



Ray of Light

The Future and Other Myths

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If I've learned anything from walking around on this planet for 73 years, it's that the future ends up a whole lot different when you actually get there than what it was predicted to be. In fact, I've decided it's impossible to reliably predict the future at all, whether it's predicting the winner of the Super Bowl, the disappearance of the polar ice caps, the outcome of the next election, the state of the economy or just tomorrow's weather. Predictions are wrong more often than right. Something always happens, big or small, that was ignored, unexpected, or unaccounted for.

Given that fact, does it make sense to live in fear of what some 'expert' is predicting, whether it is a downturn in the economy, the worst-ever hurricane season, or the certain death of traditional private dental practice? Have you noticed how these publicized predictions of big events or trends are almost exclusively negative, and (intentionally?) fear-inducing? Should you put off the bold steps that will improve and grow your practice because of what the doomsayers say, or should you, for the sake of not becoming frozen in inaction, make decisions based on your grasp of the opportunities available today?



In spite of the failure of forecasts, there are observable trends we can see happening around us in the present. Some things are continuing and growing; and some things are diminishing and dying off. One of the negative trends that has been steadily growing the last few decades is the amount of discontent among medical doctors as our healthcare system deteriorates year after year. The reasons are complex, but really not: they all boil down to the increasing control of medical practice by outside entities: government, corporate medicine and insurance companies that all put profit motive, cost-cutting, or political ambition ahead of care of patients. Sound familiar?

More recently, reaction to that is turning into a positive trend: the number of direct care physicians is growing. These are doctors who opt out of the corporate-run insurance-based

model and move to an old fashioned fee-for-service relationship-based practice where patients pay for their care directly using a transparent fee schedule. I'm not predicting anything here, but could this be the turnaround point in medicine where doctors do an about-face and return to the practice style of the 50's? Their ranks are growing. The ones who have done this report much higher job satisfaction than those remaining in the morass of the modern day healthcare system where unsurprisingly half of physicians have regrets about their career choice or their practice setting.



What's that got to do with me, you ask? Everything. One of the big advantages Dentistry has over Medicine is that we get to see the mistakes made by that other profession while we still have time to make some corrections before the same s**t hits our fan (in this case it already has, but not as bad).

Your DenVantage patients are the exact equivalent of those direct care patients in medicine. Building your membership

numbers is building your base of these patients who are insulated from the negative trends in insurance. Do you want a more satisfying practice experience? Avoid burnout? Try having a day of seeing only DenVantage patients and see how different your office feels when all the patients have pre-paid, nobody is griping that their insurance didn't pay more, or puts off treatment because their insurance maxed out. And nobody has claims to fill out and file, or insurance rules to comply with. Your team is more relaxed because they don't have to deal with insurance or collect money from patients.

Do you want more days like that? One patient at a time, build your future practice the way you want it. The best way to predict the future is to build it yourself according to the model you choose. DenVantage makes that possible if you commit to steady consistent progress. If you will do this, I predict you will have a prosperous and satisfying future practice. And there will still be ice and polar bears at the North Pole.