

Wednesday, May 8, 2013

Déjà Vu



"Dad! They are fouling the heck out of me!"

Being a dad and the coach of a club basketball team gave me ample opportunities to share life lessons with my team and my son. Getting fouled in basketball can be a very frustrating experience. My son played point guard and he noticed he was getting wacked around pretty good. "Congratulations," I said when he tried to moan about it.

"What do you mean, Dad? Congratulations? They are fouling me like crazy!" he shot back.

"Philip, are they fouling our power forward when he gets the ball?"

"Heck no, Dad. Everyone knows Nick is in the game to muscle for rebounds and set screens. Handling the ball and creating offense for the team is not his skill."

"Congratulations!" I repeated with a smile. "They are paying you a very high compliment by fouling you like that. Have you seen what happened to Michael Jordan when he played? The better you are, the more they foul you. The better you, the more your opponents need to foul you."

Déjà vu!

In February 1997, the front cover of Reader's Digest touted the lead article proclaiming the results of a special investigation "How Dentists Rip Us Off."

In 1997, dentistry's image took a beating. Change was in the air as third parties took control of patients and insurance payers wanted to know what they were getting for their dollar. The economy was humming and the fight for the discretionary dollars was on.

Dentistry has come under scrutiny in the media in this past year. Just as our economy is starting to gain positive traction, everyone in business is trying to maneuver to get on the next wave of a gravy train for discretionary dollars.

Real estate, luxury cars, pay day loans, TV connections, dental tourism, bite wing X-rays and cancer in children, mercury pollution solution at the dental office, dentists involved in poor infection standards, and clothing manufacturers are all hitting on us in the media. We must be really good, because they are fouling us like crazy.

Dentistry is the greatest success story never told and competing businesses recognize that they need to get their message out first. We have done a fabulous job for the American public and business wants first dibs on any discretionary dollars. The more they foul us, the better they are saying we are.

Recently, Debbie and I got a life lesson from an old friend in dentistry, Gordon "Yoda" Christensen. As more of us are experiencing longer careers than expected, I asked him how much longer he would continue. He answered without hesitation and with a face full of pride. With a twinkle in his eye that said he gets to do exactly what he feels God intended him to do, he answered. "I'll go till I drop. I'll go till I cannot do it at the level I want."

Amen, Yoda. Amen.



Enjoy the journey,

Bob Oro, DMD, MAGD

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