

Ep #247: Dr. Robert Pick - The Purple Cow Wow Factor



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David Phelps: Good day everyone. This is Dr. David Phelps of the Freedom Founders Mastermind Community and the Dentist Freedom Blueprint Podcast. Today with a gentleman who I highly respect, I have been following and I've had the opportunity to meet in person. I've had the opportunity to also be around his aura, his energy. He is one of the most energetic people I know and is all about dentistry, the art of, the science of, but also I would say the business of. And so let me introduce today my guest, Dr. Bob Pick. Bob, how are you doing, sir?

Dr. Bob Pick: Pretty excellent, Dave. Absolutely honored and flattered to be here.

David Phelps: Well, this is going to be really fun. I'm going to give our listeners a little bit of a background, and then we're going to dive right into our topic today, which I think is going to be of extreme relevance to anybody who's running a business or professional practice, dentistry especially. It applies across the board and this is going to be really good stuff.

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So Bob Pick is a Popular Business Practice Management Consultant, coach, bestselling author, entrepreneur and professional international speaker known for his high energy, fast moving, motivational, highly educational and entertaining programs. I've seen them personally. It's all true. His audience always goes home with great information that can be used immediately for practice enhancement and reward. Dr. Pick is also the CEO of the Pick Group, a practice management firm based on ethics and excellence, all designed to yield a happy, healthy and wealthy practice.

He's also in private practice, right in the trenches just like I used to be. Dr. Pick is recognized by Dentistry Today as one of the top 200 leaders in continuing education, has won this honor, all 21 years that the award has been given. He currently writes monthly practice management articles for Dentistry Today and Dentist Money Digest. Last October, Dr. Pick's article, which we'll talk about the subject matter, was the most viewed in Dentistry Today, over 14,000 views. So we'll talk about that article, where that came from. Dr. Pick is also an official spokesperson for the American Dental Association, is often in the broadcast media ranging from Good Morning America to the National Enquirer. Dr. Bob Pick, I'm about worn out. I'm going to have to turn it over to you here in a second because that was a lot to say, but the thing we're going to talk about today is the PBR, acronym that stands for the Pick Business Team Building Retreat.

It's one of the keystones of what is, I think made you successful, and it's kept you from the burnout that a lot of practitioners have. This is one of your most powerful secrets to success and so good that in chapter eight of

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Jack Canfield's new book called Mastering the Art of Success. It's of the Chicken Soup for the Soul books and success principles. Chapter eight features the PBR, the Pick Business Team Building Retreat.

So let's jump in here. First of all, Bob, you're in the trenches. You're a clinician. In fact, we probably started practice about the same time, I was 83, were you about in that early 80s era? I believe. Yes.

Dr. Bob Pick: Yeah. Exactly.

David Phelps: And in part of your clinical kudos I would say is you were in on the first stages of the advancement of the laser technology that we enjoy today. Give us a little piece of that and then I want to dive into our topic. So talk about that. How did you get involved there?

Dr. Bob Pick: Boy, right place, right time. Two things going through my head. Had you ever told me in 1983 when I finished Perio that I would be talking with you today on management. I would have said to you that you're nuts. And Linda Miles was just getting going, Roger Levin, most management people were charlatans. I was six months out of my training, right place, right time. Make this story very easy. We had a handicapped child that we were going to do an operating room case. We shared the OR at Northwestern with oral surgery and ENT. As I'm waiting, the guy was behind and I'm like, "Bernie, are you ever going to get done?" And I noticed there was a new machine in the room that wasn't there last week. And I'm like, "What is that?" He goes, "I don't know, it's a new CO2 laser, just came last week. None of us know what it does." And he goes, "Let's turn it on."

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He was doing a tonsil repair. We had no idea what we were doing. Today, we would have had the intubation tube with the sort of foil, but he fired it on part of the tonsillar pillar and I was like, wow, there was no blood. He was able to control where he was at. Later that day I went to his office, he was Oral Surgery Chairman at that time, DDS, MD, Oral Surgery, ENT. And I said, "Freedoms, biopsies, cuts. Has anybody ever used it?" :I don't know. It's only been here a week." So long story short, I grabbed 20 midline phrenectomies and lingual frenectomies. That took us two seconds to get the approval. Today would take two years. We did it. I was cool because I was an attending. I was always taught part-time, very important to me. I told one of the residents, "I think we're going to get paged all night long from pain."

Nobody paged us. And a week later everybody was like, "There was no pain. You didn't have to stitch, no bleeding, no swelling, no scarring, reduction of surgical time." First person to ever publish on lasers in the world, wrote the first textbook on the subject and yes, the rest is history. Most young people today probably don't even know who I am. I was the first person in the world. I'm very honored, but I left lasers almost 23 years ago for many reasons. Ethical, time, used them every week, every day. They're amazing. And if you know, had a health challenge in 97, which is why I'm at where I'm at today.

David Phelps: So you said right time, right place. I would also add to that Bob, also curiosity. You have to be curious about I think everything in life today. Because if you're not, how do you discover, how do you find new things not only about yourself but in your profession, anywhere. You were

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curious. You saw something that was new, hadn't seen before and instead of just ignoring it because it wasn't relevant to anybody at the moment, you asked a question. That question led to all the things that you just espoused. So I think that's another key is your curiosity is what keeps you going. And I'll bet your curiosity has something to do with your foray into management. So talk about that. How did you get into management? You talked about Linda Miles, Roger Levin, people that were the era who have been outstanding ever since. Where did you find your place?

Dr. Bob Pick: Very quickly, bad things can turn into good things and I was in a practice partnership that I knew was not working per se. It was the guy with the visibility. The other one was sort of the analytical one. Without boring everybody, in 1997, I had cancer in my appendix, unheard of and no survivability rate, but I told my buddies in Northwestern when my hair is gray, I still want to be on committees with you guys. I don't care what you do, do it. Went through 14 months of experimental chemo and radiation. Never missed a day of work, I don't know how that happened and never lost the hair on my head, which I was supposed to, but I lost it everywhere else. I have no hair in my armpits, not that you need to know. But long story short, good things come from bad and I said, "Life is short."

I bought my practice partnership out, goodbye, not working. Great person. I would sit in his chair if I had to. We looked at team differently and all this stuff. I discovered my overhead was out of control and I signed a secrecy agreement with one of my mentors. Mentors, peeps of great word, great word. Dave Phelps, financial

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mentor, hello, Freedom Founders and the greatest thing of lasers that came out of it, is not lasers. It was, I got put face to face with the leaders of dentistry at the time. One of them that just passed away, Pete Dawson taught me more than anybody you can ever imagine. Goldstein and Garber, Gordy Christianson, Denny Turner. So I signed a secrecy agreement with one of them whose name will go unmentioned. I hired their management consultant. I told her I was going to immerse myself in her systems and make it better.

When I was out there with lasers, I realized there was times I was presented at a fortune 500 company as they wanted to get going with lasers. I'll never forget, she even wanted to get in the laser business. I know. I do this is meeting, but I started grabbing agendas. Long story short, after my systems were in place, my overhead had gotten into control, I said, "You know what, these companies are doing biannual retreats. There's a reason they're fortune 500 and fortune 100." Although Jack Welch would have a heart attack today that GE is no longer an S and P 500 company, so I grabbed my team. I said, "We're going away from the office. We're going to do a retreat." Within the first year, one of my team members said, "Let's call it the Pick Business Retreat." I then changed it into Pick Business Team Building. Team building is so important to me.

If you don't have the right team. It ain't going to happen. And it developed first five years, they were one day a piece. They got to be done away from the office. They are now two days. And I debated to do this, whether to do a clinical day, I'm at the office today, I'm in the trenches like everybody else or did I have the Pick Group banner

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behind me in a shirt and tie or something like that. So I'm in the trenches and it's one of the greatest things you can do. And Steve Jobs had a great quote "Imitate those that are successful. Put your own spin on it, crank it and do it better." So I said, "There's a reason fortune 500 companies are successful. I want to be successful. Stay ahead of the game."

David Phelps: Yeah. So yeah. So I want to pick that apart. Not to use a pun on your name, but I'm going to pick it apart just a little bit just to make sure-

Dr. Bob Pick: No pun on the Pick.

David Phelps: So what I understand you say is, you were in a partnership with a great person, but there was just a lack of fit on vision. Overhead was out of control and your health issue, those things combined kind of puts you in a place where you decided, there is no reason why not to make some changes now, Hey my health's at risk, if I get through this, there no reason to carry on the way I used to because Hey, throw it all out. So that adversity kind of puts you in a position where you can say, "Hey, I'm going to kind of go for it." I'm going to go for it.

There's no reason to stay comfortable, even if you were uncomfortable. And then part of your background in lasers allowed you to start speaking to fortune 500 companies about lasers and while you were kind of immersed in their culture, speaking of them, you discovered that they did these biannual retreats. So again, I want people to get who you are because these things didn't happen by a plan, by some magnificent plan you had in 1983 when you graduated. You went out in the world like we all do, you start tracking, you started doing

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what you thought was the right thing in your practice and treating patients and all that good stuff, but some things, some curve balls hit.

Your partner, not the exact fit. Your health. Certainly a big curve ball. Your curiosity into lasers provide you an opportunity, which you were wise enough to take it and go speak and that led you to something. That's because you're curious again, you didn't just go speak and go home. You spoke and then looked around like you did that day when you saw the CO2 laser, said, "Huh, maybe there's something here that I could take back to dentistry," even though this is fortune 500, there's some practices here that might apply. And so that's how you started the whole PBR, is that correct?

Dr. Bob Pick: Absolutely. 110% correct. And it's challenging your own self. It's thinking out of the box, but taking things that are successful and cranking it, it's huge. And whether it's my own, whether the Pick Group is helping somebody, those PBRs help you do things that are so important. And if you want, I'll talk about what are those things that are important.

David Phelps: Well, let's do this because one thing I know that you're very wise about also, is right people, right seats. So hiring the right people because you can want to do all these great things. PBR being one of those, and develop a culture with a mission, vision, purpose. But if you don't have the right people, I don't care how strong a leader you are. Isn't that going to be kind of like hitting your head against a brick wall? So it starts with people. I mean, did you have the right people back when you started PBR,

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were any changes have to occur while you were going through that process? I'm just curious.

Dr. Bob Pick: Do we have till midnight?

David Phelps: Probably not. So, short form. Short form.

Dr. Bob Pick: You hit on something so important. You saw me reach for something. Whether it's me, you, any business, Apple, Amazon. You've got to have a mission, a vision and a corporate culture. You've got to have it, but as you just said, if you don't have the right team, forget it. All day long. There was a post the other day on a Facebook group. "Well, half my team is okay. I'd like to fire half of them, but I'm settling." Don't settle. For those of you that want to go further, August Dentistry Today did an interview on me. Focus on correcting, finding the right team members in a very efficient but short way. Here's what you need to do.

First off, I firmly believe you've got to understand what's called the DISC Personality Profile System. There's others out there. I love DISC. Really quick, D stands for driver personality, my way or the highway. Simon from America's Got Talent, he doesn't like you, goodbye, you're done. Don't talk politics. Donald Trump, my way or the highway. Okay. That's driver. Then there is expressive. Dolly Parton, she's all over the place. When she talks to you and "Hi, how are you? What's going on? My desk is a mess." Then there's S, for steady relater or amiable and you saw my voice change. I'm a little bit softer. I have great listening skills. When I lecture, I use the Pope as an example. I don't care what religion you are, he's just a sweet, nice guy. And then there's, got to put my glasses on. Then there's C for calculating or

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analytical. Mr. Spock is the example I use. When you have your medical history in somebody who's a computer programmer, they're most likely going to be a C. And we are 3.27 microns from getting loose enamel rod and we will be 2.4807 seconds until we're done.

So once you know DISC, you know a lot. Everybody that interviews gets a small test, takes 10 minutes, tells me where they're at. So you got to understand their personality. One of my own quotes is, "Image coupled with a strong performance is unstoppable." I also look before somebody makes it to me, you should have an awesome office manager. You've met my office manager, Diana, who is also my lead consultant. She is awesome. But what do they look like? Do they have a manicure? Pedicure? Are they put together? Because that's going to say a lot about you. Who's ever first on phones, which is also usually the person meeting people coming through the door. You want a primary expressive personality. "Hey Dr. Phelps, we're so glad to see you today. Come on in. Have a seat" or, "Good morning, Dr. Smith's office. This is Annie. How may I help you today?"

There's times I call offices. "Doctor's office, may help you?" I'm out of there. So, one who's ever first on phones, your hygienist, your assistants should be what's called IS or SI personalities. People that want to engage but also want to listen. If you have an insurance coordinator, you probably want somebody that's analytical. You want somebody that can sit in that desk and work. You don't want somebody like me that's ADD, that can't sit still. Your office manager should be driver personality. There should be analytical in there. Each position fits and I see more people hire the wrong people, but there's something

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else, which my own arms don't go out long enough, is huge and I published on this, this last summer. It's called the HQ factor. Hospitality quotient. The restaurant industry, Danny Meyer figured this out. I want all of my team members and they have it.

Have 51% HQ, 49% skill. Hire the right people, dental peeps. You can train them. My office manager, my front desk, they did not have anything to do with dentistry when I picked them up. But I wanted them, they can be trained. So many things today. That HQ is huge. You want that hospitality quotient in 20 seconds, is somebody that has a natural curiosity about that patient in the chair and wants to make it the most awesome, amazing experience. We love when a patient goes, "Nobody likes going to the dentist, but you're my favorite place to come to." We do the video check, patient said the other day, "Medicine, dentistry, I've never in treated this way ever." You guys are my favorite.

David Phelps: So Bob, so obviously the DISC has a profile that you can, as you said, you can test if you will or run your applicants for your staff through that. And so you know where they sit. What about HQ? Is that also profiled? So, you can test for hospitality and aptitude. Is there?

Dr. Bob Pick: Boy, great question. There is no test for HQ. It's in feeling. And it's something you got to pick up and everybody's different in a leadership role and that's where if you feel you're not a good leader, we all have strengths and weaknesses. I don't care if it's me, I don't care if it's Linda Miles, hire the right coach that can help you hire the right people. And with today's technology, there's times we simply help people. We'll do a Zoom conference and

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interview the person for that. It's a feeling that you get, you ask the right questions, do you like people? Do you engage with them? You've got to have that HQ and it's a feeling. It's no different than somebody walks through the door. How do they walk? What do they look like? I hate to say this, my better half Carmen says I look at things guys aren't supposed to look at. If somebody's got a chipped manicure, it's summertime, they've got a chipped pedicure. Their colors aren't matching. They're not part of my team because it's a reflection on me.

David Phelps: Exactly. So Bob, here's what I hear a lot of dentists talk about today and I think you and I both acknowledge that a lot of dentists say, "Gee, if I could just go do the dentistry, just focus on the patient, the treatment. But the staff issues just tear me up." And that's what we're talking about here today. So it's how to build a culture with the right people in the right seats. Today we have an unemployment rate that is the lowest it's been in 50 years. That means people out are finding jobs. And a lot of young people are, don't seem as... A lot of them, I'm not trying to overgeneralize here because there's good people, there's not so good people in every generation. But a lot of young people like the mobility, many times, I think people that are hiring too fast, bring them on and then a young person is not engaged, they're not the right person and they're off to the next, off to the next. The cost, the overhead cost, payroll cost versus talking about it as an investment.

I know that's a big conundrum too. Gee, I've got to get my payroll costs here, I can't afford to pay more and yet the marketplace is demanding that good people be compensated. Well, not just in the dollars paid, but also

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good people want to be in a place that they enjoy being. It's not just for a paycheck. I just threw a whole bunch at you. So digest that and spit a little bit back at me on some of that. Okay.

Dr. Bob Pick: Wow. I don't know where to begin, but you're absolutely correct. And we have the lowest unemployment rate ever, we've got companies not leaving. That's whole other story. You like it. I like it. But don't hire to hire. I'd rather be shorthanded and take care of those people. Then hire to hire because you're going to pay the price, but if you do the right things, you're going to find the people. People don't network. Half my employees that are here, I have a team of eight. They came from networking and three of those four came from the same person and she's a hygienist that got married, moved to Florida. I no longer allow that to happen, but one of the PBRs, we gave her the Hotel California award. She can check out but never leave. She's always part of our team. Network, talk to people. People are there and when you get the right people, dental peeps, take care of them.

And I do things for my team and for teams we coach. We teach them to do things they're not taught in dental school. As an example, I'll say, "Diana, tell everybody next week on Wednesday, I'm buying lunch. It's a surprise lunch." "Everybody don't bring your lunch next week, Dr. Pick's buying lunch." I set rewards around goals. Come summertime, if we're over goal for that point, I used to do it as a surprise, doesn't work anymore. We take the afternoon off. We'd go to what's called Chicago Premium Outlet Malls. Everybody gets \$200 cash, \$250. And they got two hours to go shopping. We come back and we see what everybody got. We go live on Facebook. Any money

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leftover goes to the Wounded Warrior Project. My favorite donation, unfortunately, Wounded Warrior has gotten zero at that time.

David Phelps: They're just too good shopping, aren't they? Too good.

Dr. Bob Pick: They get it from me at Christmas time, I've never in the last 20 years of practice, I've never had anybody come to me for a raise. When they least expect it. Annie, whose first on phones here, I thought she was doing an unbelievably awesome job. But springtime, and I know Annie, there are some personal issues. All kinds of stuff. Doesn't come through the door, it's show time when you come through the door. I called her in with my office manager and I sort of kept a very straight face and I said, "By the way, on your next paycheck you got a raise, you've got this much more." Came out of nowhere. She started crying, made her day. Blow your team away. Purple cow wows.

David Phelps: Okay. We're going to talk about it. Yeah, I want to talk about the purple cow. Quick side question. You have eight staff currently. What has been your experience with turnover? You mentioned you lost a hygienist because she got married. So pretty much zero. Over how many years then?

Dr. Bob Pick: 23 since I did the PBR. And I had a dentist on, I don't want to mention the Facebook group. I told her my office runs correctly 99% of the time, turnover doesn't exist. She thinks I'm kidding. And it's taking care of your team, when you take care of your team... Simon Sinek has a great quote, "Leadership is not about being in charge. It's taking care of those in your charge." I'll take a bullet for my team. They're that amazing and when we get five, we

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have all five star Google reviews. The teams we coach, we want them to get five star Google reviews. They mention all my team members all the time and one of my assistants, Gosia, is a Polish name. G-O-S-I-A. Even know how to spell it when they put it in the thing. You take care of your team. The only time I have turnover is when somebody gets divorced and marries somebody out of town and that no longer will happen in my practice. I made that as an illegal rule.

David Phelps: All right. You have been pronounced with the Purple Cow Award. Purple cow wows. Let's talk about that. You showed us the purple cow a second ago. What does that represent?

Dr. Bob Pick: Here's the purple cow, and very quickly, if you haven't read it, Seth Goden's book, Purple Cow. You can read it in one bathroom trip, but it simply says, be remarkable in a great way. Separate yourself in a great way from the competition. You're driving up in Wisconsin, all the Holstein cows are black and white, if you saw a purple cow in great shape, you'd stop, take pictures, send it to all your friends. So when you do that PBR, Pick Business Team Building Retreat, you've got to be thinking purple cow, purple cow. When you develop your mission, your vision, your brand, what do you do better than anybody else. Like you, every time I go to a website before we coaching off it, we went to the best schools. We got the best team. We do Invisalign, we do implants, we do intro, oral hemorrhoidectomies.

But what do you do better than anybody else? You've got to do a business SWAT. Strength, weakness, opportunity, threats. Something I discovered from the Harvard

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business review. If you don't get it, peeps, get it. Something called a STEW. STEW stands for satisfy the patient, team, extra mile, wow factor in all that you do. So when you think like that, what I'm about to tell you dental peeps, please do this. It's my biggest return on investment and it's to any office we coach. Dental Economics, I've published in it. If you want to read about it, it's called the Pick post-procedural video check. We call everybody the night of surgery. I don't care if you prepped a tooth, put a veneer on, took a tooth out. If you did anesthetic, call on the way home. But the next morning, right after huddle, takes us three minutes. We grab our phone stabilizer, I grab two of the assistants.

We turn on the video recorder on the phone. Hi Dave. It's Bob Pick and I'm here with part of my assisting team. We call this the post for huge or video check. I want to make sure you're doing okay from the veneer placement yesterday. Want to make sure that you're okay from the shots. Any problems day or night. Here's my phone number. XXX-547-9525. This is the office cell, 250-479-7979, please feel free to text me back at any time. We'll see you next week. Take care, bye bye. And the assistants, take care, bye bye.

That'll give you an idea, we then go to notes. We simply do copy paste. At 11:30, we send it to their cell phone, we send the video. 11:30 on purpose, so it comes, just before lunch. People get it, they're blown away. It should be 50 seconds or less. So you don't bore them. Video engages peeps 1200 times greater than text or voice. So 11:30, wow. They show it to everybody at work and then they show it at home. Oh my God. And the weekend I showed

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it to my relatives. It is the biggest purple cow, wow ever. It works.

David Phelps: Well, it's so personal and as you said, it's quick and easy. Grab the camera. You're ready to go. Anything that takes a lot of effort on our part, we're not going to do. But you make it easy. You've got the technology right there, camera stabilizer, you've practiced it, it's spontaneous. You know what to say. But the person receiving it, it's a touch that they don't get anywhere else. And as you said, they open it before lunch and now what are they going to talk about at lunch? You've got to see this, you've got to see this. They're showing everybody and now you just exploded your marketplace, and your referral base. How many times, over and over again. So I assume that you have a list of purple cows besides the one that you just talked...

I mean, there's probably a list of those things. And I'm sure at the PBR retreats, at the retreats you do, that you're always evaluating or what else could we add or what other things we could do? Because those are the keys that make you stand out. It's an era where there's a tendency towards the commoditization of all healthcare, right? There is a tendency towards that. You are pushing back against that 180 degrees by doing the things you're doing with the purple cow experiences. That's the key. People don't care about your degrees. They don't care about how much you're taking. They don't care about really the latest technology. I mean, that's assumed, that is all assumed today and if you're not standing out other than that, I mean, where are you? You're just another name. You're another dental office. Just like a Starbucks on the street corner. Right.

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Dr. Bob Pick: There is one word, which may be the most important word of this entire podcast. It's called relationship. If you have the relationship with the patient, your team, specialists, your referral teams. For most reasons, most people don't say no, but they don't take time to develop the relationship. You cannot do it in a two minute exam. All patients we meet are met in a preclinical interview room away from the office. Patient doesn't have a bib on.

Hi, I'm Bob. How are you? Tell me why you're here today. We develop the relationship and I'm going to embarrass Dave for a second here. He's purple cow and if he wasn't purple cow, for those of you that don't get it every month or maybe it comes out every week, I get the no BS inner circle newsletter from Dan Kennedy and look who's featured in last months letter. You. And it's stuff like this. It makes you purple cow. Dan Kennedy doesn't feature people that aren't purple cow. Dan is... If he doesn't like you, like Simon Cowell, he's going to tell you I don't have time for you. Your 20 minutes is up, goodbye. Am I wrong?

David Phelps: That's pretty much it. Pretty much it. Well Bob, we could do a whole series on this and never run out of content because we touched the surface, but you're a great resource. Obviously people can find your articles in Dentistry Today. Other places where people can find you, your website, thepickgroup.com is a great place to go. Your email, drpick@thepickgroup.com. And phone number 773-402-8933. You're a gem to the industry. Bob, you're a gentleman, but you bring so much talent, experience and wisdom. Wisdom of years. I mean, we both have some years under us and we're both survivors. We don't ever espouse that we do anything perfectly. Just

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as we said earlier, your move forward in life had to do with circumstances and curiosity and the fact that you never take no for an answer.

In other words, there's a better way to do something. You're going to find it because of your curiosity, you reach out beyond the industry, in other areas. You say, Hey, what can I bring back to my world, my team, my culture, my practice that can differentiate me and make us stronger and better? And that's exactly who you are. So I can't think of anybody that is more pragmatically influential and inspirational than you are. And it's just an honor to have you on here today. Thank you so much for your time Bob.

Dr. Bob Pick: And thank you for having me. And really quick, it's funny how in the virtual world like finds like. Couldn't wait to meet you at the Win-Win Conference. It was great and you got stuck with me as a friend for life.

David Phelps: Likewise, thank you sir. We'll talk again soon.

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