doan: Yeah. And I think people need to learn that it's okay to fail. I fail a lot before I win. I fail in a lot of different ways but the thing is that I'm never going to give up. I'm going to get up and try something different and then keep getting up and try something different until you actually succeed at what you're trying to accomplish.

David Phelps: So you have a son, I think he's four or five years old, am I correct?

Janice Doan: Yes. He's four, he's going to be five at the end of June.

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David Phelps: At the June so he's name is Jake, right?

Janice Doan: Uh-huh. Yes.

David Phelps: So I got a question for you, how are you going to teach Jake some of the principles of life, success, perseverance, of dreams, goals, vision, without him having to experience what you did with your family?

Janice Doan: I think that I'm going to teach him all of the that through my own action. At this age he's very observing, a lot of things I don't teach him but by seeing what I'm doing he learning already. For example, I get up early to go to the gym and he see me exercising and he would like get in there and exercise with me. And I would incorporate him in my routine or when I do different posting for my dental practice and I would talk to myself and he would like try to get my camera, my phone and he start doing his own interview of himself. So things like that, that I want him to learn that I just have to more of it myself so then that way he understand what it is and he would do more of it.

David Phelps: With a lot of young people coming out of school, college and then going on to professional school in many cases and coming out with a lot of debt today, a tremendous amount of debt, hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars, how do you see that effecting the generations that are... Your generation, the generations coming up behind you, what are your thoughts, what are your advice for them as they look to careers in dentistry or otherwise and are trying to weigh the decision of wow, that's a lot of money to spend and all those years to go to school? What's your thinking today? I'm really curious because I know it's a big topic of discussion today.

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Janice Doan: Yeah. So when I was at the Care Harbor for volunteer work I was able to meet a lot of pre-dental student as well, so I actually talk a lot with those people that was there because they interested in dentistry but like you said, they concern about the debt and how the dentistry is going so but they very, very motivated to help. So I think that as long as you work hard and you want to help other people dentistry is a great way for you to contribute back to society, it's a skillset that you have to learn and that not everyone can do what you do. And the things that you do really do impact people. So if you're coming from that point of view I think that whatever it is that do how much ever debt that you're going to get in its worth it at the end of it. Because you get to do what do and not everyone can do what you do. So I... Yeah.

David Phelps: It's part of the investment in yourself right?

Janice Doan: Yes. Absolutely. It's a big investment and a lot of people think that after dental school that they are set, they going to be this doctor, that they going to make a lot of money but they don't realize that's not the real reality, that it's just a starting point. What you do after that is more important now that you have your license.

David Phelps: Janice, how do manage it all? Obviously, you do a lot of things, in fact we'll talk just for a couple minutes about your current practice situation but I know that you and your sister Justene and your brother-in-law are involved in opening your third practice, got your family, you have a personal life, you're always... And you're given back everywhere we turn, any tips on how you manage it all? And it's never easy, right? It's never... It's always up and

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down but any tips on how you manage your time and manage all the things that you do?

Janice Doan: Yes. Absolutely. I used to think that I don't have enough time but now that I do more I realize I have a lot of time if that makes sense. So the more you do the more you're able to prioritize thing of what's important for you and how you want to delegate things. So a lot of time certain things that I don't feel as important at this point in my life I delegate. So before I used to do everything, and I feel like I'm always so busy but now I do more project, I do a lot more things, so I learn to get help. I get a nanny to help my son before I used to do everything on my own. I get help getting food or cooking and things like that.

So it just about prioritize what it is that you want, you can have it all. People get stuck in that mentality that either you have a practice, or you have a family, and they have to choose, and I think that you can have both if that's what you want. It's just how to make it happen depends on you, of what you want to not sacrifice but give more of and what you want to give less of yourself to.

David Phelps: All right. Last question for you Janice, obviously you study a lot in the profession, clinical expertise, taking courses to become a better, more skilled clinician, offer more services, that's one piece of what you do. Obviously, you also study a lot in other areas that enhance your life, business, family, are there any resources or current books or places that you have engaged with that have been really instrumental outside of clinical, let's leave that outside, outside of clinical that have help you enhance your life and everything you're doing?

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Janice Doan: I read a lot of books. So you can see in the back, I have tons of library and I try to whatever I'm into either business or leadership or team management it's about anything that I want I just look online, I just look at books, at people that I want to follow, of people doing things that align with me. There's a lot of different opinion so I just want to state that you just have to find someone that you resonate with, that someone that you want to be more like of and just follow that person. Because you can get a lot of conflicting information and advice and if you follow everyone, you're going not know what to do.

You're not going to be able to take action because you stuck in your mindset. Okay, is this the right way but this guys say something else and this guys say something else and that lady say something else. So you just have to pick one person and just learn all that you can about that person that make them successful and just take whatever they say and go with and just start implementing, implementing, and implementing.

David Phelps: Dr. Janice Doan, that is excellent advice. I appreciate that so much. Appreciate your time today and I hope people will connect with you. Any place... Let's talk about where they can get your book. Let's mention your book again, because they can go on Amazon and get your book, it's the Keys for Healthy Smile After 40, right.

Janice Doan: Yeah.

David Phelps: Any place else would you like people to connect with you just so we can be more impactful.

Janice Doan: Yes. On Facebook, Janice Doan and Instagram Janice Doan. And also there's aplusfamilydentistry.com, which is

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our office website. As well as to
keystoahealthysmileafter40.com, which is the book.

David Phelps: Excellent. Janice, thank you so much.

Janice Doan: You're very welcome. Thank you, David.

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