

The sense of Belongingness

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Abstract

The first time that I had walked in, into the campus, I wasn't someone sure about my options, choices and their consequences in the "world of work". Here I was, four years later, feeling relieved. For, I knew my place, my niche.

The Sense of Belongingness

The first day at college wasn't just another first day at work. It was different. It was symbolic of a certain inadequacy on my part at winning the rat race. But little did I know that I was about to enter a world that was a beautiful amalgamation of art and science.

Today when I look back I realize how immense the journey has been on aspects of learning, growing as an individual and identifying with myself as one amongst the fraternity of dental surgeons. And this has been achievable only because of meticulously designed curriculum of our university.

Right from the books that the students are asked to read, to how the theoretical knowledge and its practical application are neatly bridged, the experience is made comfortable for the students.

Carving teeth out of wax blocks in the first year, to working on typhodonts in the second year, all of it prepares us towards taking up real cases later.

As a student of third BDS, when I first ventured into clinics, I was overwhelmed. It was not going to be a typhodont any longer. It was going to be the tooth of a man, a man like my kin and my own self. The idea was certainly overwhelming.

The first case that I took up, to restore was a third quadrant third molar, conservative class one cavity design. In a world full of art and science, there were now villains. The tongue and the saliva. The patient was very cooperative but the nervousness inside me took over. The constant nagging feeling that I had to do right by him didn't let me proceed. I ended up calling a senior for help to finish the assigned work on the patient.

This day I learnt two things. One, that I was headed right towards becoming someone who had conscience. Isn't that why we all take up education, primarily? The value education and all those lectures on ethics had paid off.

Secondly, a dentist who knows how to tame the tongue and saliva always wins.

I wasn't sure yet if I was capable of winning the war.

I tried procrastinating on working on patients and refused to take up anymore third quadrant third molars. It wasn't that I liked the tooth too much or the tooth didn't like me much or both.

One fine day, during my final BDS, there was a confrontation again third quadrant third molar. But, this time I was more equipped with skills, experience and confidence. I had also learnt the tricks. The experience of restoring this tooth was pleasant for me and the patient. The patient asked for my contact details and saved them with the prefix "Dr" to my name. This was the moment realization hit me. The first time that I had walked in, into the campus, I wasn't someone sure about my options, choices and their consequences in the "world of work". Here I was, four years later, feeling relieved. For, I knew my place, my niche.

I was a dental surgeon and that gave me a feeling of accomplishment.

The fine transition from pre-clinics to clinics and then to internship and finally higher training, knowing was really the key. Knowing that no knowledge is ever wasted, that patience always pays, knowing that learning it all the right way is certainly important, that the field of medicine is and must be ethically driven, and knowing what is relevant and what is not.

Knowing, is the only key.

And I am grateful to all of those who have known this and put in the time and energy into planning a curriculum for the budding dentists. I shall be ever grateful to the institute that I have learnt from, my alma mater, to have instilled in me a sense of belongingness. Probably that is all what I lacked when I had walked in, on day one.