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With Your Host

**Dr. David Phelps** 

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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 an old friend, a good friend, somebody I loved to hang out with and we're going to have a fun discussion day with Dr. David Maloley of the Relentless Dentist Podcast and many other things

as well. David, how are you doing sir?

David Maloley: I'm awesome David. It's always great to connect.

David Phelps: It was great to spend time with you and Ben and Kara a

couple months ago up there near your area up in

Breckenridge. You're up in the Vail area and we'll talk about that. But it was great to connect with you guys. Just out of fun, we found out that we were going to the same

concert, Dave Matthews Band-

David Maloley: Yeah that's right.

David Phelps: Two separate nights, back to back. And we went one

night and you went the next night and we had a chance to talk about another commonality. So that was kind of kind

of cool.

David Maloley: Yeah, we love that. Thank you.

David Phelps: So just a little more about your background. So Dr. David

Maloley is a graduate of the University of Nebraska College of Dentistry. He attended an AEGD residency in Fort Jackson, South Carolina, served as a dental officer.

Thank you very much for your service David.

David Maloley: To non-army.

David Phelps: for five years. While in the military he was stationed

abroad in Germany and Italy. After he returned to the U.S. He moved to Vail, Colorado to start Vail Valley Dental

Care in 2009, 10 years ago. He's the host of the

Relentless Dentist Podcast, a co-founder of the Dental Success Network, and a certified high performance and leadership coach. So that's a mouthful. You keep yourself busy, mentioned you have a beautiful family and enjoy a

lot of time doing fun things with them,

David Maloley: For sure.

David Phelps: which is critical. I know when you and I first met some

years ago, by the way, I want to also say that that David you're one of the first dental podcasters out there. Really, you were like one of the first two or three or a handful and

had one of your earlier ones and-

David Maloley: I just checked the date. It was August 20th, 2013 if you

can believe it or not.

David Phelps: 13, six years ago. Now podcasts are just part of society.

David Maloley: I remember having to explain this, I'm inviting you to a

podcast and this is what a podcast is. Not to you, but to

many other guests I had on the show.

David Phelps:

Oh, exactly. Well and looking at how the landscape has proliferated in those last six years. And now there's podcasts on every possible subject out there. But it's a great way to learn. I think it's a great way for people like us to have conversations and just talk about the topics and subjects, life, business, career investing, whatever it is that are fun. So making it engaging in these conversations. I think is a big part of it. But your Relentless Dentist Podcast, definitely one of the first ones out there and definitely very strong. You carry a strong message and one of the things I know about you is that you are relentless. And one of the things that I know you're relentless about is your vision about your life. And I think that's a thing that a lot of people put off.

They try to ignore, try to put aside because they feel maybe guilty. Right? I feel guilty because I spent a lot of time getting an education in a certain field. We're talking to a lot of professional practice owners, but it could be anything. Put a lot of time I put a lot of money into the education, and how can I even have thoughts of, gee, does this totally fit? Does this totally fit? Do I want to do this for a career 25, 30, 35, 40 years? Look, there's no right or wrong answer, but I think being truthful and I'll think to oneself is the key. It's hard to do though, isn't it?

David Maloley:

Oh my gosh. Yeah. There's so many times during my path, I just, I had the vision, I get let it get hijacked. Sometimes it was a weekend course, sometimes it was a piece of technology. And my original vision is how it played out, but I took the most windy road because I'm an easy sale if you want me to buy a cone beam, I want the best cone beam. And so yeah, there's a lot of course correction that goes along the way. But you said a

mouthful. I was on another show and they asked me how do we have dentists have breakthroughs? And I said, it all starts with the truth. So if you're lying to yourself and what your true desires are, or you have all this guilt wrapped around it, like you said, it can be a really painful existence.

And we know lots of colleagues that are in that space because they're not honoring maybe why they got into dentistry or a new discovery certainly can serve from that place. And I think that's why a lot of dentists deny that, because it seems so selfish. But I would argue that that's the only place to serve from. You have to carve out that time and that clarity if you're going to serve at higher and higher levels and not reach this cliff where we see a lot of our peers fall off, unfortunately.

David Phelps:

So you set a vision or a plan, kind of a deadline, a date certain few years ago, and you had a three to five year plan. Can you elucidate a little bit what that kind of that plan said to you or how you expressed it?

David Maloley:

About a little over three years ago is when things with speaking and coaching were taking off for me. Not really by design, but kind of by demand and I was falling in love with that. I really enjoyed helping people avoid the pits that I fell into and helping them shorten their course and get further faster. And so I knew that I couldn't do both full-time. And so I went down to 11 or 12 days in my practice and that was a pretty abrupt thing. And in doing so I got more and more traction and developed this passion, which was coaching. And it got to the kind of the breaking point where it was an either or thing. It sounded like a good idea to split time, but I found myself coaching

during practice days and worrying about the practice when I should be coaching.

And a lot of my breakthroughs came from really compartmentalizing and creating boundaries around my time. And so I knew that I needed to continue to perpetuate my coaching skillsets, my message, my voice if it were going to continue to trend upwards. And so actually after my left here by my computer, I bought a little countdown clock like you'd see in a basketball game and this happens to be days and months. And I set my son's 10th birthday, May 5th, 2020, as the day that I decided that I would hang up the handpiece. And I didn't quite know how I would do that. And a lot of it was I had to listen to my own teachings. A lot of times I coached dentists like let's not get stuck in the how because sometimes you need to be on step seven to figure out step eight. And so once we're clear and we know what we want and why we want it and who we have to become to get it, we're going to take a whatever it takes attitude.

So don't think we need this beautiful blueprint, because a lot of our assumptions are wrong. And that was hard. That was a bitter pill for me to swallow because I'd been sermonizing on that and that was my time. And I didn't know what it would look like if I would bring on a partner or an exit associate and become an absentee owner and develop them as a leader. And that wasn't very long ago. And I hear a lot in and books like Think and Grow Rich about you set this intention and sometimes strange forces come to your aid, and that's really what I felt like in the last year.

And so a lot I can explain, a lot I can't explain, but it goes back to the power of clarity in a lot of ways. When you're foggy on your targets you get foggy outcomes. And I became crystal clear and a lot happened to make a lot of beautiful things happen in the last, oh man, the wheels really got set in motion February, March? Talks to sell practice really got traction April, May. And we closed right out a month ago. So 3rd week in September. So now I'm an associate.

David Phelps: So you beat your deadline by seven or eight months.

David Maloley: To a degree. I'll officially hang up the handpiece at the

end of April. I'm working on one day a week to help with

the transition.

David Phelps: Yeah.

David Maloley: And so I'll exit from dentistry completely, so I'll beat it by

five days I think when it's all said and done.

David Phelps: So you mentioned that at one point when you were

finding your passion and enjoying the coaching and

mentoring portion, trying to compartmentalize or split time

between the practice, and you intentionally cut your

practice days down to 11 to 12 days a month. Now from a

financial standpoint, what were you doing? Were you

doing as many as 15 or 16 what in days?

David Maloley: I would say, I've owned the practice for 10 years. We

started at every day as it takes in a startup. Mostly we're at 15 to 18 I would say. A couple of years previous we were down consistently 15, and so I carved that up basically another day a week to get down and have had

that real work on the business, work on realist dentist

time, set aside as opposed to taking kind of what was left over there for awhile.

David Phelps:

So for a lot of people that's a scary thing to actually cut down the physical time that you're working in your practice in your career. Did that take much of a hit for you financially from the practice side to cut from the days that you were working originally? As many as 18 down to 15 and then to 11 or 12?

David Maloley:

We never slowed down. We actually grew every year and it's a testament to all the holes in the bucket that exist in even a really great running practice. I see a lot of dentists chasing more operatories, more practices, thinking that's the only way to grow. And I'm not against it. If you're clear on that's what you want and you're willing to pay the price to win the prize. But I would argue that almost any solo practice could be optimized from now until the end of time and you'd never be done. And that's where we got our wins is stop focusing on time and effort. How many hours were we in the practice to bottom line results in the form of goodwill and case acceptance. And that year that we dropped pretty abruptly, we grew by 50% which was one of our biggest spikes.

And that was really a testament to finding those inefficiencies. My goal was to stay flat, quite frankly, and I hate to admit that because I'm kind of addicted to growth and I push really hard on either we're growing or dying in a lot of cases, but that's the power of delegation, that's the power of all these things that we know we should do. But sometimes we need forced efficiency.

In that case we had to come up with it or else, well their paycheck wouldn't necessarily drop, but mine certainly

was, and I wasn't going to let that happen. Just from a pride standpoint, being a somewhat of a business entrepreneur student that that's the last thing I ever wanted to do was say, Oh, we were up and up until I carved out more time. So I would have been content with gaining a few percentage, but we grew by 15% and our numbers were already quite strong. So when people tell me we've reached a capacity, I would argue probably not because that was in four ops and 1200 square feet the whole 10 years.

David Phelps:

Wow. Wow. When you created more time or space by cutting down the number of days you were actively in the practice, you can do to grow. But talk about that extra space or time that you now had available to, well I'll just call it think time. It doesn't mean you have to go do something more. Obviously you were doing coaching, consulting all along during this time, but what did it do for your ability just to have that time and space to actually think a little bit more and continue to go on the clarity you were developing, was that a key piece for you?

David Maloley:

Without a doubt. It's essential that we think there's something has to be on our schedule every day or night or we're not moving forward. And it's the biggest myth that busy-ness equals business. And it's glorified. If you see somebody with an open schedule, you think there's some sort of get-by person and so you have to engineer that. And I did and I could have never expected that return because I come from the farm. You brute force it. You work day and night and if you're out golfing near the laziest guy in town.

David Phelps: Exactly.

David Maloley: And so I had to break some old paradigms.

David Phelps: Yeah.

David Maloley: But really it was those Thursday mornings where I

thought I had nothing to do, where my breakthroughs

happened. It was me and a pen and a journal-

David Phelps: Yes.

David Maloley: After a workout and all of these insights and that was

never happening. I mean, certainly I'd work out before I go into the office, but I'd never had the time and space to really develop the idea and then I'd get right back into old habits. So I don't talk about that often, but I'm glad you touched on it because it just has a magic to it and we deny ourselves that ability because it's not celebrated. It's not sexy. It doesn't look good on Instagram. So we avoid

it unfortunately.

David Phelps: Well, the reason I brought it up is because exactly what I

found in my own life. The same exact thing. The busier I made myself, or allowed myself to be, the less clarity I could I have. And really through a different process in my own life, career and family situation, I was forced into a vacuum for a period of time. And that think time was so powerful as you were saying. It helped me to develop real clarity. What is my life about right now? What am I doing?

Am I living my best life, and if not, what needed to

change? And a little bit like you did, I pulled the plug on some things, I pulled the plug on the business and having to be at the practice. And like you, I ended up exiting my

practice.

And yeah, is that scary to think about? Of course it is. But having the clarity, well it's kind of like David, people talk about they're going to buy a new car. So all of a sudden they're looking at a certain model. Maybe even color, right? And then all of a sudden you see it everywhere, right? You see that car model? Well, because you've got clarity, you've got awareness. When you, when you set your deadline about how you're going to change your life, your practice one or the other, you'd know exactly what that is. But you opened the idea, you gave yourself permission to say I am going to make this change. And now it's kind of like you saw that car, that model every day. During the time you carve out it's there, right?

David Maloley: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

David Phelps: It's in your subconscious. It's living there and now you're

receptive to conversations or ideas, connections that otherwise you would have just pushed away because it

wasn't even in your line of sight.

David Maloley: For sure. For sure.

David Phelps: Huge. So tell us a little bit about how you got into

speaking, consulting, mentoring. How did that start?
Because I don't know that I really know the origin of that.

David Maloley: If I were to trace it way back, there was a book, I think it

was called The Flinch. It never ended up getting any traction. I don't think it even came out on paperback. I remember reading it on Kindle. And it was about the science of fear. And I remember not long before that I put

in, because all of my breakthroughs were happening

outside my comfort zone. I most of my life, I've been painfully shy. Most of my dental school classmates would

paintany only: most of my domai control diacomates .

say I never saw him raise his hand. I really kind of tried to fly under the radar. But all of my breakthroughs in my practice were happening when I was significantly outside my comfort zone. So the phone wasn't ringing. So I'd go live on the air with BT on Ski Country in the Morning or I'd go live on TV. And it was so far out of my comfort zone.

David Phelps: Right.

David Maloley:

But I was having breakthroughs. And so I started to realize that my favorite quote is by Joseph Campbell and the cave you fear to enter holds the treasure that you seek. And I was finding that again and again and again. And then I put a quote on the bottom of my dental town page. It said The thing you most fear is the thing that you most need to do. And kind of like what I was explaining and coaching, okay if you're going to profess this and you better start walking the talk. And I was starting to listen to podcasts, very early stages and in that I was understanding that this was going to be a medium that had significance and there was no dentists with a podcast at the time.

And literally the scariest thing I could think of was looking eye-to-eye, or ear-to-ear in this case, with somebody that I looked up to, a hero of mine in the profession and interviewing them. Even asking a question at the end of a course was hard for me. And so at that moment I knew that I had to do it. So it was a bit of an entrepreneurial seizure. It was a bit of a personal development program. It was a bit of insight and then I knew that this was going to be something significant and I wanted it to be kind of first to market there. So a conglomeration of those things

is why I picked up a microphone and plugged it into a computer and said, let's figure this out as we go.

David Phelps:

So in doing that, I totally get it. We're so similar. I'm very much a fly under the radar guy. I've never been out there. Like you, I'd never done any public speaking. Getting in front of anybody to talk about anything, or as you said, interview, get on a podcast, do what we're doing right now, yeah very much outside of my comfort zone. But I think we could both say that what we gained from that is the breakthroughs and the connections, and I think learning to better articulate verbally outside of our heads. And we're very heady people. A lot of us are. A lot of us are introverts. We live our head, right?

David Maloley: Yeah.

David Phelps:

We're not that comfortable sharing what's in our head, although stuff's moving light-speed, right. But we never take the time to express it. And so we have to learn how to do that. And I think, again, for me, and I'm sure it's same for you, I achieve a lot of clarity by doing just that. Clarity, the breakthroughs, what's next in my life. That's what I was doing. That's what you've done. You obviously felt this. There's need there. There's something that hasn't fulfilled. And I know that's the case for so many. There's, yeah, I can do this thing. I'm smart enough. I went to school, you've got some skills. I can do this. But there's something missing there. And not to be able to dig down, explore that and get clarity and find that thing and then uncover it. Right? Uncover it. Start to uncover it. Peel back the layers and let it express.

And again, you said it very well. To do that, we have to get up outside our comfort zone. we've got to do things

that we never thought we could do. And we feel clumsy at first. It doesn't feel good, right? Very clumsy. But it's making ourselves become vulnerable. And I think we can't change our lives. We can't transform anything about where we want to go or be, become until we're willing to become vulnerable. That's what getting outside the comfort zone is, right? Because now we've peeled it back. Now it's like we're open for criticism. We're open for failing, screwing stuff up. Boy, you lay it out there on the line.

David Maloley:

Yeah, for sure. And the critics are abundant, but I've never regretted it. At the end of the day ,or the end of my days, I know that I'll regret where I cut a corner, where I took the easy route, and I've certainly done that from time to time, but I've never really found dividends there. And then the fulfillment piece is completely void there. And so, in coaching with my clients, I talk a lot about that every decision is really a step forward into courage or back into comfort. And that's not a difference of one. That's a difference of two. And that's not like hang up the handpiece or move to Vail. It doesn't have to be the big leap.

Telling a patient what they need sometimes is an act of courage. When they've already told you that they don't want to hear it, you can see it in their body language, the money barriers, all this sort of stuff. It's hard to be a trusted advisor in that environment. So sometimes just looking at the x-ray and calling them like you see them is an act of courage. But there's a compound effect there, and I would argue that you can actually start to feel fear as a trigger to move forward as opposed to backward once you start getting the momentum there and realize

that there's beautiful things on the other side of that and there's not really that much staying where you are. So I use that fear as a trigger to move forward. Sometimes easier than others, but just like in business or exercise, you can get momentum there. And once you do, oh man life gets a lot more fun and easier, opens a lot of doors that you don't expect.

So that's a big piece, particularly in dentists who tend to be risk-averse and want to know the recipe from a to Z, and the right instrumentation, and the right bond agent, and materials. Life and business in my estimation doesn't really work like that ever. And so we have to take off that clinical hat and put on another one and say, okay, now I'm a CEO, now I'm the leader of my family. And what makes you an excellent clinician a lot of times gets you bogged down and trips you up in the other facets of life where you still want the same achievement. I mean, I don't know a dentist that says, Oh, I want to be a mediocre parent. Now the achievement's still there, you just don't have the architecture.

David Phelps: Right.

David Maloley: And a lot of that comes from courage and building skill

sets and mindsets like you were talking about.

David Phelps: Yeah. No, that's very, very well said. I still relate to what

you're saying. So in helping other people, I know you get a great satisfaction out of that. I do too. It's just fun. I just enjoy so much and I learned things about myself while I'm

helping other people. At the same time, what's your

framework for consulting and coaching at this point? How does that work? What are your ideal clients? Give me some frameworks there. Because I know people would be

interested in talking to you, because you've definitely made some huge leaps in your own life.

David Maloley:

In order to be a really strong advisor I feel like I can coach people in things that I've done. Things that I've danced around, headaches that I've played with. So I can give the biggest upside to someone who's owning. I've worked with students and associates and I can develop mindsets so they're prepared for ownership, but I love to control my own destiny and practice owning a practice. And why I'm a big advocate of it is really a personal development program with compensation package attached to it. The more you develop yourself as a leader, as a clinician, as a marketer, you get paid for it. If you don't, then you usually don't. So my ideal client is somebody who feels like they weren't given the skill sets or mindsets to really succeed there and really want to see the power of influence.

Not influence as a dirty word to manipulate people, but to give people the best healthcare. Case acceptance is influence. Leadership is influence. I see a lot of management out there, which is really every practice needs management, but you're going to reach higher levels by teaching people to make decisions and developing them as leaders and getting rid of some of that control and advocating some of that choice so that you can change over time. So somebody who's interested in that, I'm interested in helping them. My breakthrough in my practice was the appreciation, taking a full accountability that I was always the problem. I was always the bottleneck. And when I raise the lid, my practice followed. And so somebody who has a high level of accountability, I think is a must for any level of

coaching, particularly when I'm trying to sell, you're the problem, doctor.

We won't get very far unless you're willing to go there. And then the framework that I work through is usually five main pillars. Clarity. A lot of dentists don't even know what they want. So if we don't know that, why are we going to build velocity? Why do we want to go further faster? It might get us further from the target.

David Phelps: Exactly.

David Maloley: If we're 30 degrees off and we accelerate, that's becomes

the biggest problem was the velocity. Then energy. The hardest thing for me to accept in my practice was, it mattered how I showed up to the huddle. And so

developing a morning routine so your energy really was brought into there and realizing that that still needs to

sustain at Thursday at five o'clock or you have no business telling your team you have to be full-in, right?

Because they're just following the leader.

Courage is the third one. Fourth one is influence. Influence gets a lot of dirty looks I think, but everything that we want to do in our lives is a byproduct of influence.

Most of my clients want to be great parents, great business owners. One of my favorite clients said, I just want to feel like a badass entrepreneur. That's influence.

David Phelps: Yeah.

David Maloley: Case acceptance, helping patients want what they need

is influence. And so we can't see that as manipulation.
We see misuses of power. We see misuses of influence.
But we know that we're golden-hearted, high-integrity

dentists, and we can take that to special places if we embrace that. And the last piece is productivity. And in a dental office the biggest wins in productivity usually come from a dentist being adamant of, that's not my job. I have a dental degree, I should do things with a dental license and I need to be knowledge about all the things in the practice, but if I'm spending my time fixing sensors during the day, then I'm not the highest and best use to my patients.

And that's really the key deliverable there. And so that goes somewhat back to influences. How do we develop people so that they can make decisions that are on the best interest of the practice, the team and the patients while your heads down, that's what you really need. And then that goes to the deepest level of leadership, of charting vision, holding the vision, establishing the team and then giving them the resources to succeed. And that's a moving target. So you need a rhythm of meetings and I help a lot of dentists establish, how do you get up? And sometimes you have to be a dictator, sometimes you have to be a trainer.

And knowing the right role there and fully appreciating that has nothing to do with clinical skill.

David Phelps: Right.

David Maloley: And so again, you have to check that brain out and lease

a new one for a bit and say this is just my job. And the barrier there is always, well I'm not that business savvy. I'm not that vocal. But full appreciation that most of our colleagues are shy, introverted geeks and that cannot be a crutch to abdicate that because your lender doesn't

care. The licensing board doesn't care. It's a role that you have to fully embrace and once you do, then the breakthroughs are pretty predictable.

David Phelps:

Well, I've known you for a number of years and I know you walk the talk. You've done exactly what you are helping others do and that's gain clarity, push through the fears, out of the comfort zone to the breakthroughs. It's so important and it's such a key piece to living one's full and best life. You're a real blessing to a lot of people. I appreciate the friendship. And where can people connect with you? What's the best way to connect and learn more about how you're helping our colleagues?

David Maloley:

the podcast Relentless Dentist on iTunes, Stitch, or anywhere you can find podcasts. Like we said, that's six years in the making. So there's plenty of resources there. I would say make sure the message resonates with you. If you want to find a better burger, we won't talk about it on that show. But that's where I would start. And then you can kind of hear more about my story and I think it's a pretty unique pathway, but a very predictable pathway when we focus on the leader and saying yeah, we need to fix your phones and we need to fix your re-care system, but if we don't fix the leader, then you're constantly building and recharging and in my case rebuilding the team because people are moving away or they're getting frustrated with you. So you're the common denominator. And if we can get you trending upward on those five things we talked about, then life gets really fun, and practice success gets really predictable. So if you want to know more about that, it would be on the website, relentlessdentist.com.

David Phelps: so good. So good. Well David, thank you for your time

today. I'm excited for you because I know this has been in

the works for a while and we kind of kept it under the radar until it was out because you never want to let the

cat out of the hat until it's there.

David Maloley: Jinx myself, yeah.

David Phelps: But congratulations and-

David Maloley: Thank you David.

David Phelps: Let's be excited to see how your next continues to unfold

and you're living your life true to yourself. So thanks for

your time today, Dr. David Maloley, the Relentless

Dentist. Thank you, David.

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