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Overcoming Obstacles

Martin Matovich, D.M.D.

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By Jack Tucker

The following article is a reprint of an interview conducted by Doctor of Dentistry magazine. It's an insight to the dental practice of Dr. Marty Matovich and his associates. We invite you to gain an appreciation of his dental philosophies and the services offered at his practice.

Marty Matovich, D.M.D., knows all about the obstacles associated with dentistry. He has been overcoming obstacles ever since he entered dental school at Oregon Health Sciences University (OHSU) in 1984. He started dental school three different times before graduating. "Not necessarily the kind of record you

The needs of each patient are unique to them. Patients must have their priorities identified and their clinical needs met beyond expectation.

want to set," he laughs. "I feel like I'm the poster boy for never giving up."

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES AS A YOUNG DENTIST

When he graduated in 1995, he had two main goals: to have the respect of his peers and to make a difference

Dr. Matovich feels blessed to be partnered with a wonderful staff. "Every person in this office is highly valued. I am lucky to be surrounded with people of character, and that makes all the difference." Pictured left to right are: Pam, Cindy, Kristin, Jessica, Mary, Dr. Erinne Lubisich, Dr. Matovich, Colleen, Naidia, Marnie, Holly and Debby



The Impact of Cosmetic Dentistry

Esthetic dental procedures are becoming a larger part of most general dental practices. Whether it is pressed porcelain jacket crowns on peg laterals or hand-stacked feldspathic porcelain veneers on the upper six anteriors, esthetic procedures impact the way patients feel about their smiles. "We have to be careful when treatment planning anterior cases," Dr. Matovich says. "It seems that some dentists are eager to restore worn anterior teeth without diagnosing the chewing system above the single tooth level. If the teeth are restored without addressing the cause of the original breakdown, future breakdown may be likely."

Dr. Matovich's patient, Michelle Dray, states, "At 30 years old, I had worn down my misaligned front teeth. I wore braces to correct my bite to become a good candidate for veneers. I've had veneers for over a year now. I love to smile and now I think my smile looks as good as I feel. The expertise, forethought and innovative skills he and his team use are the keys to this success."

Before



After



PHOTOS COURTESY OF DR. MATOVICH



Michelle Dray, 6 maxillary anterior veneers

Before



After



Before



After



Examples of cosmetic cases completed by Dr. Matovich that started with proper diagnosis, bite correction and then stabilized with anterior veneers.

Full-Mouth Reconstructions Impact on Facial Appearance

Example of a bioesthetic full-mouth reconstruction case completed by Dr. Matovich demonstrates the soft-tissue changes that occur when reconstruction centers on the patient's most stable condylar position. "When meticulous attention to detail is given to condylar position and occlusal morphology for mechanoreceptive guidance, the neuromuscular system functions in a more relaxed state," Dr. Matovich says. "The results are like facial plastic surgery without the scalpel."

Dr. Matovich believes his patient, Charles Hunt, says it best: "I did not fully comprehend at the time how amazing the final results would be to my face. You put my teeth back into a stable and healthy situation, and affected my visual appearance in a dramatic fashion. You have even straightened out my crooked smile. Wow!" "I have received many glowing compliments about how

Before



After (2 years later)



PHOTOS COURTESY OF DR. MATOVICH

Charles Hunt, Bioesthetic full-mouth reconstruction

beautiful my teeth look and how dramatic your work has improved the appearance of my face. Some have said I look 10 years younger. One of those people was my wife and that, of course, was great to hear from her."

"The ideal philosophy for reconstruction, I believe, is one based on the biologic model of a healthy chewing system, and one that has meticulous clinical detail in transfer of the diagnostic reconstruction into the mouth."

in people's lives. "Graduation from dental school is only the beginning." Although Dr. Matovich graduated first in his class, he states, "It's like we just got our driver's license, but we are certainly not racecar drivers." The obstacles faced transitioning into a general dental sole proprietorship are many. "We generally lack significant experience in dental office management, specialty procedures and diagnostics. Our hand skills are not fully developed."

He became an associate in a general dental practice in southwest Portland, and shortly thereafter became a regular volunteer at a free public health dental clinic.

"I figured I owed it to Oregon taxpayers because they subsidized my public education at OHSU," he says. "Volunteering at public health dental clinics can also reinforce your experience in dental diagnostics and specialty procedures. You are able to provide a great service to the community along the way."

In his quest to become an outstanding general dentist, he knew he needed to further develop his clinical skills. "Dentists can easily enhance their clinical skills and judgment by joining participation study clubs." Over the years, Dr. Matovich joined several continuing education study clubs in cosmetics, endodontics, periodontal surgery, oral biology and diagnosis, cast gold procedures and full-mouth reconstruction. Dr. Matovich gained his current dental practice in 1997, and his ability to offer all forms of dental and specialty procedures within his office is a result of his dedication to his continuing dental education.

As a result of his desire to support organized dentistry at the local level, Dr. Matovich accepted an appointment

to the Dental Peer Review Committee for Clark County. “The Washington State Peer Review process is a great way for dentists and patients to overcome their differences when they don’t see eye to eye. I try to facilitate resolution between dentists and patients prior to going to full-committee binding arbitration.” Dr. Matovich listens to both sides and then suggests what might work as an outcome. “I want to give the dentists support and empathize with them, not judge them. It’s also important to make the patient feel as though someone is listening and cares about their problem. Resolution fair to both sides is always the goal. I feel this experience has been important in my own practice because I recognize the

importance of resolving any patient-related issue in a fair and respectable way.”

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES TO PATIENT TRUST

Whenever a new patient joins a practice, they are often concerned about the quality of service they will receive. “The two most common complaints that I see in peer review are over treatment and substandard quality of clinical care.” Dr. Matovich feels a patient cannot have a long-term relationship with a practice if they feel their specific needs are not being met. “I never want a patient to feel that I have a hand in their pocketbook or

Stan’s Story — An Application of Bioesthetic Dentistry

Stan Randall shares his story: “Over the past 18-20 years, I have experienced, with increasing intensity, migraine headaches on a daily basis. Regular visits to our family doctor to determine a cause/cure were not successful. After the standard migraine medicines proved to be ineffective, we began to look for stronger options. Imitrex shots worked best; however, they were still only able to mask the pain. Once the shot wore off, the headaches returned. We also tried physical therapy and chiropractic, with no success.

“About three years ago, while I was visiting Dr. Matovich, he noticed I was in pain and asked what was bothering me. I told him about the headaches and said I was having a ‘pretty good one’ right then. We talked about what I had done to deal with them and that so far nothing had worked. He asked if I would be interested in discovering if my chewing system had anything to do with my symptoms. Of course, I was willing to try anything that might reduce or eliminate the migraines.

“Dr. Matovich began by fabricating an orthotic appliance for me to wear over my upper teeth. During the next several months, I would come in once a week for adjustments on the appliance. The adjustments gradually allowed my jaw to find its most stable position. Once my jaw stabilized, my headaches were completely eliminated. Dr. Matovich had me go to the orthodontist to move my teeth in a way that would keep my jaw in its stable position. Additional adjustments to my teeth were necessary after orthodontics to maintain my new bite.

“I lived with headaches every day for almost two decades. I had come to a point where I accepted the idea that this would be my life. Dr. Matovich saw an opportunity to make a



Stan Randall

difference and found a way to eliminate the headaches. He did not give up. I am very grateful for his willingness to be more than just a ‘tooth fixer.’”

PHOTO COURTESY OF DR. MATOVICH

Technology today is changing our everyday lives. Many people, however, aren't aware that technology is also impacting dentistry in new and exciting ways. Cutting-edge innovations in dental instruments are requiring less time in the dental chair, causing less discomfort and creating satisfying results. One breakthrough instrument, called CEREC®, allows dentists to quickly restore damaged teeth with natural-colored ceramic fillings, saving patients time and inconvenience.

Dr. Matovich is able to offer crowns made in a single visit within his own office. "The use of CEREC® CAD/CAM technology has been a real plus for patients that have busy schedules. Crowns milled and seated in our office saves the patient an extra dental office visit. Since we do the design in house, the finished crowns are produced to our own exacting standards."

Before**During****After**

Dr. Matovich designed, milled, custom stained and seated this single visit CEREC® 3/4 ceramic crown.



CEREC® by Sirona Dental Systems is the world's first system for the fabrication of all-ceramic dental restorations in one office visit.

Before**After**

Dr. Matovich designed, milled, custom stained and seated this single visit CEREC® ceramic full crown.

Observed Trials Motorcycling

When overcoming obstacles of a physical nature, Dr. Matovich and his son, Michael, share a real connection. They ride trials motorcycles and compete in the sport.

The motor sport is called observed trials. The competition is a scored event similar to golf. "The object is to negotiate extreme terrain over a defined course without being assessed penalty points for falling," Dr. Matovich says. "It's a very precise sport. You have seven control variables that are managed simultaneously." It is both mentally and physically challenging.

Dr. Matovich loves the sport because it allows him to spend time with his son doing something they both enjoy. "My dad got me involved in trials when I was 10 years old. I wanted my son to have the same memorable experiences that I had with my father when we rode trials together in the 1970s," he says. "My son loves it. He has his own bike, knows how to take care of it and likes the combination of riding and being outdoors."

Although his wife, Christine, and daughter Amy don't

Dr. Matovich during competition.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF DR. MATOVICH

compete, trials events allow the family to enjoy the outdoors on a year-round basis. "My daughter, Amy, rode briefly when she was younger," he says. "Now she enjoys the photography side to the sport, and has captured some great images."

Dr. Matovich's son, Michael, during competition.



that I am trying to sell them something.” Dr. Matovich continues, “The needs of each patient are unique to them. Patients must have their priorities identified and their clinical needs met beyond expectation.”

Building a practice on patient trust is not difficult when advertising is limited to word of mouth. “We are blessed to have a continuous new patient flow through patients referring their friends. That is very important for our practice and we feel honored by the compliment. Through direct referral, new patients come to us already knowing something about our practice. Patients need to know that if they see me or one of my associates, they can count on consistent dedication to proper diagnosis and quality service.”

As far as trust in the clinical care received at Dr. Matovich’s practice, patients only need to look as far as his reputation among his peers. “I feel honored to have had the opportunity to treat nearly two dozen dentists as patients throughout my career. Treating fellow professionals reinforce that I am on the right track to accomplish my original goals.”

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES IN TREATING DIFFICULT CASES

As his practice grew, Dr. Matovich encountered certain patients he couldn’t confidently treat. “These were patients who had musculoskeletal problems, migraines, temporal mandibular joint problems, extreme generalized tooth wear with significant loss of vertical dimension,” he says. “These patients demonstrate a breakdown of the chewing system at a level higher than a single tooth. I felt that if I was going to be doing more complicated cosmetic and reconstruction cases, I owed it to the patient to have a higher level of education.”

He researched the different philosophies of oral diagnostics and full-mouth reconstruction: “The ideal philosophy for reconstruction, I believe, is one based on the biologic model of a healthy chewing system. If we diagnose how people deviate from the ideal biologic model, then we can identify the source of their chewing system problems.”

Therefore, he completed the full clinical training

series taught by the OBI Foundation for Bioesthetic Dentistry, and the diagnostic oral biology series taught by iCon Articulations.

Another obstacle to treating complex cases is finding the best lab support. “The lab has to care as much about the finished cases as the dentist. They have to be willing to invest in the latest techniques and training and they have to understand the philosophy being used for reconstruction.” Dr. Matovich was very selective in finding a lab that would support his level of detail he demanded. He found that lab in Davis Dental Laboratory in Portland. “They’re phenomenal,” he says. “They went through the entire bioesthetic training program. Having a solid understanding of ideal tooth morphology and occlusion, their work is meticulous. I have used them for esthetic, crown, bridge and full reconstruction cases.”

When it comes to making an impact, Dr. Matovich feels the story is incomplete without honoring those who have made an impact on his life. Dr. Matovich acknowledges that his biggest champion during this journey is his wife, Christine. “I owe my success to my wife, Christine, for her patience and the constant support she shows me,” he says. “I could not have done this without her, she is amazing. She is my source of strength and encouragement.”

On the professional side, Dr. Matovich says, “As dentists, we also need to acknowledge that we stand on the shoulders of many researchers and dental professionals that have shared their work with us through dental education. Hopefully, we can be a part of that continuum and lift others by sharing our own experiences.” ■

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