

Building People First: Creating a High-Performance Dental Practice and Business

Dr. Matt VanderMolen: Ep #539



Dr. Matt VanderMolen:

In the Navy, you have advancement, right? Because you start as a neophyte knowing nothing. You go to bootcamp and then you advance through things. I learned how to help them build up in what they were doing and get better. And the more that I did that and understood that, the more they supported me. And fortunately when I first started in private practice, I kind of forgot that a little bit. I was playing the game where basically only I was the one controlling everything because I noticed that every good business has amazing people. And I finally asked somebody in a business outside of dentistry, how do you find people? And he is like, let me ask you something. What business are you in? I go, I'm a dentist. And he goes wrong. That's the wrong business. You need to be in a people building business. Then it kind of hit me, oh yeah, I've already been doing that when I was in the Navy. That's why I was so successful.

Dr. David Phelps:

Decades ago, I hustled to grow my dental practice in real estate Empire Society patted me on the back and every new deal and patient reinforced the success they said I had. Then my daughter Jenna was diagnosed with leukemia. Nine years, several intense chemo treatments and years of epileptic seizures. My daughter was given one more miracle, a lifesaving liver transplant. In that hospital, I realized I wasn't successful. I had money, I had real estate assets and a business. But the only thing that mattered was time with my daughter. In that hospital room, I decided to sell my business, leave active income, and sustain my lifestyle with my real estate assets. Now Jenna is healthy and all grown up and me. I am teaching others to do what I did and I continue to uncover the principles, strategies and lessons we can apply in business and investing to create ultimate freedom for what matters most to each of us. Welcome to the Freedom Founders podcast.

Today I sit down with an extraordinary guest and friend, Dr. Matt Vander Mullen from his early days in the Navy to building one of the top dental practices in Springfield, Illinois. Matt's journey is a masterclass in leadership, culture, building, and purpose-driven success. He doesn't just talk dentistry, he lives a mission of building people and empowering teams to reach their full potential. In this episode, we dive into Navy inspired rank systems for staff advancement, crafting a mission that rallies millennials to the radical idea that the patient comes second, why you should treat your practice like a game, how coaching, mentorship and

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learning to let go of control can unlock massive personal and professional growth and much more. Trust me, you don't want to miss this one. Please welcome Dr. Matt Vander Mullen. Well, Matt, so good to see you again. I'm really excited about the opportunity to have a conversation with you and do a little bit more of a deep dive into your really long span. And I have to say a very prestigious career, and I know you're a very humble guy, but I'm just going to say that all the background research, looking back over your lifetime really, you've done some amazing things and everybody, there's been twists turns and you've had to step out at times when probably didn't feel like there was a solid footing, but man, you've done it well and you're not through yet either. You're not done, and that's what I love about you.

Dr. Matt VanderMolen:

Yeah, well I appreciate that. You're right. I'm humble. It's making me turn red. Just all that stuff.

Dr. David Phelps:

Well, it's my job to say and give you kudos for the things that I know you're going to be careful about, not bragging on yourself, but there's a lot to be learned from you. And I want to just go back way back. I want to know what inspired you to go into dentistry in the first place?

Dr. Matt VanderMolen:

Yeah, all the wrong things. Pretty much I decided I want to be a dentist when I was 13 and my orthodontist, my dentist and the oral surgeon that I saw, there's something I noticed about all three of 'em. They drove really nice cars and this was before sunlamp, they always had a tan, so they were always coming back from a ski trip or some exotic place in the wintertime. I grew up in the Chicago area and they were surrounded by beautiful women and I was like, that looks a pretty good lifestyle. And the other thing I noticed was my oral surgeon was my baseball coach, and we would've practice on Wednesday afternoon and my dad didn't have Wednesday afternoon off. And so I really took notice of that and I just liked the lifestyle and all three of these guys were great guys. They were really interested in helping people, but helping that was just sort of in the background. Those other three things were the most important things in my eyes. And of course I've seen what a great career it can be and helping people is what I'm all about right now.

Dr. David Phelps:

Well, it sounds like those early experiences, engagement with those three later to become colleagues, but certainly serving you in their capacity and not only with your oral health, but also with your extracurricular activities. What a great way to really see what this tribe of dentistry could be the collegiality. I mean, you got a close-knit group there, but three out of three, that's pretty good, right? Pretty good odds that you were moving in the right path. So I know you graduated from University of Illinois and then you went to the advanced program at Bethesda.

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In the Naval Academy. You got super high honors, and I want to dig into a little bit of what you learned there. But again, asking the question, what tracked you to the Navy?

Dr. Matt VanderMolen:

Well, in the beginning I had a classmate that signed up for the Navy our first year in freshman year because he is like, well, we can get drafted. And I didn't know that when I got in dental school, there was still a draft. If you had a professional degree needs to figured what the heck, I'm going to do that. And by signing up now, when he went in, he would have a higher pay and I was like, oh Jerry, you're crazy. That's insane. Who's going to go in the Navy to do all that? Well then as time went on and I had an interest in doing a residency, I found out that the Navy had at Bethesda a premier residency program. And not only they only took three people, it's where the president went at the time. So this is when Ronald Reagan came to our hospital when I was there and also met George Bush when he was vice president.

So it was pretty crazy. And we had all kinds of brass coming there, very precise across the street from National Institutes of Health on that campus. They also had all the post grads, so endo per pros, and of course there's an oral surgery program at the hospital. So my boss made us not only do a residency, but we had to attend all the stuff with all the other residency programs. So it was a very time intensive year, but man, it was drinking from a fire hose and I'm very grateful for that. And people thank me for my service and I'm grateful to do it, but I always say, Hey, thanks for your tax dollars because I had an incredible experience.

Dr. David Phelps:

So you did your time with Navy and then 1990 you opened your private practice in Springfield, Illinois.

Dr. Matt VanderMolen:

Yes.

Dr. David Phelps:

Give us a little bit of obviously the military, so many good, the discipline, the leadership skills, what pieces from being in the Navy did you take with you that you think are partly part of the pillars of your foundation, of everything you've done in leadership and driving culture and all the things that you did in your practice that are now doing in your coaching?

Dr. Matt VanderMolen:

Yeah, so I mean the Navy was really great in teaching leadership course and could I had a lot of, because after I was at Bethesda, I was in Sicily for three years and me and just a few other dentists and they basically told us their residency. I was like, all year we've been telling you you don't know anything. And then the last

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two weeks they said, you know what? You guys actually really know a lot. We're sending you out to an isolated place because you know what you're doing. It was like, oh, okay, thanks for letting us know before we left at least. And so there was a lot of things that immediately sort of thrown into that and into the real navy basically, where you had real people, all different things. I was on an air base, I was awesome. And so right away you're just sort of thrown into this situation and you learn from leaders within the enlisted people.

And then I was a leader as an officer and I learned a lot from my enlisted people, people who had been in the Navy already for 20, 25 years. And so I humbled myself to learn from that and we got along really well. But some of the things that I saw were, one of the main things was in the Navy you have advancement. So in all the services you see people, they have stripes and you're like, well, what does that mean? And it's because you start as a neophyte knowing nothing, you go to bootcamp and then you advance through things. If advancements isn't just time in you've zone skills where you get better. And so the same thing in dentistry. We had the dental assistants were called dental technicians and they had different rankings and I learned that and I learned that they were motivated to make the next rank. And so I learned how to help them build up in what they were doing and get better. And the more that I did that and understood that, the more they supported me. And so our little clinic in Sicily, we were rated number one in the whole European theater because of what we were able to accomplish. And so that was a great lesson. Unfortunately when I first started in private practice, I kind of forgot that a little bit.

Dr. David Phelps:

If you're ready to break free from the conventional financial treadmill, the Path to Freedom newsletter is your roadmap. Every quarter you'll receive my free digital newsletter packed with powerful alternative investment strategies, timely economic insights and uncommon wisdom to help you create more freedom, autonomy, and impact in your business and in life. As a subscriber, you'll also get weekly blog insights from decoding market shifts to building generational wealth, to crafting a business that doesn't run you. It's not just information, it's insight that leads to action. Join a community of like-minded entrepreneurs and practitioners who are choosing the road less traveled. Sign up today@freedomfounders.com slash digital newsletter one and start your path to true freedom. That's freedomfounders.com/digitalnewsletterone. So alright, well let's go from there. I know over time you built up a pretty significant size clinic with 30 some staff members and associate doctors.

Well give us that pathway. What things did you do right that worked out well, and what things did you have to come back and redo? And I'm interested also to hear how you took the aspect of rank achievement of rank with your time in the Navy and we able to transpose that to clinical team members to also give them the same motivation to achieve certain skill levels. And is there a ranking process there? So just go wherever you want to with that. But I'm interested in the evolution and we all are because we all have gone through a story in our own lives and some things work and some things don't. And just to learn from someone like you that has

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years of experience would be really valuable.

Dr. Matt VanderMolen:

So I'm thrown into private practice and actually initially I went to a small town in Illinois. I didn't start off in Springfield, I was in a small town for 13 years and then I started scratch at 45 in Springfield. So I started over and I was already financially independent at that time at 45, but I knew I could do more in a bigger community. The community I started in was only 3,300 and the whole county was 7,700 and it wasn't growing.

Dr. David Phelps:

So why the move? I mean, you did really well in that community. Mean

Dr. Matt VanderMolen:

Well, I made good money. I had a beautiful house. It was a big fish in a small pond as they say, but the schools were not what I thought they should be. I had two daughters and I wanted them to have the best. And then I also wanted a little change in where I could live. And so in Springfield, I now live on a beautiful lake. And so my wife will say that's the primary reason that, but my daughters did extremely well here in the Springfield area and they went on to have very successful career. They're very proud of them. But so that's where I started out. And the thing is, when you get thrown into private practice to the military, there's no money. You don't ask a patient for money, you tell them what they're going to do and they go and then we do it.

And so now I came into that and I felt the pressure. Initially I had nothing and I thought the pressure, I got to make money. And so I set goals. I've always been a good goal setter and I presented that to my small team at the time. Here's what we need to do, here's what we need to do. But I was playing the game where basically only I was the one controlling everything. I didn't really take what I had learned from the Navy about, okay, focus on these people first and then you'll get what you need. And I lost that for a little bit of a time. But then once I recognized, hey, we've got a bunch of people in there and they come in as a dental assistant to come in as a hygienist, they come in as front desk and if you stay long enough, you become office manager somehow.

That's the way it usually works in offices. And one of the main reasons that people leave dental offices and they're not satisfied in dental offices or any business for that matter, is they don't see an opportunity to be promoted to move up. They just don't see that. And if you ask dentists, Hey, do you have promotion in your office? They'd probably go, maybe it's the office manager. Or maybe if they do have team leaders, they have that. But what they're missing is that everybody needs to feel like they're moving up. And so I developed basically a five level system for all departments, for administration, for hygiene, and for the clinic where you start out as a neophyte new and then end up at the fifth level. And you could call those levels whatever you

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want. Even a novice, beginner, intermediate, advanced, superior, or you can just call 'em one, two, three, four, five.

And then you basically write out, okay, what does it mean to be a number one? What does it mean to be a two? And my whole purpose with everything is to become the best version of myself, but while helping others to do the same. And so this whole idea of self-help where you just focus on yourself, I think that whole group of books, you can just throw those away, the you build other people and you will get better. And so when you provide somebody literally a one through five, here's the track, here's what the pay is, and then have them say, okay, in this level two I, I'm going to work on these two or three things. Then there's progress and people are happy and people are advancing. And of course you as the owner, you've got people advancing. And ideally you want people that are threes and fours for sure, and hopefully some people make it to five. But if you have threes and fours, you're going to crank right along and basically have a very successful business by default.

Dr. David Phelps:

By default. Matt, with these rankings, were they based on obviously some objective criteria skill sets that they were measurable, but what about softer skills, culture, values, communication, just getting along with how'd you weigh that because, because I know as an owner, a leader of a business, a company giving back assessments to people, sometimes that's difficult for us to do. I dunno about you, but you obviously had a way to do that. Give us a little bit of insight into how you made that productive

Dr. Matt VanderMolen:

Basically. I mean you basically have, you define core values and there's probably some people going, oh no, here we go with core values. But you have to have some that you live by. For me, I had eight, I'm told that's wrong. You should have three. I just read, another thing should have two. Whatever they are, you need to have them written down and you need to present them and work with your team, communication of who you stand for and what your culture is, all that stuff to permeate. So when someone comes into your office and your business, they could see that going on. And when you have your weekly meetings or monthly meetings, you should be talking about examples of those core values. And I operate, and I've talked to you before about I treat the whole thing as a game and we're not really going to talk about that today.

But the other thing is that when you have a business, you should have a mission. And so I was like, oh, a mission statement here we go to that too, but let me make it simple for you is that for me, in our community, basically our mission was to help as many people in our community to have healthy, comfortable, confidence, smile and of sense. Our staff understood that. So when we're driving to do more, it's not just to do more. It's like, well, what's our mission? Our mission is first of all, our mission is that because most dentists listening to this hopefully feel that they're the best in their community. And if you're the best in your community, why

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would you want to just sort of split away your time? Why wouldn't you want to be as efficient as you can to help as many people in your C as you can?

Because if someone's going to someone else in your community, they're not getting service that they would get at your office. So there's a drive to do that. And when your staff understands that and it gets into, you always track numbers and so on, it's like doing more. They're not seeing it so much as money. They're seeing, well, what's our mission? And I have to tell you that a lot of us baby boomers and anybody that's a little bit in the older range now, there's this thing about that young people don't want to work, they just don't have the same work ethic. But I will tell you, they will rally around a mission and if you have a stated mission, they're going to rally around that. And if nothing else, at least you start out asking me why I want to become a dentist. I would say I'll bet to anything that most dental team have no idea why their boss became a dentist. Start with that. Say, Hey, this is why I became a dentist and it might be laughable. And my staff, they stared with team, they go, yeah, Dr. Van became a dentist. You want to be around hot women like us. And it's a big joke,

But it's like, so you think about it, well, we must be pretty something special because he wanted to be around women like us. So as ridiculous as that sounds, just little things like that that show that who you are and authentically what you're after is going to go a long ways for you.

Dr. David Phelps:

I think you bring up a great point about the younger generations today and where sometimes they get a bad rap about, well, they don't want to work, but I think you really nailed it in what I see more and more, and there's really pervades all generations, but I think we see maybe more in the younger generation is that people are really coming back to what is my purpose? What's my purpose here on life? Was it just to go out and make money, get a job? Well, maybe at the early stages we do that. We work at McDonald's or wherever, that's what you do. But at some point you want to be purposeful. And I think you really hit it is certainly we need to be compensated with a wage that provides for our families, but man, I want some identity in terms of some relevance and part of the group, a company that's doing something, I think you really, you said it well, that's missing a lot today, right? In people's lives, I think.

Dr. Matt VanderMolen:

Right. And going back to that, the purpose where, and let me actually say, so I learned what I had to learn and a mentor took me aside. I noticed that every good business has amazing people. And in my mind I was like, how do they find those people? How do they find those kinds? And I finally asked somebody in a business outside of dentistry, how do you find people? And he is like, well, let me ask you something. What business are you in? I go, I'm a dentist. And he goes wrong. He goes, that's the wrong business. You need to be in a people building business. And I'm like, what are you talking about? And as you talk that, then it kind of

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hit me, oh yeah, I've already been doing that when I was in the Navy. That's why I was so successful. So that was kind of a smack across the upside my head type of thing.

Hey dummy, this is where it, and when people get into a situation where they know that you're caring about you and you're building them, that's really good. Also, you as the dentist, a lot of dentists have this idea that people should start with them and work their whole career, their whole life, their whole working life with them. And they get all disappointed when someone leaves their office. And I didn't have that disappointment because what was my business? My business was to help people become better versions of themselves. And so when someone did leave for whatever reason, they're moving away or they're doing changing vocations, whatever, I looked at it and said, okay, is this person a better person than when they started? And if they were, I was like, success. And that was gratifying for me. And the cool thing is, is that a lot of dentists, as you're doing that, you will get better yourself. And as you get better yourself, surprise surprised, the people that you bring on to work with you will actually be better than those people that left that you thought, there's no way I can have someone that's better than Sally. And then along comes Mary, and it's like, oh wow. So that's how it can work. And that's exciting and that's what drives me.

Dr. David Phelps:

Well, it's one of your principles that you bring out. And you say, most people say that the patient or the customer comes first and you already made the position that no, that actually comes second. Who comes first? Well, you're building people right? To serve the people that are coming

Dr. Matt VanderMolen:

In. Yeah. No, it was my mistake when I first went into private practice, it's like patient's, first we got to take care of them, do whatever crazy thing they want us to do because they're paying us and I need to pay my bills. And so I lost that for a while until I got whacked by a very good mentor.

Dr. David Phelps:

Well, we all need that. Once in a while. It hurts. A little bit stings, but it's a good wake up call for sure. Well, Matt, what traits do you specifically try to look for in bringing on new talent, new team members?

Dr. Matt VanderMolen:

So David, I'm a simple guy. I like these things real simple. And there's all these tests out there. There's Myers Briggs disc profile. I just took one called the Big five, which is supposed to be different. It was interesting. I had all these little details about myself that came into focus, I guess, but I still don't have time for that when I'm looking for new people. And there's some things, some seats that I use. And one of the things that I use, and people who know me well know that I use this question, we ask people pretty much right up front, do you consider yourself a fast walker or a slow walker? And people laugh about that, but if you look at it, I looked

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up, there's research that people research this, the fast walkers and slow walkers has been comics about it, business thinks about it, and it comes down to 41% in one study of population or fast walker.

And another study showed that fast walkers, and I'm sorry you slow walkers out there, but fast walkers actually have a bit of a higher IQ than slow walkers. Fast walkers are goal oriented and another study show they have a longer lifespan, so your staff won't die on you. So that's good. Slow walkers. On the other hand, research has shown that they have reduced emotional civility. And this is really hits hard in dentistry is they tend to have weaker motor skills. And so this may be very judgmental on my part, but again, you're trying to make easier, quicker decisions. And in my office, my staff is trained to do that, to ask at the beginning of the interview, do you consider yourself a fast walker or a slow walker? And if they said slow walker, we would kind of slow walk them pretty much straight out on the street very nicely. Then there's nothing wrong with slow walkers, it's just that if, so you have to understand about my office, we're high performance

And why are we high performance, again, because of what our mission is. And so we don't need people that get in the way. We need to be operating at a high level and high level people are not going to tolerate lower level people. And that's another thing to consider in your office is within these times where it's hard to find people, you need to pay attention to your higher performing people and make sure that you're taking care of them. If you bring new people in that aren't high performance but don't have that potential, your high performance people may leave because they see you spending more time with them. So it's a little counterintuitive, but spend more time with your longer term higher performing people and you'll stay out of trouble.

Dr. David Phelps:

It sounds like we should just go to the airport and do our hiring, right, walking down the terminals. Right. And I'm in a hurry, but we move a good pace too. It's like you're trying to dodge people who are just kind of lollygagging along. It's like, yeah, I get that, man. I think that makes sense. But I hadn't heard it put that way. That's very interesting. I'm going to pay more attention to that, not picture, the Vander Molen team, advanced Dental Care, Springfield all out for their day walk, all 30 of you out there and just fast walking. Right? I mean, there's a sport in the Olympics called just was it fast walking and those fast walkers. Yeah. I mean, it's kind of interesting to watch, but that's very, very good. Well, you mentioned several times mentors. I know you added a chapter to a book with Brian Tracy, I assume Brian Tracy was someone who was influenced in your life. Talk to us about mentors. Obviously you had mentors going all the way back to your training at Bethesda. There's mentors there, but how much of mentors impacted you? What would you say to anybody wherever they are in their capacity of life or practice? How valuable the right mentors can be?

Dr. Matt VanderMolen:

Dennis, we tend to be more introverted people, and we're a lot of times with a mentality that if you want

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something done, you do it yourself. And although that can be true, you're never really going to grow as a person or certainly you're never going to grow a business trying to do everything yourself. And mentors have played a role way back shortly after I was 13 when I became whatever age it was to be able to work in a drug store. I had a mentor right there as one of the assistant managers, and he pointed out things to me that where I was already kind of a step above and then talent me to do more.

And I've been very fortunate, not only my own dentist, but I became an Eagle Scout and Boy Scout. So I had lots of leadership things in there. And then as part of that, there was a dentist in the neighboring town. He was an Eagle Scout, and you spent a day with him. And then that guy, it was more than a day, it was all the way up through dental school that he took time to talk to me about things. And when I went to college, my roommate's brother-in-law was a brand new dentist in town, so I got to watch him start from scratch, and he was a great mentor. And then the Navy and so on. And then private practice comes along, and again, this is before the internet and all the social media that we have. And I stumbled around a little bit and had to really work and to be at CE meetings and so on where I'd find people, I'd always find one of the older dentists and ask them questions about things.

And then Tony Tech started Sunrise Dental Solutions. And it was a group of like-minded people who wanted do it right, also wanted to do really well in their practices. And one of the things I admire about you, David, is I know you do a lot about real estate investing and investing in things like that. And when I've seen that in the past, a lot of things, it's like, well, dentistry sucks. So you need to go over here and maybe do real estate, for instance. And that's not your message at all. Your message is that you do dentistry really well, you do your business really well, and guess what? It becomes a great cash machine. But now you've got this money that you can take and invest into other things, and that's the way things should be. And it takes a coach or a mentor to help you along with that.

And if you don't find that person, you're really missing out. And I'm glad, I'm a little jealous actually. I have clients that I coach, and I'm a little jealous of them because I literally saved them at least 10 years in the curve of growing to a point where they can be financially independent. And so I'm a little jealous of that because I didn't have that at their age. So coaching really works, and you have to be ready. You can't coach somebody who's not ready. So if you're listening to this and you think it all keep going, but I'm going to tell you, you don't know what you don't know. And coaches are really an inexpensive investment in what the returns can be in your future.

Dr. David Phelps:

And you got started, and you've been coaching and mentoring through Sunrise, Tony Feck, Chris Phelps, I know a number of the people with Sunrise, all great people. So something just came naturally to you because obviously you've been coaching and mentoring the people building business. I mean, that's inherent in who you are. That's what I know about you. And I think it's a perfect segue for you because you're out of clinical

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practice now, correct?

Dr. Matt VanderMolen:

Yes. I left clinical practice a couple of years ago. People ask what I miss about it, I missed the game in practice. And for some of you that might be struggling out there right now and look at work as kind of a grind, and no pun intended there, but if work for you is a grind, that would not be good. But if you can approach what you do as a game and involve your team players as a game and have a purpose, have a mission, it's amazing all the incredible things you can do. And so I do miss

Dr. David Phelps:

So much, so much there, Matt. And you're right, we put so much focus, which is a good focus on our clinical skills, and no question that that is a huge part of our continuing education, our focus, our investment. But if you don't get the people part of the business, it can be that grind. And I think again, you're really good about helping doctors find that balance, right? I mean, we always talk about the word balance, and that's not easy to do, but I think a lot of those who struggle with that and feel like they are grinding, it's because they're missing that other piece. And sometimes we just need, as you said, that mentor that just gives us that slap to say, Hey, over here, you're doing great here, but you're missing a big piece of this. We just don't know what we don't know in life. We all are missing pieces that somebody has already figured out. We just need to find those people. And then you said, be coachable.

Dr. Matt VanderMolen:

Yeah. When I said I was always going up to older dentists when I was a younger dentist at CE seminars and stuff, and I would ask them, I go, okay, you've had all this time. What's the number one problem that you have in your office? And the answer was always the staff.

And I remember one guy told me, he goes, yeah, well, sometimes you get lucky and sometimes you don't. And he was telling how one part of his crew, he was just lucky he had these people, and then they came and went, and then as practice decreased. And that really bothered me for a long time. It still bothers me. And what I've discovered, what we've discovered working with clients in Sunrise, we do these events called Ultimate Team Event, where we have doctors and some people bring their whole staff, most of 'em bring their team leaders with them or managers. And it's funny because the doctors come thinking that we're going to fix their staff, but what inevitably happens is we discover it's not the staff necessarily, it's the doctor. It's something the doctor is missing. Something's not right because the staff, especially when you bring your leadership staff, they're frustrating because they want to help you out, but yet they're being held back by the doctor.

And so a lot of what we do with our coaching is to help doctors understand that in some cases, it's just letting go of things and letting people perform. And the one thing that I've really come to appreciate about good team

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for you is especially in a situation where, say you just lost somebody and now you've got the sort of second banana is there, and you look at that person and instead of going, oh, man, she doesn't know anything. What's this going to be like? You just ask that person. You go, Hey, I know you might be a little frightened because your superior basically has left, but here's the deal. Are you ready to step up? And they'll always say yes, especially in a situation where they know again, so what's Dr. Van breed? What's he all about? He's about helping people get better. And I tell him, I've got your back.

And if they're feeling like they're in a safe situation where they can excel, I'm always stunned. It's embarrassing to me how much better they do than what my expectations are just by asking 'em to step up. So you have good people, they're just being held down a lot of times. And there's some people that are obviously bad, and your good staff will tell you who they are if you ask them. And yeah, go ahead and get rid of them, but before you just decide that all staff are bad or everything's terrible, if you really take a look at what's really going on, and a coach can help you sift through that,

Dr. David Phelps:

A coach. And also, let's give some credence also to the community of other doctors and their staff who are also being coached. I think it feels good to know you're not the only one, right? Right. When you're with other people that go down the path and you realize that they're just like you, and they struggle with some of the same things, yet they've made some moves, well, it's possible.

Dr. Matt VanderMolen:

Yeah, yeah, yeah. You're as good as the people you hang around with, that's for sure. So I know your group is a lot of really great people. I've met several people in there, sunrise, of course, I'm going to say the same thing. It's a whole different world. And sometimes it's funny because we'll work on something and we'll be kind of giving ourselves a hard time about something, and then Tony will give us the dope slap and go, Hey, you guys, this thing that you're worrying about, let me tell you what the real world of dentistry is struggling with. And it's almost laughable. But again, it's part of that game of just continually getting better. And I know there's some people out there going, well, where's the end point? When is it okay to just be you? And for me, growth is important. If you're not growing, things just tend to happen and tend to die off. And so if you're excited about what you do, and again, having a mission and having a purpose, you're not really asking yourself that question of When could I slow down?

Dr. David Phelps:

Well, that's a great way to end our session today, Matt. We're going to put the links to contact. Would you like me to, you've got your email here and cell phone number, and also Sunrise Dental Solutions. We'll put those links in. Is that appropriate for you?

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Yeah,

Dr. David Phelps:

Absolutely. Okay. Yeah. It's Matt, M-A-T-T-V, dds@gmail.com. Those of you who want to just think about that, but we'll have the show notes there that will also put the rest of the links there. So you could contact Matt, follow up. And yeah, if you're a doctor that's working hard and you aspire to live that life where your journey or path with your team becomes more of a joy than a hindrance, I would definitely connect with Matt. I can just tell you my experience with working with great coaches and mentors, definitely elevated every aspect of my life. And looking back, I would never do it differently. So Matt,

Dr. Matt VanderMolen:

Yeah. I know you want to cut off here. No, you're good. Go ahead. If you know somebody that's a good dentist, if they're truly a great dentist and you reach out to them and asked them for help, they're going to help you.

Dr. David Phelps:

Yes.

Dr. Matt VanderMolen:

And that's part of what drives me too. I've had dentists, when I would meet people at seminars, they would actually invite me. I had one guy invite me to come to his office, and I called him up and said, yeah. And he goes, well, you're the first one that's done that. And it was an incredible experience for me. And I've had other doctors spend hours on the phone separate times. I had no monetary interest. They were just interested in helping people. And so that's the kind of people that you want to associate with. And if you contact me through sunrise and you have some particular issues, there's no pressure that I'm not protecting you to sell you to buy anything. I'm just sincerely interested in you getting what you need to move on, and what I consider to be still one of the great professions available.

Dr. David Phelps:

No question. Well, your career certainly proves that to be true, and you're one of the standouts that continues to shine an industry that does serve so well. So Matt, thank you so much for being with us today.

Dr. Matt VanderMolen:

Thank you, David.

Dr. David Phelps:

The primary core values that we espouse in Freedom Founders with my leadership team goes back to really

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our inception when we first started out and really discussed what do we want to be about? This is important for any business culture, is to have a meeting amongst the leadership and determine what are you really going to be about And Freedom Founders. Our core values are, number one, integrity. Do what you say you're going to do. No excuses, no answer, but about it. Second, community, we believe in collaboration, community, a tribe, a place where you can be yourself, speak your mind, and have the full born backdrop of people that are supporting your move in life, your challenges, your wins, everything about living life to its fullest. And finally, I'm a big believer, as you might imagine in personal sovereignty, freedom, freedom of choice, freedom of expression, the freedoms that we've been promised in this great country, but go beyond the freedoms we have here in this country to how we live our lives, what we teach our children about, having choices and freedom and options.

Not to say there's not a sacrifice, period. We all go through it, but how quickly can we reach a point where we have more options in life, more choices that are not dictated to us by third parties or society itself. In my experience, a strategy that has really helped me to build a culture where my team members feel safe, inspired to step up, is to make it a safe place, and I don't use that word lightly. You do have to create a place where people have the safety to know that they can speak their opinion or their mind with full respect. Of course, it doesn't mean clashing or disregarding or disrespecting other people, team members or the owner, but it means you want to have a tribe that feels like they have ownership, they have a voice. And when you have a voice, then you care.

Then you care about what happens in that business, and if you see something at whatever position you're in, as that team member, you feel like you have the right to say something and know that at least you are going to be heard with dignity and respect. What decisions you would like to make or opinions you have may not be taken at full face and transcribed into full action, but if you've got a leader who respects you, then that's going to build a lot of confidence in your ability to speak forwardly about what you see in the business and how you can help improve it. Without that kind of safety, a good leader is falling short of the ability to really engage and power the team that stands behind the entire mission, the values and the cores.

Speaker 4:

Okay. European markets opened way down this morning, a 16 month low. As Trump's tariffs starts to bite, we're seeing a mass sell off of shares as fears grow about a global recession. It was the second straight day of dramatic losses on Wall Street, a sea of red for the Dow, which fell more than 2000 points on Friday, or five and a half percent. Remember Thursday it fell more than 1600 points. One big factor is China that announced Friday, it would impose 34% retaliatory tariffs on American goods in response to President Trump's tariffs plan. We have not seen stocks have these big losses over a two day period since the beginning of COD. While

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Uncertainty remains elevated, it is now becoming clear that tariff increases will be significantly larger than expected, and the same is likely to be true of the economic effects, which will include higher inflation and slower growth. The size and duration of these effects remains uncertain. How

Speaker 6:

Are you feeling about the markets right now? Not gray, anxious,

Speaker 3:

Optimistic, worried, terrified.

Speaker 6:

It's not too clear what's going to happen in the future, in the near future, long-term future.

Speaker 5:

Yeah, there's obviously a lot of

Speaker 6:

Uncertainty now. Business and politics are even more transparently aligned.

We have to understand that there's a lot of implications, and all these implications are certainly in the short term, are not good for the economy.

Dr. David Phelps:

Trump's announcement of tariffs has heavily affected the markets. For those who are also rather strongly invested in Wall Street, this can be a very painful time. Right now is not a time to be reactive or disillusioned. The truth is the stock market is not under your control, nor mine. No one can guarantee when it will rise or when it will fall. You can, however, control your own actions. Keep your money near your own hands, whether in your business or on higher ground. Higher ground, such as treasuries, cash, cash equivalents, precious metals. This higher ground will permit you to safeguard your investments while giving you a higher vantage point. To see the opportunities that emerge in the following quarters and years, those seeking immediate safeguarding and guiding principles to weather the financial storms ahead. I lay out more in-depth frameworks to protect your capital and financial future. In my book, building Your Financial Arc, you can get your free copy @financialarcbook.com. I'll say it again. You can get your free copy @financialarcbook.com, and for those seeking a more in-depth analysis and customizable blueprint for their investments according to their needs and freedoms, you could always schedule a call with my team. We'll help you by pointing you in the right direction of whatever you need to do next. For clarity and your future freedom, you can schedule your call at freedomfounders.com/discover. That's freedomfounders.com/discover.