

Interview With Omer K. Reed, D.D.S.



by John K. Sullivan, D.D.S.
Tulare, CA
www.smilesbysullivan.com

Omer K. Reed, D.D.S.
Phoenix, AZ
www.omerkreeddds.com

Change is an important part of the dental profession, particularly the rapid changes in the cosmetic arena. When change happens, or a paradigm shifts, we can choose to rapidly integrate that change, or continue to do things the way we always have.

For years, Dr. Omer Reed has recognized and embraced the changes in the dental profession. Since 1989, he has pioneered the concept of the one-to-one future of our profession with a solo delivery system. Concepts such as the single-chair schedule, the "care pair" team, the front desk-less office, and advanced interactive diagnostic technologies provide the base for the future. We are honored to have Dr. Reed speak twice at the AACD Annual Scientific Session in New Orleans in May.

JS: *Back in the days before there were MP3 players and compact discs, we used to listen to practice management cassette tapes. One of the first practice management tapes I heard after I got out of dental school was you speaking about the concepts of the 90-second crown prep, front "desklessness," and treatment planning with the patient. It truly opened my eyes that someone was thinking "outside the box." As a person who has stretched the minds of the dental profession, how have you handled the "slings and arrows" of making predictions for paradigm shifts?*

OR: Well, this is a simple "how to" that may immediately be put to use by anyone. The window of reality through which I see the world includes many choices. When I was young my father taught me that when a person or event makes you angry, frightened, covetous, etc., that person or event is in charge of you. The *probable* outcome of such a situation is not as useful as a *preferred* outcome, so we must choose what we allow to rule our life.

If we choose to be deeply rooted in things spiritual, the choice is even easier. It is more comfortable, profitable, and responsible to choose to be at

A portrait of Dr. Bill Blatchford, a middle-aged man with glasses, wearing a dark pinstriped suit jacket, a blue shirt, and an orange patterned tie. He is smiling warmly at the camera.

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peace. We alone are responsible for our choices and our actions. No matter what the past, it is better to choose the preferred future. Each of us is responsible for our becoming what we are capable of being, and we alone stand in the way of our achieving our preferred future.

Dr. Viktor Frankl, who spent three years in Auschwitz, reminds us that we are not victims as long as we have choices; and that we, until our dying breath, retain the freedom to choose whatever attitude we bring to every situation.

JS: *What do you predict for the next generation of dentists, and what do you think the next paradigm shift will be?*

OR: I see opportunities for the next generation of dentists that are abundantly greater than those the last 50 years have brought to us. I believe the next paradigm shift will be toward the role we must play as oral physicians striving for total systemic wellness. The U.S. Surgeon General states emphatically that it is not possible to have a healthy body without a healthy mouth. The oral-systemic connection is finally, after 40 years on the back burner, receiving "prime time" attention. The oral-systemic

connection must be addressed in our patient examinations. Not just as a precursor to cosmetic dentistry, but as a precursor to any treatment. We must master changing our current paradigms to meet the future of dental wellness.

JS: *You are still actively practicing dentistry. What gives you the most pleasure in dentistry after all these years?*

OR: My pleasure in practice comes from what I refer to as the "people game." I deeply enjoy my team and the interaction with each person who comes to us for care.

JS: *You have been a leader in the dental field for many years. What inspired you to recently join the AACD?*

OR: I had an uncle who entered a mule in the Kentucky Derby. He knew the mule couldn't win, but he felt the mule deserved to run with the winners. The AACD is my Kentucky Derby, and I am the mule!

JS: *Your method of patient-centered treatment presentation is legendary. We are honored that you will share your thoughts on the subject in New Orleans. Can you give a brief preview of what attendees can expect?*

OR: The classic forms of human needs and wants will be cov-

ered in terms of the new patient experience and case presentation. The work of masters such as L.D. Pankey, Harold Worth, Morty Amsterdam, Nate Friedman, Bob Barkley, and Perry Ratcliff will be addressed, as will the philosophy that "the best dentistry is no dentistry" and the importance of a holistic approach to oral health.

JS: *What other issues can our attendees look forward to hearing about from you in New Orleans?*

OR: We will review and acknowledge the "why's" and "how to's" that lead to a chosen paradigm of happiness, health, wealth, wisdom, and peace of mind in dentistry. We will consider how to be a whole person in a broken world. Every dentist has a choice in how he or she practices. We will examine minimally invasive dentistry as it is defined and practiced. A 40-year legacy of neuromuscular dentistry also will be discussed, giving a functional window on dental cosmetics. All of these topics will be combined, and attendees will see that they have the choice of intentional economic independence. *ASp*



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