

# Advanced Practice Management: Influence, Growth, and Building Self-Managing Businesses

## Dr. Chris Phelps: Ep #541



### Dr. Chris Phelps:

The solution to spinning a lot of plates is figuring out how you're not the one spinning them. My goal is to bring in the right people as fast as possible and offload these tests so that I can get it independent, get them self managing, if you will, so that they don't need me for these day-to-day things. So once the plate's spinning and I hand that spinning plate to somebody else, then I got time to do the next thing and focus on that, and then I've got time once I hand that plate off to the next thing. And so it looks like a lot of plates are spinning, but as I said, I'm not the one doing it. My team has, and I found that to be way more productive use of my time and still allows me to budget family time and vacations and other things that we'd like to do.

### Dr. David Phelps:

Their financial advisor's. Word stung. You're on cruise control on the open highway. Just keep doing what you're doing for 20 more years, rent and allie's shoulders hung low. This was not cruise control. They were fighting tooth and nail in their dental practice with two little ones at home. They both knew they couldn't keep this up for much longer, let alone two more decades. That's when Brent and Ellie decided to make a change. Two years later, they are now free for life. Their practice is more profitable. While they spend less time in practice, they have more time to raise their kids, see the world and live life without constraints. What was the change that started it all? The catalyst for this exponential freedom and success. Go to [freedomfounders.com/catalyst](https://freedomfounders.com/catalyst) to see what started it all. That's [freedomfounders.com/catalyst](https://freedomfounders.com/catalyst). Maybe you can take the same steps they did to stop grinding and start living.

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 life-saving 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

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ultimate freedom for what matters most to each of us. Welcome to the Freedom Founders Podcast.

If you're a dental professional, looking to break free from the chair or build scalable systems and become a strategic business leader, this episode is for you. Today's guest, Dr. Chris Phelps, is a renowned dentist, entrepreneur, author and CEO of the Cialdini Institute, known for his innovative approach to marketing and practice growth. Chris has built multiple successful dental businesses and helped countless others do the same. From pioneering scheduling solutions with golden goose to championing behavioral psychology and practice management, his journey is one of relentless problem solving and intentional impact. In this episode, we discuss how Chris first business emerged from tutoring classmates in dental school, the secrets behind building scalable self-managing businesses, why mastering influence and commitment is more important than ever in today's dental landscape. How kolby assessments and psychological triggers like scarcity, social proof and consistency drive team and patient behavior. What Chris learned from seven years of success that still left him feeling trapped.

Whether you're looking to step back from day-to-day operations, optimize your team or enhance patient compliance, this episode delivers transformative takeaways. Please welcome Dr. Chris Phelps. Chris, it's great to see you again. It's always fun to have conversations with you. We've been kind of tag teaming with each other for a number of years. We've been in different groups together as participants and mastermind groups and strategy sessions, and you've always been one that I've appreciated. Your inventive and innovative nature, like many of us started out as a clinical dentist and you've obviously gone very deep down that rabbit hole, but at the same time, you've always been on the forefront of creating value adds for all of us who are in the dental industry in practice, in terms of leadership and scheduling and marketing. And now you're the CEO of the Cialdini Institute. Congratulations. You've been a long time mentee with Robert Cini, and I know that's a big focus for you, but at the same time, you've got your hands still in a lot of things in dentistry with sunrise and golden goose scheduling and all that you do. My question to you is what was your motivation, your inspiration back whenever that you first felt that, and maybe it happened while you were still in school. I don't know, but was it curiosity? Was it you were trying to figure things out to help yourself as a clinical dentist or is that just your nature?

### Dr. Chris Phelps:

Yeah, that's a great question because prior to dental school, I never had any entrepreneurial inkling. I always just had jobs and just thought I wanted to do dentistry, but I still thought I would be an employee of my business treating patients and whatnot. And so dental school was the first opportunity where I realized what my unique ability is in essence. And really it's the foundation of what I built all my companies around them. I just got really good at washing, rinsing and repeating. And in essence, it was when I was studying. So me as an undergraduate student versus me as a dental school student, my wife will tell you she was there. Both was a tale of two cities.

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Me as an undergrad was not that motivated to go to class and because to me it was a hoop to jump through to get to where I really wanted to be, right is why do I have to just memorize this crap for a test that I'm never going to use? What does that really prove about me in this other role? So it was hard for me to get motivated. I did it. I did well, but I didn't do as well as I could have and didn't put the effort into it. But when I got to school in dental school, I was like, all right, this is the show. This is the big game. This is what I've wanted to do since I was in middle school. So this long-term commitment had finally been realized, but it was so much information I had to simplify it for myself.

And so my way of studying my process was it took me multiple hours to condense every test, first down to 15 pages of notebook paper. Then I rewrote it down to 10 pages and then I rewrote it again down to five pages front and back, and that's what I put my time into. And one of my classmates came up to me and asked me if I would mentor him, if I would teach tutor him. He was struggling, 68, 72 a test kind of thing. And he saw I did well and I said, well look buddy, I dunno what to tell you. It's a lot of stuff you got to know it. But I saw him putting in the effort hours in the library, but he wasn't getting the result

And I'm always willing to help anybody that's putting in effort because I know his problem was he just couldn't figure out what was important. He couldn't simplify it for himself, so therefore he didn't know what to focus on, so he didn't focus on the right things. So I just made him a copy of my test and said, here's put your time and effort into this. And he saw the five pages and he was like, that's it. I'm like, that's what I do. We'll see how you do. And he got a 94 on the first test and he says, oh my God, amazing. Do you have the next test? Yeah, I do this for every test. And so I gave him the next copy of the test, 92, he thanked me profusely and then he handed me \$10 and said, thanks for the tutoring. And then he handed me another 10 and said, can I get the next test? And I told my wife, I was like, honey, I just made 20 bucks studying. She was like, what? Flash forward two nights later, one of my classmates, a different one, knocks at my door in my apartment one night and he goes, Hey, so I've seen what you've been doing with our friend and I hear you got these notes I need to copy. And he handed me his 10 bucks. Flash forward later, I had over 70 members of my class on the payroll for every test.

**Dr. David Phelps:**

70

**Dr. Chris Phelps:**

Word had spread. We had like 120

**Dr. David Phelps:**

In

**Dr. Chris Phelps:**

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The class and the top 10% of the class absolutely hated me. I blew the curve out of the water,

**Dr. David Phelps:**

Right?

**Dr. Chris Phelps:**

But I realized that I was good at figuring out solving the problem and that others valued and appreciated and I could monetize that. I just organically stumbled my way into it, my first entrepreneurial business. So every company I've built, it all started with a pain point that I had in my own practices and it was like a dog with a bone. Once I really dug into it and was like, I need to get to the root cause of this thing and really solve it not only for myself, but what I realized was will this work for others? And when I realized it does, then I usually build a company around it.

**Dr. David Phelps:**

Yeah, well that's so good. That's really helpful and it makes a lot of sense because I think that those who do solve problems for themselves, once you solve it, as you said, other people are going to migrate to you and that's where you can do great things, you can have greater impact, whatever your thing is, but certainly you're solving it for yourself first. That's the motivation, that's the incentive. And then if you figure something out that is scalable to other people that have similar problems, then hey, you've got something to run with. And I think there's a lot of fun when you create those solutions. Then of course what you want to do is don't want to be the one who has to be the deliverer on all of that. So you create the process systems, you create the team, the support system, the infrastructure, and that's what you've done.

So every business really, probably most of these businesses run pretty much on their own. I mean, you're in and out and still the top level visionary I assume, but for the most part, except for the things you really are focused on and driving, maybe it's the c Chaldini Institute right now, you're maybe more there. I don't know where you're placing your time at different places, but maybe that's my next question is, so when you have a lot of, I'll just use the kind of cliché plates to spin, that's not really fair because you're doing more than plate spinning, alright? But when you have things going on, the question people would often have is, well, how do you balance everything and your family and your health and everything else that's important for you? How do you do that? So let's go there.

**Dr. Chris Phelps:**

Yeah, no, that is a great question. The solution to spinning a lot of plates is figuring out how you're not the one spending them, at least not all of them. Some of them I am spending, right? So as you said, what I realized was nobody's better at digging in and starting it up. Let's say a company let's say, to creating a company out of these solutions than I am and to be the first on the ground to test it with the market and figure

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out does this work for 'em, does it not? We need to adapt. Okay, right. Let's modify it. So I'm strategic in, I don't start 10 of those at the same time. I try not to work on more than one of those at the same time. So I can give it all of my focus and attention and one, but my goal is to bring in the right people as fast as possible and offload these tests for me so that I can get it independent, get them if you will, so that they don't need me for these day-to-day things.

And like you said, I could be free to be the marketing promotion guy, which I'm out there doing anyway. Or I can be the strategic planner for the year or they know if they got a problem they can't figure out I'm the guy they come to bring in to help solve. So once the plate's spinning and I hand that spinning plate to somebody else, then I got time to do the next thing and focus on that and then I've got time once I hand that plate off to the next thing. And so it looks like a lot of plates are spinning, but as I said, I'm not the one doing 'em.

#### **Dr. David Phelps:**

My

#### **Dr. Chris Phelps:**

Team is, and I'm only focused on one or two plate spinning at one given time that I am very strategic about scheduling time to keep my mindset focused on those things, not shifting it between multiple plates if possible, focused on one plate spending and give it all my energies for that specific period of time. And I found that to be a way more productive use of my time and still allows me to budget family time and vacations and other things that we'd like to do.

#### **Dr. David Phelps:**

Well, building that team for the various businesses is really the critical part. I mean we can figure out processes and systems, but somewhere somebody less AI takes over the world and then we don't need people, but I think we still going to need people even with ai. So I know you're a certified in Kolby kolby training and I've studied kolby, but not to your level, but let's just take that. How important of a tool or resource is right people, right seats, and how much does Colby impact that? Maybe that's a way to put that

#### **Dr. Chris Phelps:**

Question. Yeah, that's a great question because it was instrumental in the success of not only my dental practices and finding the right people or making sure I had the right people on the right seat on the bus, but also instrumental in helping me hire the right people for these new companies endeavors and making sure that I'm putting them in a position to succeed and not in a position to fail. Because what I realized is that Kolby is basically this instinctive profile, how we're all built naturally, our natural strengths if you will, and challenges that come with that by default. So it's not your iq, it's not your personality. It's a different part of the mind. I like to say it's what kind of car are you? Are you Ferrari and your job is requiring you to drive off road

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or are you Ferrari and your job is a highway?

One of those two is going to be a lot easier versus the other one. So what Kolby ultimately showed me was this, there's a certain strength and profile for every role and position in your company, whatever that company is, and you've got one or two choices when you're trying to put somebody in that seat. You're either taking a person, whatever their kolby is and you're trying to make them fit your job. Or what I realized was that the people that were naturally attracted to roles, let's say my front office for instance, none of them fit the profile that the job needed, but I'm forcing the square peg through a round hole because of it, because that's all I got. Wondering why they're failing miserably and their turnover is so great. Well, Colby showed me the realization of that and I'm the fool for expecting different outcome.

It actually made me change my mindset and I realized I need to stop making this person try to fit this job, which they won't because they're not built for it. I need to make the job fit the person I have to change the way the job is done and make it fit their strengths and figure out what to do, what doesn't fit their strengths. If that's outsourcing, if that's hiring another person, sometimes like my treatment coordinator position for instance, there's actually two different profiles that actually fit that role in the dental office. So I realized I had one person that was sitting in two different seats, but they were one seat is what we were calling it. But no, there are actually two very different seats, two profiles involved. So I'm going to make the job fit them and then I'll create a different seat for this, what's left if possible. So that's really what it helped me. I need to make this if possible, I will get the person who fits the job, but if I can't find them, I need to be willing to make the job fit the person.

### 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 we're really talking Chris about some skill sets that never made it into my curriculum in dental school. I dunno much.

We're laughing because we know the focus is to get through and pass the didactic and clinical basics to get out in the world and start doing what we're trained to do, but the realization is, and what we're there's really discussing here right now is that those clinical skills and that license to practice, that is an entry point, but it's all it is and if you want to succeed by whatever your definition is, and that's going to be different for everybody, whatever success means to you, and to me it means less stress, better bottom line profits do it

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the way I want to do it, not having to fool around with insurance and all the other BS that the industry takes on is these other, you can call 'em softer skills, but skills that aren't taught that in school. These are really the key that opened the door and I know that's what you're about.

I mean that's what you branched out and we could do a deep dive on Colby, but we just touched the surface of it. I just want to make sure we got that out. All the work you've done with Robert Cialdini, there's so much there and you teach courses there. My point is I'm just trying to reference what you and I both have figured out the hard way. You maybe a little more easily you were doing it as you went, but just realizing that what I knew academically would not transfer into what I wanted in my life from a business or practice by working harder on that and I needed these other skills or to surround myself with the people that had the skills if I didn't have 'em or didn't want to care to develop them myself. Is that fair?

### **Dr. Chris Phelps:**

Yeah, definitely. In fact, what was interesting is my first seven years out in practice, it was a blessing and a curse because I had a lot of success in a small amount of time, 10 times the revenue of that initial practice, going to four locations, having a hundred plus people that worked for me between employees and doctors, measure of success by all accounts in most people's books, but I was trapped in my own business. I had no freedom of time or anything like that. So realizing that where my mindset at the beginning of school and what I thought I wanted once I achieved it, maybe it wasn't what I needed and what I should want and strive for the long run as well. So I was probably uncoachable those first seven years. So it was actually when I took those from success and they finally started struggling, having those kind of pain points was the realization for me that maybe there's a better and different way and I should look to others.

This is why I started associating with people like you and people in other entrepreneur groups and learning what others out there are doing as my wake up call that maybe I don't know how all the answers, maybe I can look to what others have done and the social proof, if you will, to guide me. Maybe I can look to experts like Cialdini and Colby who can guide me towards realizations ultimately about what do people really use to make their decisions and how can I predict their behavior. To me, that's what influence and Colby does. I know how to move people down a path now and I know what they're going to do and they're not going to do over the long run. I mean if you know those two things, there's not much you can't do.

### **Dr. David Phelps:**

You've also authored at least a couple of books I know of Grow Your Dental Membership plan and we may talk about that in a moment, but also the complete book on dental marketing, which I'd say is a tome, it's a compendium, it is an all encompassing source of marketing and again, marketing was something that I don't think the word marketing left the lips of any of my professors in dental school wasn't there. I guess it was banned, I don't know, back in the seventies you actually couldn't market in the professions, but that obviously

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has changed over the years. Marketing is a key element for anybody, any business, anybody who provides solutions and is trying to create a marketplace and create an inroad to prospective patients, clients, whatever it's you're looking for, I want to go back to the right people in the right seats. We know since particularly going through COVID and after COVID, the entire labor force universally has completely changed work from home remote work.

We know in the government sector what they find out that like 1% we're actually going to the office.

Ridiculous, but not so ridiculous when we talk about our own businesses, our own practices, where in many places hygiene shortage, just docs are going, I just can't find a hygienist. Hygienists are sick and tired of it, they're not going to do it. Or they want a paid premium up to here and I'll just do my own. And then in my front desk, my back office clinical assistants, it's just churn, churn, churn. So you've got great ways to assess potential candidates, but what if the darn labor source is just bringing you just stuff that doesn't even meet the filter? Can marketing play a point of reference there for those who are having a hard time?

### **Dr. Chris Phelps:**

I mean definitely if you're looking to acquire the best of the best out there in the labor force, in essence, you're marketing yourself to try to attract them to your practice. So your marketing has to be on point there and really the messaging you're putting out there is absolutely critical. What are you putting out there to show others that you're different than everybody else? That's one of the ways actually I leveraged Kolby was I would take this ideal profile of who I was looking for for a position and the kolby strengths and terms and phrases associated with that strength and I would put that in my job description. So I'd automatically, if you're that person and that's how you're built, I'm already speaking your language and making myself look completely different than I got a job,

### **Dr. David Phelps:**

Right?

### **Dr. Chris Phelps:**

I'm somebody who's looking for these skill sets and if you're this type of person and if you are, the good news is I got a job. In fact, not just a job, I got a career. If you're interested in that as well,

### **Dr. David Phelps:**

I was going to say that's what we all want. We want people that we can attract that have the skill sets, the attributes that we can hopefully assess and do a good job doing that, but also for people that are playing the long game and they're not just looking for just the paycheck, and of course we have to authentically have that environment and then we have to speak to it or paint the picture with the right copy, the right messaging in our marketing to attract that particular person and not just a wide funnel like this where we're just getting

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applicant after applicant that are just worthless. I mean, the marketing can actually be the filter that brings us whether again, you're looking for staff applicants or you're looking for patients, you're looking for a particular type, an avatar can we always say, right? And so a lot of what marketing does is helps us find or those people find us and then we track the right people. Would that be correct?

### **Dr. Chris Phelps:**

Well, and with marketing, what I've realized is in the influence world, we always say not only what you say to people is important, but actually the order, the sequence in which you say it is even more important that sets the stage for yes versus no. And I'm often blown away of how important the sequence of things is, and I'm noticing it more and more and more when people are putting out the right things, but the order's wrong. So from a marketing standpoint, everybody goes to the medium first, where should I put it? Then they may think about the message

And then without very little thought of who are you actually trying to attract, what is that avatar? In fact, actually the sequence is you need to be very clear, not generic, but crystal clear and as specific as possible on who you're looking for from a patient standpoint, from a team member standpoint, that's where that Colby language came in. I know with detail who I'm looking for and so I can express that in my messaging automatically. I got a chance to attract a better person now, patient team member, et cetera. So starting with that market first, understanding who that is, then crafting the messages that are going to in this world where we're distracted by everything, nobody's paying attention to anything. They're half listening to this podcast right now because they're distracted by 10 other things, but something is going to grab their focus and attention hopefully and make 'em go, wait a minute, that sounded important. Let me go back or let me pay attention to this next thing. So your messaging, that's all it does. What can you put out there as your headline to grab their focus and attention that makes them want to read more or find out more? Then you strategically figure out mediums, where am I going to put this thing? So now understanding that sequence is also important.

### **Dr. David Phelps:**

I want to take a few minutes and go to the work you've done and continue to do with Cialdini and now the institute. What are some examples or principles that and teach about persuasion that apply to our audience primary on here today, which would be in the dental office? How can I, as an owner of my practice start to utilize and what would be some of the potential outcomes that I could potentially see if I understood and utilize some of the principles?

### **Dr. Chris Phelps:**

Yeah, I mean there's seven of them in total. We've got reciprocity, meaning if you give someone a gift of value significance, an obligation is created inside of them that that person wants to get back in kind liking. We

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like to do business with people we like. So if it's a friend asking, it's hard to say no. If it's not a friend asking, it's not as hard to say. No. Unity means sometimes we unite ourselves with others under certain categories or banners if you will. So liking a similarity, you're like me, but unity is you are me. We are of the same. So we could be both be fanatical sports team fans. We are the Spurs if we live in Texas, right in San Antonio or I'm a Tar Hill fan. So we are tar heels if you will, follow college basketball family unit. So there's all kinds of things we can unite under social proof.

We look to evidence what others are doing to show us what we should do. While we all want to be unique individuals, we still want to be unique individuals that are part of something, part of a tribe, part of a group, part of a community, and so if we see those, we associate ourselves with moving a certain direction away from us, there's a big pull for us to follow. And so authority means we look to credible, trustworthy experts to tell us what we should do, and it's important to get credibility. You have to have real expertise in what you're talking about and advising as well as be trusted by others. Consistency is the commitment principle. If people commit, then they do. That was my big realization in my own practices. Why am I having all these struggling issues? Why aren't patients returning for needed treatment?

Why do I have to keep telling my team to do their job? Why don't they just do it? Why was it when the cat was away? I bounced between offices. The mice would play. Why am my associate doctors, why am I paying for their education and they don't come back and use it and put it into practice? My realization was I didn't get a commitment out of any of them to do any of those things. Not really. And so I'm the crazy one for expecting a different outcome, but once I got them to commit to make real commitments, everything change. So consistency is huge in dentistry, and of course scarcity is just about loss, right? We care more about what we stand to lose the consequences of doing nothing than the benefits of doing something. So I'd say out of those two, the two biggest bundles I see in dentistry are liking and consistency.

Nobody's taking the time to connect with people anymore, especially if you're in a heavy PO based practice. If you don't have volume because of the margins and how they've been cut, because of the fee schedule you had to accept, you got to churn and burn. We got to keep getting to the next one and the next one, the next one. So nobody's taking the time to show others that you'd like them by finding something in common, connecting them into some base level, and guess what? If there's no relationship, people don't come back, right? They don't say yesterday and they don't return. So we're sacrificing everything on this hamster wheel because now we've got to replace 'em and around and around we go. So not taking the time to show others we like them and connect with them is costing our industry billions and with the consistency, as I said, not getting commitments.

So just a simple one, I hear from docs all day a lot right now that no-show and cancellations and reschedules are at an all time high again, right? Pre COVID levels is what we're back to. The pendulum has finally swung back the other way. So what that tells me is that offices are not doing a good job getting people committed to

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those appointments. So just changing one statement, how we usually end any call after we've made an appointment, we usually say, please call us if you can't be here, you need to cancel or reschedule. So just changing that to a commitment question. Hey David, will you please call us? If you can't make your appointment for any reason, will you please call us in waiting for you to say, yeah, okay, I'll do that. Great. In one study alone, in a popular restaurant in Chicago asking that commitment question, reduce no-shows on reservations from 30% down to 10, one commitment question, imagine if we got more commitments out of that.

What if instead of just telling them your appointment times, you gave 'em a choice, this or that, now Marriott figured this back in the eighties this week or next week, morning or afternoon, two o'clock or four o'clock. So the better you present things and giving people a voluntary choice and frame it as a this or that option, and typically that. The second thing is what I want them to say yes to. The more compliance you get and now they're more committed, they are to showing. So getting those relationships built and getting better commitments out of people are probably the two most powerful that I see. We bungle all day long.

### Dr. David Phelps:

That's excellent, Chris. I totally can see that and it makes sense, and really in that commitment, you really used what you talked about earlier in sequence. Basically the words were the same. You just change the sequence of the words to turn it around and get that commitment rather than a negative statement of please call us if you can't make it. I mean that's basically, that's almost setting a precedent for we know you're busy and if you care to come see us, well drop on if it was convenient that day, if not, just no problem. Totally different scenario. Well, I do want to talk a little bit about Sunrise because I've really enjoyed getting to know some of the other key leaders in Sunrise over the last year or so, and you've been a big part of that. I know that Tony Feck, who back in decades ago when he was also part of, oh, I can't even remember the Docs organization. Yeah, docs, yeah. That's where I met Tony decades ago, but Sunrise running now. Just give us an idea of how Sunrise, who your ideal clients are, what they're looking for, and what kind of generally outcomes you're able to have 'em achieve. I know it's a big wide statement, but what would you say? Who are you attracting? Maybe that's the way, and what kind of outcomes are your ideal clients achieving today?

### Dr. Chris Phelps:

Yeah, I mean, I would say our clients come into a couple different stages. Ultimately, we're looking for good practices that want to transition to be great practices, whatever that means to them. At the same time, we also attract great practices that want to take it to another level and just want to be stand out, be the big fish in their town, if that makes sense, to stand out from others. I'd say those are our two main folks we're looking at, and that could be folks that are trying to grow and scale what they're doing. That could mean adding multiple practices to what they're doing now, like I did in my business originally. It could just be maximizing the capacity of what you've got to its fullest extent. It could be getting your freedom of time, as I said, making the

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practice independent of you. That was one of my main goals, get it to be.

So I'm making a certain amount of money that I can count on whether I'm there or not, and just if I show up and do dentistry, it's gravy, right? It's great, but it doesn't affect my lifestyle or my income and other kind of things. It could be that I'm looking to retirement here in the next year or in three years, and I want to position myself in my practice to have leverage so that there's opportunities if I sell to another dentist, if I sell to one of the DSOs or one of those kind of groups, I want to make sure that, and this person's in the best position, that they have leverage to get the best possible deal that makes the most sense for them and is the biggest win. Whatever that defines, so it's going to be different for everybody, but I want them to at least have an option to go whatever path they choose, not I feel like they're forced into a path because of that, so we get people at different stages of their practice, transition and career.

What's amazing, and it's kind of what makes Sunrise stand out, is that whatever coach you're working with myself, Dr. Feck, as I said, he is been doing this for 25 plus years or one of our other coaches for the most part. They've all been there and done that. They have that wisdom and experience that you get to leverage as what I like. One of my favorite ways of learning was you can do it yourself and do it yourself works to a point. I mean, initially in those first seven years, I said I was uncoachable. I cracked a lot of eggs to make that al more eggs than I care to admit and made way more mistakes and failures than I care to admit to, but they were reality. But at the end, it was a pretty damn good omelet, right? My hope for most people is that they don't want to feel like they have to touch the hot stove to understand that it's hot.

If I can save them that pain and headache and help them make a better omelet faster by making less mistakes along the way or any of our sunrise coaches can do that, then that's what our motivation is. That's what our big goal is, and so we're looking for those who are ready and they think they're at the point where they're ready to be coachable, to get true wisdom and guidance from experienced people that have been there and done that, and those that have experience and systems at each level of growth, because what is the old song? More money, more problems, meaning the problems you can, challenges you have up to a million dollar practice are completely different for a \$2 million practice are completely different for a \$4 million practice and are completely different if you have two or more of those things and some variety in between, knowing that what got you to where you are today is probably not going to get you to where you want to go tomorrow if there's a higher level. So maybe now's the time to get some guidance and advice on what to do next.

### **Dr. David Phelps:**

I think we've all climbed that mountain, Chris, we start out lugging the nap sack or the backpack ourselves. That's what we've been taught to do. I can do this. I've gotten to this point. I don't need any help, not coachable, but you're right. You get to, everybody gets to a certain point where to have a real breakthrough to break that ceiling to whatever your next level is for you, going with somebody who has charted that path is

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collapsing time. It's speed to goal with the lives we live today. Speed to goal is everything, so yes, once you've had enough of running solo, which we all have to do to some point, then jump in and find the people who have been there, and I'm a big fan, big fan of yours, Chris. I appreciate you being on today with us, and I look forward to a continued collaboration because that's how we help more people with the different aspects and experience that we bring to the table, so again, thank you so much.

Awesome. Thanks David. There's a big surprise waiting at the end of the road for many professional practice owners who become sellers at the right time. They're ready to exit the practice, go into their retirement phase, whatever that means to them. It's time and when they sell, the big surprise, which is kind of an anomaly to me, is the fact that they no longer have the income that was produced by their labor is what carries the weight of the lifestyle for all the decades that you're living and working. I mean, that's what we're trained to do. I'm not taking anything away from that. That's what we're trained to do, real freedom, whether that's in retirement or can be done much sooner, that's just a little bit of a trade secret. Having that freedom to have more peace of mind, less stress time off way before you exit, but certainly by the time you exit means understanding how to replace your income and when sellers sell the business and take the big chips off the table, that equity certainly after taxes, after sales commissions, after paying off any debt, what's left over becomes really what you have plus any other outside investments net worth that you have to now fuel your retirement, your non-active years that you've been waiting so long for.

Again, that's a problem that I see that too many people are waiting for that day and then that day comes and then their health is not good or they've lost the opportunity to have memories with their family. That's the thing I hate to see happen, and what the real problem is is they've never been focusing on replacing their income. All of a sudden the income stops from the trading time for dollars and they're left with some amount of net worth wealth equity investment somewhere, and they're trying to figure out, how do I make this work because they never thought about it. It's something that I see over and over again as I've had the privilege to work with hundreds of professional practice couples who face this on a regular basis, they're tired, they're burned out. They've had offers from private equity backed DSOs who are going to promise them a certain amount of upfront capital and then stay in the game, get your backend second by the apple, which I think those days are dwindling quickly, but the problem is when you sell in that manner, all of a sudden your income, particularly the additional distributions as an owner stop because now you've got a partner in your business, right?

You sold equity, but you're still in the game and all of a sudden your income ratcheted down probably by as much as 67% just making up a number, but it ratchet down considerably and all of a sudden all that money that was in the practice in the equity distributions, it's gone. You have some additional equity, but again, after taxes, sales commission paying off any additional debt, it can be a relatively smaller amount than one thought. Having a game plan in place and planning for you at the exit way before the exit, or at least as you're coming to the exit point, is something that every practice owner every couple needs to do. It's a conversation that nobody wants to have, nobody does have because as long as you are in the practice and blessed to be

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able to do what you do, which is make a higher than average living, you provide for your family the security, you've done it well, but you're tired.

You'd like to really enjoy some life instead of just the one big three week vacation you take every year that makes you feel better for a short period of time, but then it's back to the drudgery, not learning to replace yourself both during the time that you're in your business and practice. That's one key element of buying back your time, and secondly, as you're going along, having milestones to measure the ability for you to be replacing your income with the appropriate investments is another key. When you put those two together, when you see the coincide, the ability to replace yourself to different degrees in the practice, being the provider and having outside investments, also providing replacement income at the right time, those two together can take pressure off way before your late fifties or sixties or seventies whenever people are thinking about retiring. If you could see the light at the end of the tunnel way before then, maybe it bring some enjoyment back to your actual practice model, maybe you wouldn't have to put up with certain types of patients that you're trying now to see because you feel like you just to fill your operatory chairs, you wouldn't have to deal with certain insurance company contracts because you just feel like if you don't have them and you don't bow to them, you don't have butts in the seats to serve taking the pressure off, so you see when you've got some margin changes, the dynamics of everything.

I've seen it happen over and over again to people I've had the privilege of working with once they had the clarity as a couple as to how much they really needed to take time off again during the time they're in practice, certainly have the ability to exit on the way they want to exit, not be pressured into exiting one option or the other because they've got a plan. This is what's missing. I see over and over again for the greatest producers out there, for the higher, highest income people, for those who have done really well and are very good at what they do, this is the missing element. There just isn't teaching financial acumen. Financial advisors don't do it because they don't understand it either. They don't understand the workings of a business owner and how much is missed just because no one teaches this.

No one brings this to the forefront to have these discussions. Once you have these discussions, the earlier in life you can have them. I'm talking about when you are a young doc and you're raising your family and getting off the ground, if you can have the clarity to know where you are, where you want to be, not at retirement, but two years out, three years out, five years out, see, these are the years that your family is growing up right in front of you, and if you're like, I was in my early years where I thought, well, I've just got to grind, grind, grind, and make hay while the sun shines while missing. The very moments in time with my family was a big mistake, and I had a snapping of the leash when my daughter was very, very sick at age 12 that told me, David, you got to stop this, and once I had my own clarity about how much was enough, that didn't stop me from being able to build more net worth.

It didn't stop me from having a higher income. What it did do, it stopped me from being crazy about giving up

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the present day for some anticipated future, and you can't do that. You've got to combine both together. This is such an important conversation. It's something we do at our blueprint weekends for our couples and freedom planners for every new member who enters, because this conversation is more important than X, Y, z yield, return on investment, that's important. Not as important as having clarity about where you are, where you want to go, designing your life in advance and knowing where you want to be. Nobody does this. It's always about retirement. It's retirement, retirement. Accumulate, accumulate, accumulate. Keep your fingers crossed. Use the money Carlo, take out two, three, 4% per year deplete. It's like, that's baloney. Get over that because that's not going to give you true freedom, and until you're ready to dig in and have these conversations, you're going to stay on that treadmill and eventually that treadmill gets old.

Oh, I know. I see it. I see it all the time. Those who have the clarity, the focus, and have the confidence that they've got a plan that fits, then you've got the security to make changes. Look, we're all about security. I'm about security. I'm risk averse, but my security is not in how many dollars I have in net worth. It's my ability to know that I've got a game plan that keeps me safe, it keeps me inflation hedged, and gives me enough to live the lifestyle I want. I don't need to pile it up forever. You're missing the mark if you're trying to do that. I'm David Phelps. I want the best for you. I want freedom for you. Where do you find it? You've got to connect. You've got to get in the mix. You've got to have a curiosity about doing this. Don't follow the herd. The herd's not going to take you. Where do you want to go For those interested in learning how to create exceptional and life-changing results to step back or exit entirely from practice, then schedule a call with my team at [freedomfounders.com/discover](https://freedomfounders.com/discover). That's [freedomfounders.com/discover](https://freedomfounders.com/discover). We'll dig into your financial situation and lets you know your best next steps, and as always, be sure to hit the subscribe or follow a button wherever you're watching and listening so you don't miss a single episode of the Freedom Founders Podcast. I'll see you next time.