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THE LVI 20 YEAR *Journey*

As we enter LVI's 20th
year in business, I was asked to
reflect and write an article about our anniversary.
WOW... 20 years! It seems just like yesterday.
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Just two years prior to this I was asked to do a live patient program at Baylor College of Dentistry in Dallas. I had been lecturing on the road before that, at one point traveling 120 days a year. Over the years I've lectured in every state and almost every democratic country. But it was this program that changed everything. I had been part of a six month continuum at Baylor the year before and they liked my presentation enough to have me come back and do a live patient treatment course - where the doctors actually got to work on patients. It was VERY successful so in 1994 I decided to bring the course to Las Vegas as well so I wouldn't have to travel as much with the first course opening in 1995. I had a young son who was reaching the fun age (two) and I wanted to be able to spend more time with him. I ran the programs out of my 3,000 sq/ft office with 5 operatories. I would lecture sitting on the sink counter in our team lounge room and actually had to climb over chairs to get there. We even tried doing the lectures at the YMCA next door for a while. We developed an LVI office in a strip mall when things got really busy and had to hire a team of people to help me run LVI while I was also managing my dental practice.



Finally, in the summer of 1998 I completed the first building on the campus. People at the time called me crazy for building such a large structure (20,000 sq/ft) and predicted my downfall and financial ruin. Many tried to assist in that prediction by spreading false rumors and creating competitive programs by copying the blueprint for the courses I had created. All that did was make me work harder to prove them wrong. And, work hard I did!



At the time we were offering mainly aesthetic and practice management courses. The courses were packed and LVI was on a roll. Then, what many predicted would be the ruin of LVI became just the opposite. In 1999 I was introduced to what was called Neuromuscular Dentistry. Basically it's just the physiologic approach to treating patients, something dentistry has ignored for decades. But the venom of those that were ignorant to what it really was about was cascading. I lost friends over it. I know... hard to believe that people who I mentored and who credited me with their success would not only turn their

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backs on me, but would actively discredit me and LVI. There were personal attacks, with one guy calling me the "cosmetic guru from the desert that knows nothing about occlusion."

Others mocked what they didn't know or understand. As Wayne Dyer said, "The highest form of ignorance is when you reject something you don't know anything about."

The following years were traumatic with many questioning LVI's success and path. I had taken NM dentistry out of the closet and used our success in the aesthetic arena to bring it to the masses. All of a sudden, the "ridicule," which Jefferson talked about as the first stage of change moved to the second phase of change... "violent opposition."

Because we were successfully educating the masses who had the courage and common sense to "learn" the status quo felt threatened. Ninety-nine percent of those that came to hear what our approach was all about were convinced we were right. No longer was ridicule enough. It became important for many critics to discredit the voice of this great occlusal revolution. Right or wrong, I was believed by them to be that voice and it's easier to discredit an individual than a cause that has all the science and logic behind it. For this reason, I worked to

make others the voice as it's hard to attack a group of people than one individual. I worked hard to build up the reputations of instructors at LVI, making them worthwhile voices for people to listen to. And eventually I made the move in 2008 to remove myself from that group

of voices to take me out of the equation by retiring from speaking publically - other than teaching at LVI. And it worked.

Even though the adoption of NM dentistry by LVI caused a problem, it also was very

successful. So successful that in 2003 we finished the second building on our campus adding another 40,000 sq/ft, another clinic and four

more lecture halls. It is my sincere belief that LVI would not be here today if I had not stumbled upon this amazing physiologic approach to dentistry called Neuromuscular. During this same time period almost every other

aesthetic institute or center went out of business or dramatically curtailed their courses. But even more importantly, LVI evolved far beyond those early days of NM dentistry thus creating today, a much superior, practical and logical approach to treating patients than we offered even five years ago. The biggest thing I'm



proud of about LVI is our continual willingness... no, our desire... no, really it's our passion... to evolve and grow. There is no finer post graduate dental training center and no finer occlusal and restorative education one can receive. And I say that with humility as it's not about me... there are dozens of contributors and brilliant minds to the education one receives at LVI.

In 2005, I sold LVI yet remained as the CEO and continued to teach and bring in and develop new programs. While this was a good move initially, it resulted in the guidance and direction also coming from the owners and the reality that their mission and path were different than ours. In 2013, Heidi and I had the opportunity to buy LVI back to ensure that it would continue on the correct path and to honor the real purpose of its mission. We came to realize that LVI was our passion filled purpose I talked about in my final road lecture at the IAPA in 2008. LVI is what drives us, what gives us hope for the profession, and what gives us the passion for what we do. It's the greatest job in the world and Heidi and I can't imagine doing anything else. Since



buying it back in 2013, several significant changes have occurred and the courses, content and team moral have never been better. The feedback we get from attendees is the best ever and the new advanced courses have taken NM dentistry to a completely different level. To paraphrase the old Buick commercial... this is not your grandfathers NM dentistry.

So we celebrate that over the past 20 years we've had over 10,000 alumni from 45 different countries attend one of the 38 courses on our campus. We've changed many lives - both doctors and patients. We've prevented dentists from wanting to retire because of their new found passion... and we've even saved lives with our physiologic approach to treating sleep-breathing disorders. We've created dentists that on average do better and are more satisfied with their chosen profession than the average dentist. And with persistence, we've reached the hard earned 3rd stage of CHANGE that Jefferson talked about... ACCEPTANCE.



"Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma - which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition."

Steve Jobs





So in October we will celebrate this incredible path that everyone who has attended LVI is part of and it is they who are responsible for our success. It's those committed dental pioneers that ignored the advice of the uneducated "experts" who had a vested interest in us being wrong. It was they who were willing to challenge the stagnant status quo that existed in the profession. And it is they that really are responsible for the 20 years of LVI's success. Our alumni had a thirst for knowledge and wanted more from the profession than they were receiving... or knew it could be more than they were told it could be. I am so proud of our alumni and their commitment to excellence as well as the much needed enthusiasm they bring to our profession.

My hope is that everyone who has ever attended LVI can be a part of this historic celebration and incredible educational event that will take place October 22-24 on the LVI campus - because you all deserve to be part of such a celebration. We have been around for 20 years because of you. Embrace your contribution and be part of this wonderful and monumental event. It WILL be historic!