



Are you thinking yourself into a stressful life?

By Julie Parker

I was conducting some online research a while ago and came across an interesting analogy. So interesting, in fact, that to this day, I use it frequently to reduce my stress.

I am interested in how our minds shape our reality and was looking into different techniques that are used to shift sub-conscious beliefs. It is a challenging area, as these beliefs are often not ones that we are aware of, so it takes some serious reflection to identify them. Despite this challenge, though, I believe it is vital to uncover these deeply held beliefs as they direct our experience of life.

My research directed me to a video of Morty Lefkoe speaking about his method for shifting unhelpful beliefs. It is called the Lefkoe Belief Process and I encourage you to do your own study, as the process is more detailed than what I am portraying here.

During his presentation, Lefkoe successfully illustrated how our experience of situations transforms when we change how we look at it. I will recount the analogy he used.

Imagine that it is raining outside right now. How does it affect you? Not much, right? You are inside and able to continue on with your day.

But let's say that it's your wedding day. Plans have been underway to have the perfect day for months. Now the rain has a different meaning to you. It is upsetting and you become distressed.

But now, let's say you were getting married in a country where the culture considered rain on a special day a spiritual blessing. You feel extremely lucky and are grateful for the rain.

How is it that this simple event - rain - can bring about either indifference, distress or gratitude? The difference lies in a shifting of the meaning.

"I often see the frustration that owners experience when problems arise. Much of the frustration is borne of an irritation that they must, again, deal with a challenge. Owning a business has many perks, however, these are balanced with managing the continual challenges that arise. It is part of the deal and no-one is free of it..."

Many of us have read quotes such as *"it is not what happens to you, but how you react that matters"* (Epictetus). I think Lefkoe's rain analogy has stuck with me because it provides a simple and applicable example of how easy it can be to change the story of what an event means to us.

Dental practices provide several examples of "rain" that results in team members becoming distressed:

- Staff call in sick;
- Patients fail to attend;
- The schedule runs over into personal time;
- Someone resigns;
- A new employee doesn't work out and the search for a new team member has to start again; or
- Breakdown of compressor, so all work ceases.

None of us enjoy being distressed and it is not the best mindset to come from when searching for solutions. So how can we put Lefkoe's rain analogy into action and achieve a more stress-free life in our dental practices? What "meanings" can we change?

Julie Parker Practice Success co-founder and Australasia's Passion Provocateur, Charles Kovess, delivers the first helpful shift in meaning...

Happiness is NOT the absence of problems.

I often observe the frustration that dental practice owners experience when problems arise. Much of the frustration is borne of an irritation that they must, again, deal with a challenge. Owning a business has many perks, however, these are balanced with managing the continual challenges that arise. It is part of the deal and no-one is free of it. Stop resisting problems and embrace them as you embrace all the benefits of your position.

The second shift in meaning comes from me...



It could be worse!

I considered this when I was reflecting over a particularly embarrassing event that happened decades ago. You know, one of those memories that plague you as you try to fall asleep and can't let it go. I started to contemplate how much worse that event could have been and imagined my reaction.

It could have been so awful that I became grateful that my event played out in the meagre way that it did. Situations can always be worse, so be thankful that your problems are so manageable.

The third shift in meaning is one that I adopted early in my years of owning a dental practice...

Everything is in perfect order, whether you understand it or not.

Our default is to react to situations in accordance with how they affect us personally or based on our perspective, our "meaning". When we expand our perspective to include others and the universe, we understand that not everything is about us. We may simply be bystanders

in someone else's story. We may have an alternate and better destination we are being led to that we do not yet see. For me, the phrase *everything is in perfect order, whether you understand it or not* became a mantra that I would say took me out of my head and into acceptance of the unknown.

The final shift in meaning is, again, from Charles...

Every situation presents an equal number of benefits and drawbacks.

As Charles says, despite the obvious benefits, even winning the lottery will have drawbacks. Embracing this concept shifts your expectations to ones that are more realistic. You no longer resist the drawbacks of situations because without them, you would not experience the benefits.

Identifying the meaning you attribute to the "rain" in your life and flipping it can have a powerful impact on the degree of stress you experience. Bring your team along on the journey and create a better environment for everyone, one that contains less stress, less distress and much more enjoyment.

About the author

Julie Parker's whole career has been devoted to the dental industry, starting in 1987 as a dental nurse. In 2003, Julie became the first non-dentist to buy a dental practice in Australia. She owned and managed her practice in Brighton, Victoria for 10 years. During this time, she more than trebled the turnover and her staff base grew from 3 to 12 members. Julie successfully cultivated a winning team and a winning business. Her business programs on how to accomplish a dream dental business are gleaned from her wealth of experience, intensive education and an inquisitive business mind. Julie is a Certified Practitioner of Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Time Line Therapy and Hypnotherapy.

Julie Parker Practice Success provides dental teams with coaching and training so they can work together and achieve successful outcomes for their dental practice. Contact Julie on 0407-657-729 or julie@julieparkerpracticesuccess.com.au and discover what is on offer to help your team members develop the skills to run an efficient, productive and happy practice.