

A Diary of a Dentist – Part 1: Relieve Daily Stress by Being Prepared

Have a Plan

I used to be anxious and intimidated by a lot of procedures and patients. Especially anterior esthetic cases. Why? It's because I was just winging it. I didn't have a solid game plan. The voices of self-doubt would creep into my mind. Thoughts like “what material are you going to use?” and “Are you sure about that?” would give me a gloomy outlook. Unless you are still in school or lucky enough to be in a great mentoring environment, a lot of us no longer have that wingman to rely on to advise you of what to do next. Most dentists are on their own out there. So having a game plan for me has been a total game changer with my dental career.

Every dentist is different, comes from a different clinical and financial background, and works in different situations. I totally get this. Personally, I have created a unique workflow in my head for each procedure. Whether it's a filling, crown, or implant. I go into each treatment with a game plan. It is like a playbook and it has made me so much less stressed.

It allows my brain to go into autopilot and the procedures go by efficiently and predictably. It takes time but when you and your assistant have mastered your workflows, it becomes like a ballet or well-rehearsed synchronized swimming performance. If you are struggling to figure out the next step, then patients can sense this too. They may think that you are not in control or not sure what you are doing. Here's an example of a case that I would have been totally stressed about: A #8 central incisor with an incisal edge that had become aesthetically unpleasant and functionally weak due to attrition. The patient did not like the stain glass look of it. He felt motivated to improve his smile and complete the restoration since we had placed a new ceramic bridge on the adjacent teeth.

My plan was:

1. Bevel
2. Etch and Bond
3. OMNICHROMA BLOCKER *Flow* followed by OMNICHROMA *Flow*
4. Adjusted occlusion
5. Smooth and polish with a cookbook of burs

Products Used:



- Tokuyama Bond Force
- OMNICHROMA BLOCKER *Flow*
- OMNICHROMA *Flow*

Case:**Before****After**

No anesthetic was needed for this particular case, since there was no decay, and the restoration was mostly in enamel. Patients love when you tell them you can fix their tooth without having to get numb.

I started off by beveling the tooth with a diamond bur on all the margins. This helps blend the restoration and to have a greater bond to the enamel. The enamel margins and the restorative surface were both acid etched (35% phosphoric acid). The tooth was then thoroughly rinsed with water and air dried. Care must be taken to have great isolation and prevent any etch from touching any soft tissue.

Next, a bonding agent (Bond Force, Tokuyama Dental) was applied in two applications on the restorative surface and slightly beyond the margins. The tooth was then light cured. To avoid show-thru of the restoration, I first applied some OMNICHROMA BLOCKER *Flow* on the lingual surface in a thin layer (0.5 mm).

It wasn't needed for this case but sometimes a putty matrix can be made on the lingual-incisal area to create a lingual shelf to accurately hold the OMNICHROMA BLOCKER *Flow* in place until it could be light cured.

Next, the OMNICHROMA *Flow* was injected into the restorative area and slightly beyond the margins, filling the entire restoration. The new restoration was then thoroughly light cured on both the facial, lingual, and incisal directions.

The incisal and facial areas were first contoured with carbide burs and occlusion was adjusted and verified with articulating paper. I make sure the patient is biting down in MIP and then go into excursive movements. Some patients need to be guided into their MIP if they keep biting with an edge-to-edge position.

I then used sandpaper discs (Soflex-XT, 3M). A coarse disc was used to establish the primary anatomy and then a successive series of finer discs was used to obtain a high polish. A high polish was achieved with the blue and pink rubber cups (Medium & Fine Flexi cups, Cosmedent). A Jiffy Brush was used to obtain a very high polish.

This was my plan for this case, and it ended up with a happy patient which means a *happy dentist*.

My advice is for you to create your own individual customized plan that works for you, your hands, and your practice. It may be different than mine but that's ok. Find your game changers and personal workflows that help you be more efficient, productive, and stress-free.

Less inventory and more organization are also part of the plan

Being well-prepared is more than just having a plan. Earlier in my career and especially when I was a traveling associate, I used to have a drawer in each office full of random materials and many composites. I would rummage through these drawers like I was searching for the right Lego piece.

Disorganization is a waste of time and can be frustrating for everyone involved. No one likes to go into a procedure unprepared or without the proper tools. This is very common when searching for the right shade of composite. You can't formulate repeatable and predictable clinical results if not organized or without the proper inventory. I can't tell you how many times we had to find the right shade of composite only to find it had expired. OMNICHROMA product family was the solution I needed. We used to keep a large inventory of composite shades to accommodate a variety of patients. We had this palette of shades in a fan-like shape like a painter before painting a canvas. But now we just need one - OMNICHROMA *Flow* and its companion OMNICHROMA BLOCKER *Flow*.

Now I no longer need to rummage around looking for a shade and praying that it hasn't expired. That's why my practice is always stocked with OMNICHROMA products, we use it so often that it wouldn't have time to expire. OMNICHROMA products are truly single-shade, reducing my inventory and procedure time.