

Hello everyone. Dr. Rich, Rich Castellano The Smile Doctor, here with my weekend review. Something really interesting and important to talk about today is staff communication.

I had an incident, I had a problem that I'm going to share with you with my staff. We ended up having a really good conversation and I wanted to share how this impacted our relationship and our workflow, and really set the stage for a good foundation moving forward.

Let me set the stage that we are in the office and one of my staff is pregnant, so we're interviewing. We had another staff that had trouble with childcare, so were interviewing, we're a little short-staffed and we're also training on one day. It was a busy day and we're wearing our, we wear our [pappers 00:00:41] and all of our gear here. We're social distancing, things take a little longer.

As we're going through the day, we get a little later, a little later and sometimes you go into the room, not everything's set up straight, or maybe the patient, there was miscommunication. We have to talk to someone else, so there was a little tension. Do you ever get any tension in your day? Or how about all the time? We had tension that was going on.

One of my staff, I was just noticing that when I would send some energy to, is kind of like they weren't there. They were so focused on getting the work done, they didn't even see me. I was nervous about their energy because they felt tense. I just know when I see that kind of energy, it's almost like the boiler pots ready, the crock pot's ready to boil over. The pressure cooker is getting too much pressure and things are cooking.

I was feeling a little on edge about this and we had someone training at the same time, so it was pandemonium. Now the trainee that we had, I printed up my five page list of the protocols and I said, "Here's this, here's how we do our filler, here's how we room patients, all here, read through this." And so lots of stuff going on.

I'm going in from room to room. And then I walk into a room and I see the patient, I'm meeting them. They're supposed to have a filler. When I talked to them, I'm ready to go, I'm flowing through, and I look and on the tray there's just a filler and there's no cannulas and there's no local, which means I have to stop my flow. I'm going through and I got to stop. Don't you love it doctors, when your tray's not completely set up for you?

I look in the drawer, I couldn't find any cannulas. I walk out and I say, "Hey guys," I'm trying to be as nice as I can, but I am frustrated. I say, "Hey, I need some local. I need some cannulas." In the back of my voice, I'm saying, "Like we always need it, like every single time for the past year. Why isn't it there?" I'm like, "Ah," but I'm trying to just ...

I came across this one staff that was tense and I could see it just raise the tension even more. We got the thing that took care of the patient and we "tried to hide that from the patients", but you never really had it. They see all of these things, everything, they see it all.

When we got to the end of the day, literally the staff literally just walked out of the office and I'm like, "Uh oh. What's going on?" Then I feel bad because I don't want my staff to feel tense and over done. So I reach out to them later and I say, "Hey, is everything okay?" We're talking on the phone and she was upset and she had talked to my office manager and just felt like that she couldn't do anything right and I was singling her out if I was not happy about something. I'm like, "Oh no, I don't want to be that person that's just beating up on somebody."

I said, "Okay." First thing I did, what did I do? I apologized. But wait a minute. She was the one that wasn't doing things right. Her energy wasn't good. You apologized to her? What kind of precedent are you setting? Are you just letting the inmates run the, the kids, the team run everything? I mean, you're the leader.

I apologized. I took accountability for everything. I said, "Look, I know that it was a tense day. And I know sometimes I can be a little difficult to work with because we are seeing a lot of patients and I got to support a staff of 20. And so yeah, we have high standards. And so I know it was tense and I don't want it to be tense, but we need to have a way to communicate about things." Then she opened up, at least we started the dialogue and she opened up and said, "Well," she didn't want to feel singled out and noticed that I had made comments about the energy. I was trying to lighten things up and she wasn't really receiving that well.

I said, "Well, when there's an error that happens ..." I said, "Look, I make mistakes. Everybody's going to make mistakes. There were mistakes that were made today. Right? There were mistakes in pictures. They were mistakes in filler set up. What's the best way that I communicate that to you?" She said, "Well," she doesn't want to hear that in front of other staff. I said, "Well, that's okay." But I said, "When I walk out of a room and things are going, I have to somehow say, 'Hey, I need these extra supplies.'" She says, "I get it."

I said, "Look, this is business. This isn't about personal." I said, "Let me start at the beginning. We really value you. You do a great job. You really do and we're so proud of the work that you do. Patients love you. You know that, that how much we like you and you're doing a great job. You know this right?" And they're kind of like, "Hm." "I mean it's true. You really need to see how much we appreciate you. And I do my best to express it. We talked about that if you want to take extra classes and you want flexibility with your schedule, we want you to advance your education and all that. We really want to support you. But we've got to communicate."

I came down to these three things that we needed at this point, is that number one, I, we, me, my team, we like our staff. We like them as people. I wanted to express this to her. I said, "Look, you're funny. We have a good time. When we're operating, we're playing and joking and laughing and that's all good. And yeah, there'll be ups and downs, but we like you. We're proud of you. You're doing a great job." That's number one, is we like you and you got to believe it. It's like, "Well you say you like me, but I don't believe it." It's got to be genuine. And when it's genuine, they know, and when it's not genuine, they know that too. That's number one.

Number two, we need to know that you like us and we know you enjoy it. I'd had this conversation. We know you enjoy the patients. We know you admire me for what I do and you've given nice compliments in the past. But you need to know that if things are too tense that we're not just going to hold your feet to the fire for every mistake you make. If you make a mistake, want to support you and set things up so that you can succeed. It's not about you're getting into trouble for every mistake you make. We like you more than that. We like you. We know you're going to make mistakes. And when you do, fine, we'll try and correct these as quietly as possible. We'll try and do our trainings. We want you to feel liked, but we need to know you like working here and that you can take the feedback.

"Business is best when business is business-like," Warren Buffett. Number one, you need to know we like you and we need to express that. You need to like us and we're in this together. You need to be able to say, "Hey, there's a timeout. It's getting too tense or I don't feel comfortable with this situation." Great. Communicate, tell us what you need so let's get through this, but not the pressure cooker, which leads us to the third thing is, how do we diffuse the tension? It's super important.

You need to have ways to do this. Now the number one way to diffuse tension is charge ups and smiling. I say, "I'm so frustrated right now because we're at 30 minutes late." In fact, today I had a webinar and I messaged my team. I was literally 15 minutes late to the webinar. I'm like, "Oh no, people are registering. They're not going to come to the webinar." I was frustrated, but we had to get through. I had a Spanish speaking patient. They had confusion about the treatment and I'm like, "Oh no." So

there's tension. And I just, "Hey," we just keep going through, laugh it off and build each other up and charge ups and pumps up.

I was so happy we were able to help this Spanish speaking patient and take care of them. I did get on the webinar and I took care of those people too. You need ways to diffuse the tension and talk to your team about this. Now my personal recommendation is, of course, the charge up. It's always great. Oh, we're going to have such a great day today. When you run into challenges, you're like, "Ah, I stubbed my toe. This really hurts, or this chart's missing or this patient's not happy, or these photos aren't right," or whatever is going on that's going to bring us down. We charge back up and say, "Let's keep going."

This was the summary of this conversation is that I told this team member, "We really like you. We care about you. We want to support you. If you want to further your education, and we're grateful for the work you do. You're a great part of our team and patients love you. And we love you too." That's number one, we like you.

Number two, you got to like us. You got to talk to us. You can't hide things away. If you're feeling tense, we need to know about that and what do we do to get around that? How do we give you feedback? Because everyone's going to make mistakes and we're going to learn together. We're on the same team.

And number three, when there's tension, and we know there's going to be tension, how do we diffuse it? Even if it's something as simple as saying, "I'm really tense right now," whatever you got to do, you need a way to diffuse the tension. You with me?

That's so powerful because I can imagine that you may have a staff that you need to have this conversation with. If you're totally good with all of your staff, you don't need this, maybe you need to look a little deeper. Maybe you are super duper great with all of your team members, but something tells me, I know you'll find it if it's there, you don't want it hiding from you. You don't want to say, "I'll just leave that alone because if I don't ask, maybe I don't have to deal with it. I don't have to deal with that."

Trust me, you're dealing with it because tension, regret, resistance builds up, builds up, builds up. And then before you know it you're like, "Why is my team so inefficient or why did that staff leave or why are we dealing with this blow up when the pressure cooker blows?"

That is my week interview, what was so powerful. Now we have such a great relationship with that team member and we're going to build on that. We're going to train our new team members and that new trainee that was there for that day. This is a great teaching moment. I'm going to share this whole conversation with them and say, "What did you learn from that? That day was not perfect. Was not a really stellar day, was it? But here we are. We got a great team and we got through it."

I'm excited about getting you through your tough days. We'll have more videos coming soon. Let me know if you have any questions. Remember as always, everything worthwhile starts with a smile. See you in the next video.