

## Shopping Experience



by Wm. J. Schlotz, D.D.S.

My favorite “department” type store is Kohl’s, more later. By the way, here’s fair warning, textual coherence in this article will be challenging. Try to follow the bouncing ball.

The phone rings to our dental office, caller on the other end asks “What do you charge for an implant?” This shopping question bugs me due to the implied lack of understanding of the importance of quality reflected in the question. It’s not like buying a “T” shirt. Or maybe it is.

I went price-shopping for apparel the other day to various stores (including my favorite store). Price ranges for various items, *within the same store*, were up to a 100% differential (or even greater). Some items were twice as expensive as the exact same item (including “t” shirts). If the same store *retail* pricing is indicative of *wholesale* pricing, then some producers of the same item charge double what other producers charge. How can some producers “get away” with this? Or, flipping it, why would a right-minded consumer pay double for one “t” shirt over another?

Most understand that *quality differences* are the answer to the above two questions. So, back to our caller, does s/he think that there is less of a quality differential re: the surgical implantation and prosthetic replacement of a tooth vs an apparel item? So how exactly is a price over the phone going to help?

Continuing my literary hop-scotch, I had an interesting conversation with Anita Camoy (not her real name) a patient of mine with a very high health-IQ. Anita recently had undergone Lasik eye surgery. I asked her how she chose her producer, I mean provider, of healthcare. Anita mentioned the internet, actual Lasik patients and consultations as helping her with her decision. With regard to fees, she chose not the highest nor the lowest – just the office that made the most sense for her needs. Now that shopper is the real McCoy.

Careening back to dental implants and dentistry in general, many understand that raw fees, important as they are, don’t tell the whole story. Some dentists try to lower fees employing ever-more-popular style of “speed dentistry” where miscues propagate (see “Affordable Dentistry” article on website). I prefer more meticulous, slower treatment – yet with the usage of technology for more cost-sensitive care.

Finally, instead of a number, our mystery shopper might have benefited more knowing this dental office is quality-confident enough to assure implant success for life. My team and I think of our office like Kohl’s... offering quality at reasonable prices. Find the office that suits your needs. The bouncing has stopped.

Resume Smiling.

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