

RISBRUDT REPORTS

We feel called to be a nurturing, supportive and health-centered practice based on integrity, trust, commitment, quality, service, and dedication to technical and behavioral excellence.

Lessons from the Masters

One of the first and most profound mentors in my professional life was Dr. A.B. Hall, Professor of Dental Anatomy at the University of Minnesota School of Dentistry. He was all of about five feet nine, and weighed around 135, I'd guess, but he was one of the most formidable forces on the faculty. He had a reputation among students and alumni alike, and you were either in total awe, total fear, or total hate in your feelings for this man. He literally held the keys to your professional future, and he had a reputation for being an ultra hardnose.

I remember standing in line, waiting for Dr. Hall to check a certain step on a project in my freshman year in dental school. One of my classmates in front of me in line presented him with what he thought was just what was required. The project was to do a sculpture in modeling clay of an upper central incisor tooth three times scale. After examining the project for a few minutes, Dr. Hall reached into his pocket and, with a flourish, took an exquisitely sharpened jackknife and reduced the sculpture to pieces in seconds. "Here's what I think of your project, and on the way back to your dorm after school, you can throw it off the Washington Avenue Bridge (over the Mississippi River) and you might just as well jump in after it." His point was this: Dentistry is a very demanding and exacting profession, and when we perform a service *we leave behind an artifact of who we are*, and it's important that it's done right and to the very best of our

ability. Most modern school teachers would be horrified to hear this story, because they would be concerned about our delicate little psyches, but after 40+ years in practice, I can assure you the profession of dentistry is NOT for the faint-hearted! Dr. Hall knew that so very well, that he felt the test should come early in our career to avoid making a wrong career choice and being miserable all of one's life.

All of us in our class would have a favorite "Hall story." One of my personal favorites was Dr. Hall saying to me that what I thought of him and how hardnosed he was didn't matter to him, because, as he said it: "Nobody's going to be naming any buildings in the dental school after me. After all, who ever heard of Hall Hall?" The result of this one man: Our entire class scored in the 96th percentile and above in the Oral Anatomy section of the National Board Exams for dental schools. There isn't a day that goes by that I don't look at teeth and lab work and evaluate my performance or that of my labs in emulating God's handiwork for our patients. Dr. Hall helped me to envision and appreciate every curve, every nuance, every ripple, groove and fossa of natural teeth. Just as counterfeit experts are taught—they study the real thing so much that any counterfeit stands out like a sore thumb.

My other significant mentor, as those of you who read R/R often know, was Dr. L.D. Pankey who said: "There is no self-satisfaction

or self-esteem in doing slipshod work. Only in work that is one's best!" To that end, I apply myself on your behalf every single day. It's why I still look forward to coming to the office after nearly 43 years in practice. A little part of me goes into every single restoration that I have the privilege of performing.

I am extremely thankful for significant mentors in my life. Don't ever underestimate the impact you have if you have that privilege with others.

Something to think about!



Thomas H. Risbrudt, DDS, FAGD

More on Snoring and Sleep Apnea

You need to know that we have been working in conjunction with a specialist in sleep medicine who has developed a home-testing device for screening snoring and OSA (Obstructive Sleep Apnea). This medical doctor has spent the last thirty+ years studying sleep medicine, so he's a real pioneer. We are currently using this device for confirming the presence of sleep apnea and then re-testing after making an oral appliance to confirm that the appliance is indeed working. The results have been extremely gratifying!

More and more information is being published in the lay literature concerning sleep medicine, which is

a good thing!! Stroke, heart attack, high blood pressure, even diabetes is being linked to sleep disturbances. If you snore, or anyone in your family snores, even children, it would be wise to investigate!!

The Lasers Are coming, the Lasers Are Coming!!!!

As I write this, I have just returned from a laser seminar, and I must tell you, I was very impressed. Those of you who read R/R regularly know that we bought our first laser about two years ago. I will admit I was not quick to embrace lasers. Our decision-making process surrounding lasers (or any new technology, for that matter) is simple: Will it provide a superior, faster service for our patients? Or, will it be just another high-priced toy?

Our first laser turned out to be something that I could not now picture myself practicing without. We use it for soft-tissue surgery, especially prior to taking impressions, to efficiently and effectively control minor hemorrhage and to curette diseased soft tissue that would otherwise interfere with obtaining an excellent restorative result. We also use it for esthetic recontouring of gum tissue for veneers and other esthetic procedures. Soon our dental hygiene department will be employing it to hasten healing and to correct soft tissue concerns.

Now, we can also envision the use of a new type of laser for hard tissue work. The only key element that needs scrutiny is speed. The hard-tissue lasers are still not as fast for some procedures. But, the phenomenon of "biostimulation" is a factor that we had not looked at as closely in the past. Research and new evidence is pointing to the fact that lasers stimulate cell biology to promote and accelerate the

healing process in a most remarkable way. Now, THAT got my attention! We have already observed rapid healing with our soft tissue diode laser. At the seminar we were exposed to some ideas coming out of Europe with startling surgical results for all kinds of procedures. Remarkable stuff!!

Stay tuned—when a hard tissue laser makes sense in terms of our criteria for *speed, comfort, and a superior service*, we will be getting our next one!!

New Faces.....

We have been blessed with a new full-time hygienist in the person of Jennifer Payne, RDH. (Suzi has left to take on her new role as a Mom.) Jennifer has a thorough and comprehensive background in dentistry with nearly 20 years experience, giving her a unique perspective on excellent patient care. She started her dental career as a chairside dental assistant, moved into a front office position managing a dental practice, returned to school for her Expanded Functions license for chairside assisting, and finally went on to complete her degree in dental hygiene. All the while raising two children! You are sure to receive a most thorough and comprehensive teeth cleaning and oral examination in Jennifer's hands.

Christiana Roberts, RDA has returned to our practice after a three year hiatus. Christy was a long time assistant of mine and has now returned to round out our team—a most welcome addition!! You will find Christy to be a warm, experienced, empathetic and very professional dental assistant. In her twenty year career Christy has had experience in several specialty-type practices as well as restorative

practices, giving her a unique perspective on excellence in restorative dentistry.

Saving Lives - The Value of Oral Cancer Screening and Detection

Speaking of comprehensive, as an additional service through the dental hygiene department we are introducing one of the most important annual exams you can have. That is the ViziLite Plus Oral Cancer Screening Exam. We have always performed conventional visual and palpation exams in the past, but this latest new technology takes early detection a step further. Vizilite technology allows us to see pre-malignant lesions or early stage oral cancer at a much earlier stage, before they are even visible to the naked eye, making treatment simpler, less invasive and more than 90% successful.

We suggest appointing for it in advance on an annual basis, alternating it with your appointment for annual x-rays, for example. It is highly recommended in particular for anyone over 40, anyone who smokes, has ever smoked, or has a family history of oral cancer. Just so you know, however, 27% of oral cancers occur in patients with no apparent risk factors.

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