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"The first half of life is devoted to forming a healthy ego, the second half is going inward and letting it go." Carl Jung

We spend most of our lives defining ourselves in comparison to "everyone else". The creation of a society, a community, a nation is defined by "the aggregate of people living together in a more or less ordered community." So how do we know we are significant, liked or intelligent if we don't have anything to compare ourselves to? A person's sense of self esteem or self importance is about how one sees their place in the world. And this is influenced by many experiences from the day we are born.

What experiences molded you and opened more doors for you, or conversely traumatized you and blinded you from seeing doors. I have believed that one person cannot know as much as they want, but one way to expand ones world is to listen to those stories and experiences of others.

As I reflect on where I came from to where I am now, I am grateful for all those conversations, stories and experiences I listened to and envisioned, as if I could feel the same emotions as the story teller. To have empathy drew me into the storyteller's movie, as if I was an intentional character, the observer.

Over the many years of having the privilege and trust of many of you, I thank you for the stories you've told, the experiences you've been through and the tough conversations you've had. And the tales, life experiences and dialogues will continue to draw me into more worlds that are vastly different than mine.

What a gift it has been to be a dentist. Being able to connect with people provides another level of insight into someones general health. I learned that optimal health is the alignment of biological and mental health. If I could make someones teeth function comfortably and achieve an esthetic smile, I have also increased their mental health. Conversely, if I could make someone smile, know that they're liked and important, either they become more beautiful and healthy on their own, or they become open to treatment.

No one person is the same, no one person has been through the exact same experiences and no one person has the same perspective: We are individuals defined by how we interpret our experiences and stories. But lately, healthcare is transitioning to PPO/HMO providers, DSO's and Corporate owned businesses: A business model that focuses on profit more than individualized care. Times are changing faster and faster.

This is when I realize I am a Boomer. I align more closely with GenY that are skeptical about GenAI, as opposed to to the younger GenZ population that are embracing GenAI. And what about the Digital Nomads of GenX?? We Boomers suddenly see ourselves as our parents saw our generation.

We Boomers complain about how we worked hard long hours to achieve our goals and how the millennials have no idea what is to work hard. Are Boomers martyrs and millennials maybe have it right?

As I grow, the world around me moves and changes faster. The prospect of coming home to an android, having AI research and write a presentation, getting into a driverless car, buying my groceries online, Amazon's insta-delivery and drone wars is mind bending. I could go on, but for the sake of my Boomer mentality I will stop before I explode. As our world becomes more computerized, people become more detached from each other. Consequently, we miss the conversation with the stranger on the chairlift, we miss the energy that is felt when someone shares an experience and we forget what it's like to go

to bed smelling like smoke from a campfire after an evening of storytelling.

Thankfully, there are those that don't live in the middle of the bell curve. My door was wide open and Dr. Jenkins walked in. She is a wonderful mix of focusing on balancing family, personal and professional time. She also searched for a couple years for a practice that was relationship oriented and strived to treat individuals comprehensively. Our paths crossed because they were meant to. And because we both understood that I had an ego to shed and she had an ego to develop, we worked empathetically with each other, understanding the vulnerability that we each experienced.

I have had the pleasure and honor of being a mentor for Dr. Jenkins for the last 3 years. She has worked hard with both the team and I, and we fully support her.

I was fortunate to work with professionally respected and globally revered mentors, Dr. Vince Kokich Sr., Dr. David Mathews and Dr. Frank Spear. It was Dr. Kokich Sr. that said, "retire when you're still at the top". That quote stuck with me and that is what I am doing. March 20th will be what most label as my retirement, but I see it as my new beginning. Stay tuned on your relative social media, whatever Gen you are, as I continue to nurture old and new relationships by giving back to our community.

And I can't walk out of my story without thanking all the individuals that trusted and honored me in being a part of their overall health and lives, my team that has supported me professionally and personally for many years and my current mentors who I deeply respect for all they've taught me, Dr. Jim Janakievski, Dr. Steve Baerg, Dr. Tim Quinn, Dr. Vince Kokich Jr, Dr. Chad Smart and Dr. Sam Hinz.

I leave you with a couple of my favorite quotes:

"Being humble means recognizing that we are not on earth to see how important we can become, but to see how much difference we can make in the lives of others." G. Hinkley

"Information is not knowledge. The only source of knowledge is experience. You need experience to gain wisdom." A. Einstein

Thank you all

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