

Why Do I Do This?

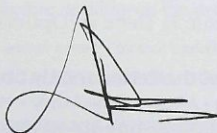
The paperwork piles up on my desk. The telephone calls never seem to stop. New governmental regulations intrude from every side. I have less and less time to spend on learning and on personal matters.

From the time I start in the morning until I stop seeing patients in the afternoon (usually from 7 to 4 straight through), I rarely have the opportunity to sit at my desk and catch up. This means that by the time charts are filled out and e-mails are answered, I get home at about 7. This routine is normal four days a week, four weeks a month, interspersed with traveling for lectures. I must admit that there are times when the routine takes its toll.

But just as I get to the point of questioning my sanity for this self-imposed stress, I walk into a treatment room for a patient's postoperative visit and am greeted with the dazzling smile. In many cases, with a smile enhanced by therapy in which I was privileged to participate. Modern periodontics has brought us to the point where outcomes that would have been considered miracles 20 years ago are now routine.

Everyday I see these miracles. I see the patient who suffered trauma, both physical and emotional, following a traffic accident, restored to health. I see the older patient (my age) whose smile returns as a result of surgical procedures performed to reduce previously elongated teeth. I see a young girl who never smiled before replacement of multiple congenitally missing teeth with dental implants, grin from the ear to ear.

Regulations, paperwork, long hours, minimal personal time.
All are justified when I walk into that room.



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