

Finding Dr. Right, Part 1

How do you find the right dentist (or M.D. for that matter)? The good news is that most dentists are very competent and understanding, so you begin with odds in your favor. The bad news is that the good news doesn't help a whole lot when narrowing your decision.

There is no infallible guide. The question is, how complicated do you want to make it? It sometimes amazes me what criteria is used to find someone who will be working on your teeth. For some, I guess dental fear is just paralyzing and overshadows common sense, sometimes cents overshadows common sense. Sometimes procrastination, over-saturation, and desperation lead to a hasty choice.

For me there is one important consideration when shopping for *any* services...*integrity*. Can you trust that they want to do the right thing? Begin your search there and look for clues about integrity as you move along. You don't have to be a great detective, you just have to pay attention and ask questions as you proceed. The problem is knowing what questions to ask.

First, consider the available sources of information about the dentists in your area:

- 1) Neighbors, friends, co-workers, directories, Internet.
- 2) Call the office(s) with specific questions
- 3) Visit the office
- 4) Personal evaluation of the treatment rendered and follow-up

Some people will stop at 1) and be done with it, and most of the time that works out fine. If you are going to try to do a more complete search, you need to know how complicated that could be. How do you use the information you get from these sources? I will deal with the first item on my list next month, second and third in another column, and the fourth in a final installment. Stay tuned. Happy Holidays.

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