

DENTISTRY: SCIENCE OR ART?

For Dr Greg Finn, principal at Finn Dental Specialists in Beckenham and part of the Dentex community, you can't have one without the other

Is dentistry an art, a science or both? While for the patient, the two may not appear intrinsically linked, for Dr Greg Finn the answer is resoundingly the latter; to achieve high-quality dental care, he believes that elements of both science and art are essential. As principal at Finn Dental Specialists - with expertise in full-mouth reconstruction, implants and aesthetic issues - Dr Finn's approach is reflected in his practice's mantra: 'Use only the finest materials and techniques. Make it beautiful. Make it last. Make it painless.'

MAKE IT BEAUTIFUL

Dr Finn has taken an interest in minimally-invasive dentistry since he embarked on a Master's Degree at UCL's Eastman Dental Institute, which was also where he first recognised how an artistic eye brought immeasurable benefits to his work.

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Discussing a lesson during which he and his peers were building crowns, he describes: 'The head technician used to say you can teach people all the steps they need to do the crown, but that you cannot teach the art of it.'

Luckily, the creative side came naturally - Dr Finn has been a keen artist since he was a boy - and his specialties require artistic elements to achieve optimum results: 'I do a lot of composite bonding,



rebuilding mouths where people have severe tooth surface loss, and I rebuild a lot of those by conserving the original tooth structure,' he describes. 'I think it helps a lot if you have an eye for the art. Obviously you need rules to work by, which is the science, but I think the art brings it alive. It's quite a subtle thing, but by changing

the curvature of a couple of corners on a tooth, you can bring the whole smile alive. If teeth are just a bunch of arches, they can be gleaming white, but if they're the wrong shape they can look false and uninteresting.'

WORK LIFE BALANCE

Dr Finn's passion for art is lifelong, but his busy career has meant that practising art has taken a backseat for much of his adulthood. He came to the UK from Australia in 1984, and moved from NHS dentistry to private practice in 1990 - a risky move at a time when private dentistry was not commonplace. He embarked on his Master's Degree in the

early Nineties, and as his practice grew, he converted his home into his business premises and moved his young family into the adjoining property. Suffice to say, interests outside of work and family life were low on the priority list.

JOINING DENTEX

Achieving more leisure time has always been a challenge and Dr Finn credits his decision to join Dentex in 2021 as the shift that has finally allowed him to start striving for more balance. Not only a means to more personal time, Dr Finn has enjoyed refocusing on the side of the business he enjoys the most - the dentistry - now that



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the practice has Dentex's support with the administrative side: 'The nice thing is that this frees me up to get on with the dentistry,' he describes. 'It's a great relief to not have the responsibility of running the whole practice.'

While relinquishing some of the responsibility has been a key advantage,



Dr Finn has also seen how tapping into Dentex's Partner Support team has helped grow and improve Finn Dental Specialists: 'When you're a full-time dentist and running a practice you have knowledge of where the gaps are in the business,

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but even with the best will in the world the chance of you being able to fill them properly is really low, because you're working at the coalface,' he describes. 'So getting your marketing right, your HR right, your management right is very difficult. Dentex partner support has that expertise. The practice now has access to dedicated marketing, legal, HR, compliance teams, to name a few. It's wonderful for me to just be able to continue with the dentistry, and let (Dentex) support in those areas.'

To his loyal patients, very little has

outwardly changed – one of the key benefits that attracted Dr Finn to join: 'When I decided to join, Dentex were clear in their belief that the people best placed to run their practices remain those who established them and got them working well in the first place,' he says. 'And they're right. Why would somebody coming in from the outside know more about how to run my practice? Nothing has changed for my patients, which is exactly how I had hoped it would be.'

One of the biggest changes for Dr Finn has been the freedom to find more time to focus on his passions - art and sculpting. 'When you start doing sculpture or painting, your time disappears and you have a real sense of calmness,' he states. 'Dentistry can cause a lot of stress, but the best thing in the world is to compartmentalise it, take it in little bites and go and do other things that actually give you some joy in life.'

A LIBERATED LIFESTYLE

Ultimately, with the support of Dentex, Dr Finn hopes to achieve more work/ life balance - he recently started portrait painting each week on a Wednesday evening. While he has built his career by employing elements of both arts and science, his partnership with Dentex has allowed him the increased time to pursue art purely for enjoyment, and as he explains 'meditation'. He credits this time away from work with making him a better clinician: 'I used to think I had to focus on a problem until I had it solved,' he says. 'Now I realise my subconscious is well able to find solutions, whilst I get on with other things. Eventually an elegant solution pops into my head. It's as if my subconscious is saying to

my conscious brain: 'Go away. I'm dealing with this. I'll let you know when I have the solution.' Now I trust it will happen if I'm patient... I do think art is like meditation,' he says, 'I think everybody should look for the things they can do that take their mind away from the everyday! ●

MORE INFORMATION

FINN DENTAL: www.finndentalspecialists.com
DENTEX: www.dentexhealth.co.uk