

# Smile Potential Newsletter

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516-599-0214

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Featured Article



Dr. Steven Katz

## OVERCOMING FEAR



### Dear Clients, Colleagues and Friends,

The reality of a fairly gentle Winter in the Northeast has allowed many practices to surpass their early year metrics in comparison to last year. The increased productivity can lead to stressful situations and confrontation when communication is not stellar. As indicated in the thought for the month, ""YOU" May Be A Problem". "Overcoming Fear" is derived from experiences in my practice over the past 30 years and more recently from exposure to an exciting new technology.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Steve Katz

PS: Please take a minute to view the attached Smile Potential Speaking Video. **CLICK ON THIS LINK:**





Kelly Fox-Galvagni

## "YOU" IS A PROBLEM

Nearly every questionnaire that we receive from Dental Team members indicates that a lack of communication skills is one of the greatest problems in most dental practices. When things are going well in a practice there is usually complacency towards potential problems, but as soon as the fecal matter hits the oscillating, rotating appliance things turn for the worse. In previous issues of our newsletter we have dealt with the problem of Gossip and we have given a policy to eliminate it from your practices. (Please send me an email if

A 3-minute video showing how Dr. Steven Katz and Kelly Fox-Galvagni Make a Difference by Motivating Dentists and Their Teams To Grow Their Practices, Increase Treatment Acceptance and Change Lives.

## OVERCOMING FEAR

Fear is a vital response to physical and emotional danger. If we didn't feel it, we could not protect ourselves from legitimate threats. But we often fear situations that are far from life-or-death, and that phenomenon tends to paralyze us throughout our lifetimes. Traumas, bad experiences or hearing of others' traumas or bad experiences can trigger a fear response that is very hard to overcome. Exposing ourselves to our personal demons is one of the best ways to move past them.

Fear can surface from a vast range of situations and challenges. One of the most common and strongest fears is fear of dying. But for many, other fears can be nearly as strong or even stronger. All of us have witnessed, first-hand the intensity of dental phobia. Consider the pain, embarrassment and internal torture that some of our phobic patients have endured as a result of their fear. For many, fear of public speaking is even stronger than the fear of death. It is said that many people are more fearful of delivering a eulogy than of being the person who is being eulogized.

The list of common fears is endless. Fear of heights, fear of bugs, fear of flying, claustrophobia, fear of failure and, ironically, even the fear of success can be added to fears of public speaking, fear of injections and fear of dentistry.

Drs. Howard and Robbin Gurr are extremely accomplished Clinical Psychologists who have been friends and patients of mine for many years. Through the years, Robbin has done an amazing job in helping some of the most fearful patients from our practice overcome their fear of dentistry. As she has explained, overcoming fears involves several concepts. First the individual must acknowledge their fear. Then they must present a need or desire to overcome the fear. They must develop an understanding of what it is that elicits their fear. They must develop strategies or skills to overcome the fear and they must be able to use the strategy when confronted with the fearful situation. We have learned how to

you would like to receive a copy of this policy and the Policy Signature Form for your practice.)

When conflict resolution is necessary in the absence of gossip it then becomes necessary to avoid the volatility that can result from direct confrontation. Often times, when handled improperly, direct confrontation and accusations lead to a defensive posture and counter attack.

Let's look at an example:

Maria and Lauren are both clinical assistants with shared responsibilities and identical schedules. Maria tries to manipulate the schedule each day so that Lauren repeatedly has the last patient and Maria leaves to go home before Lauren, leaving Lauren with the final cleanup responsibilities.

support and reinforce Robbin's work with the patients in our practice and together we have had a tremendous amount of success working with these patients. If you would like to hear more about how this process works or have a patient who you would like to support through this process, I suggest you contact Dr. Robbin Gurr at (631) 462-2467 or rgurr@drsgurr.com to find out more.

One of the most successful techniques of treating fear is called Systematic Desensitization. This is progressively and incrementally taking a patient through the experience that elicits their fear. The process can be lengthy and costly, depending on the nature of the fear. Dr. Howard Gurr has always impressed me by being on the cutting edge of innovation and the use of technology in his field. Recently he has described and demonstrated to me his pioneering use of technology in performing Virtual Reality Therapy for treating fears. He utilizes Virtual Reality Technology and a sophisticated computer program to simulate the conditions that might cause an individual to be fearful. He has modules that enable him to treat fear of heights, insects, flying and claustrophobia that are incredibly "real" and together with therapeutic support and concurrent relaxation techniques it is easy to see how this type of therapy can be so successful. Dr. Gurr and I have discussed contacting the developers of this technology about the development of a module that would enable the successful Virtual Reality Treatment of Dental Phobias that affect between 5-10% of people in our country.

One of the best modules that I experienced first-hand is the module that deals with fear of public speaking. Glossophobia is the technical term given to a severe fear of public speaking. As many as 75% of people have glossophobia and many consider it the greatest fear a person can have. Some say there are two types of people, those who describe a fear of speaking and those who lie about it. The Virtual Reality module for treating fear of speaking recreated the feeling of speaking at meetings and in front of various size audiences. It simulated audience approval, inattentiveness, dismissal and even being booed. If there is a situation you could encounter in a speaking engagement that invokes fear, this form of therapy can simulate it and allow you and Dr. Gurr to develop mechanisms and strategies to overcome the challenge. This is incredibly useful for anyone wanting to speak to patients, team members and colleagues, or in a variety of social and business situations.

The inability to speak in public may create lost opportunities in business and in life. Of course it would be great to have the ability to inspire a patient to accept treatment, or to motivate a dental team at a team meeting or huddle. or to deliver an informational program

The situation reaches a head and Lauren confronts Maria, "Maria, everyday it seems like you avoid taking the last patient and then you leave before I'm done so I get stuck with all of the end of day cleanup. It's not fair!"

Maria responds, "Lauren, That's not true. I cleaned up on Monday. And besides, half of the time you don't get here on time in the morning and I always have to set up the rooms and see the first patient. It's making me angry also!"

You can see that this conversation is going nowhere fast. Using the word "YOU" makes it an accusation that leads to denial, defensiveness and counter-attack.

Let's try it again a little bit differently.

"Maria, sometimes I get frustrated when I find myself both treating the last

at the local Rotary meeting. But it also has a huge impact on other aspects of our lives. It might affect the ability to convince a bank underwriter to extend financing for the purchase of a home or second business, or to get up and influence neighbors about an important issue at a school PTA meeting, or to comfortably express emotions when toasting a son or daughter at their wedding, or remembering a loved one in a heartfelt eulogy at a funeral. Whatever the circumstance, the ability to express yourself in front of others has the ability to change emotions, perceptions and opinions. Doesn't it make sense that it could affect the level of success in your dental practices?

The experience also invoked thoughts of my colleagues in the Speaking Consulting Network (SCN). Kelly and I have both been very privileged to be honored with awards for speaking from the SCN during the last 2 years. We are eager to attend again in June to further develop these skills. In my interaction with many members there is still mention of inherent fears in getting up in front of audiences. I wholeheartedly believe that Dr. Gurr's use of this technology would be very helpful to so many of you who still harbor these fears and who experience anxiety before getting up to speak. If this applies to you, I would suggest that you contact Dr. Howard Gurr at (631) 780-4877 or [hgurr@drsgurr.com](mailto:hgurr@drsgurr.com).

Life is a series of challenges to connect with people and engage them. Whether they have a fear of the service you provide, or if you are fearful of communicating the merits of what, how and why you can benefit them, doesn't it make sense to engage the help of technology and professionals who can help overcome those challenges and turn them into opportunities. And in the words of one of the best public speakers of all time, Daffy Duck, "Th-th-th-that's all folks!"

If you would like to discuss helping patients overcome Dental Phobia or overcoming your own Fear of Public Speaking, please call me anytime at 516-599-0883 or by email at [coaching@smilepotential.com](mailto:coaching@smilepotential.com).

It will be my pleasure to spend time with you.

Also, consider ordering the book  
**"They Didn't Teach Us THAT In Dental School"**  
the exciting First book from Dr. Steven Katz:

patient and completing the end-of-day cleanup. Do you think it would be possible in the future to develop a system that would have us communicate better together and create a fairer situation for both of us?"

"Lauren, I can see that you seem frustrated. I agree that we need to do something. I am equally frustrated with shouldering the burden in the mornings when only one of us is here to start the day. Perhaps we can be more considerate of each other and develop a system that would help both situations."

I'm sure that you can see the benefits of the second scenario. The lesson learned from this is that "YOU" is a problem and should be avoided in these situations. Try to use the word "WE" to distribute the burden of responsibility and speak about the feelings that the



### Coaching Update

#### **Invite us into your practice or Study Group !!!**

We have now surpassed our 120th presentation and have spoken to over 8,000 dentists and team members in just over 7 years.

We are presently working with practices in Arverne, Babylon, Bayport, Bellemore, Brooklyn, East Meadow, Fishkill, Islip, Jericho, Levittown, Manhattan, Manorville, Merrick, Oceanside, Roslyn Heights, Wainscott, Whitestone, Yorktown Heights, Fishkill, Wantagh, Wappinger Falls, Poughkeepsie and several in the state of Connecticut.

- Weds, March 16 - Custom Practice Coaching - Bayport, NY
- Friday, Mar 18 - Laser Training for Hygienists - Rockville Center, NY
- Thursday, Mar 24 - Custom Practice Coaching - Port Jefferson, NY
- Thursday, Mar 31- Custom Practice Coaching - Massapequa, NY
- Friday, April 1 - Custom Practice Coaching - Levittown, NY
- Friday, April 8 - Full-day Presentation - Portland, Oregon
- Weds, April 13 - Greater Long Island Dental Meeting - Melville, NY
- Friday, April 15 - Penn. Academy of Gen. Dentistry - Wilkes Barre, PA

behavior elicits before identifying the action that caused it.

It is also a great idea to avoid REACTING "in the moment" that you are most affected. When you do this it becomes more difficult to deal with it constructively. It may be better to take a step back and RESPOND to the situation after giving the discussion some more thought.

If YOU do this, YOU will find that avoiding the word "YOU" will give YOU the result YOU want more consistently.

Thank YOU.

## MEET OUR COACHES

Mercedes LoRusso  
Queens, NY

Tuesday, April 19 - Custom Practice Coaching - Wainscott, NY  
Tuesday, April 19 - Custom Practice Coaching - Port Jefferson, NY  
Weds, April 20 - Custom Practice Coaching - Bayport, NY  
Thursday, April 21 - Custom Practice Coaching - Manorville, NY  
Monday, Feb 22 - Custom Practice Coaching - Oceanside, NY  
Thursday, April 28- Custom Practice Coaching - Massapequa, NY

On Friday, March 18, we will present a Hands-on Laser Training Program for Hygienists featuring Jill Taylor, RDH, in Rockville Center, NY.

On Friday, April 8, Dr Katz and Kelly will be presenting "They Didn't Teach Us THAT In Dental School" at the Oregon State Dental Meeting.

On Friday, April 15, Dr. Katz and Kelly will present "They Didn't Teach Us THAT In Dental School" to the Pennsylvania Academy of General Dentistry in Wilkes-Barre, PA.

On Friday, May 13, Dr Katz and Kelly will be presenting "Pump Up Your Practice: Doctor AND Team Strategies for Increased Treatment Acceptance" in Glen Cove, NY for NuLife Long Island. For information about registering for this all-day presentation at the beautiful All Dent Learning Center, Please call Arielle or Amanda at (516)621-2080 or sign up on their website at [www.all-dent.com](http://www.all-dent.com).

On Friday, June 10 - Sunday, June 12 Dr. Katz and Kelly will be attending the Annual Meeting of the Dental Speaking and Consulting Network in Santa Fe, New Mexico. In 2014, Dr. Katz won the top award for speaking at this meeting. In 2015, Kelly made it back-to-back wins of the same prestigious award for the Smile Potential Team.

Oral Surgeons and Periodontists who want to do 100 more implants this year have been engaging Dr. Katz and Kelly for programs with their referring practices to generate greater case acceptance of comprehensive treatment.

Several Study Groups have recently taken advantage of Smile Potential's Round Table Discussions where we sit with the Doctors and Team members dealing with the specific issues facing their practices in a focus group type setting.

Lucrezia Lentini  
Franklin Square, NY

Denise Barnes  
Holbrook, NY

#### Quick Links

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Kelly and I thoroughly enjoy meeting all of the wonderful people in our profession. One of the things we enjoy most is visiting with doctors and their teams in their offices. Invite us to visit your practices. When we spend time with you in your practices we offer very subtle suggestions that may make significant changes in your production, profitability and fulfillment. We love what we do. We love sharing our knowledge and experience. We would love to help you reach your practice potential.

## Newsletter Library

For comments on this or any of our previous newsletters, please email us at [Coaching@Smilepotential.com](mailto:Coaching@Smilepotential.com) or through our website at [www.smilepotential.com](http://www.smilepotential.com).

If you prefer to speak with us, please call:  
**Dr. Katz at 516-599-0883 or  
Kelly at 516-599-0214**

**Sincerely,**

Dr. Steven Katz  
Kelly Fox-Galvagni  
Mercedes, Lucrezia and Denise  
Smile Potential Dental Practice Coaching

Smile Potential, Steven M. Katz, DMD, MAGD, Kelly-Fox Galvagni, CDA, 116 Broadway, Malverne, NY 11565

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