



J. Peter St. Clair, DMD

Brighter Smiles

A SERIOUS MATTER

We all have people we look-up to whether it is in our personal or professional life. One of those people in my professional life is the late Dr. LD Pankey. Dr. Pankey was a true visionary and has an advanced dental education institute named after him where dentists learn from his influential teachings.

I recently read an article he wrote in 1981, 8 years before his death. It is interesting to read some of the things he wrote because it shows how much things have not changed and how well he understood people and his profession. I would like to share a few paragraphs from this piece:

“Another important element, then, in the future of dentistry is determining the answer to the question: why don’t more people with needs go to the dentist? In-depth studies on consumer attitudes have turned up a host of reasons, but one surpasses all the rest. Most people who fail to seek dental care fail because they don’t perceive their need. More astounding than that is the fact that the

majority of people who do go to the dentist don’t perceive the need either!

If the public is ever to be enlightened about the importance of dental health, who will have to do the enlightening? I’ve never found anyone else I could depend on to do it. I had to build the one-to-one relationships with my patients that were needed to make my practice- and thus the future of dentistry- prosper and grow.

People with dental needs are out there, all right, but even when they do perceive their need they must be assured there’s someone available who will identify with what they’re feeling and devote themselves to helping them to be healthy, happy and whole.”

Statistically, there are 50% of you reading this that do not see a dentist on a regular basis. In 1981 there were no connections between oral health and systemic health. Today we know that a healthy mouth is so important to a healthy body yet still the same percentage of people do not see a dentist on a regular basis.

Next week we will take a look into the 5 major reasons why people do not seek ideal dental care. Those 5 reasons are money, time, lack of concern, fear and trust. Following that, we will look into how to go about choosing a dentist if you do not have one.

The dentist is not going to call you to make an appointment; you have to call. After you make that call, it is up to you and your dentist to discuss the specific barrier(s) that are preventing you from obtaining optimal oral health.

Don’t take your teeth and oral health for granted. Just because it doesn’t hurt doesn’t

mean you are healthy. Just because your car runs doesn’t mean you don’t need maintenance. Just because you feel okay doesn’t mean you don’t have heart disease. Take your health seriously.

Dr. St. Clair maintains a private dental practice in Rowley dedicated to family health-centered dentistry. If there are certain topics you would like to see written about or questions you have please email them to me at jpstclair@dentalhealthforlife.com.

