

EP. 61 Interview with Dental Hygienist, Kierstin Raught

In this episode, we talked to Kierstin on how she was able to leave her comfort zone and take a risk to come out stronger on the other side. Here's her story.

Q. Tell us about your practice.

A. My practice is in Logan, Utah. My doctor, Dr. Gordon, started the practice about 8 years ago from scratch. He came in out of school and took over a practice. He has been with Scheduling Institute about 2 years. I'm new to the practice. It's a great office and great doctor to work for.

Q. You were feeling that 7-year itch and looking for something else. Tell us about that.

A. I was feeling the 7-year itch early, at 4 years. I got to a place where initially out of school you are thrilled to get a job, especially where I live in Utah. The dental offices are very saturated, but there are not a lot of job opportunities. Right out of school it was common to only find temp work or one day a week. Being right out of school, it would take 5 or 6 days to get us off on the right foot. I interviewed with an office and was able to get 4 days a week. I was a bright-eyed new hygienist and thrilled I could be in one office at the wage I was hoping for. Out of necessity, I was settling for just a job. I didn't understand that there is a difference between a job and career. The doctor was taking over his dad's practice so we were transitioning from the old philosophy of dentistry to the newer philosophies of dentistry. There wasn't a set hygiene program. It was great opportunity, looking back now, to be able to be in a position of team lead. I had to start from ground zero with the office I started with. It's interesting how life works out. Seeing where I'm at now, I would love to start with this experience. It's great how life works out and teaches you things. It molds you to become that ideal version of yourself. I got to the point where every day I was finding myself in the parking lot trying to give myself a pep talk before I walk into work. There wasn't one definitive moment where I changed from being this excited hygienist. It was a process of all of a sudden I'm sitting in my car before work thinking how did I get here? It was hard for me because you want to be grateful that you have a job and take advantage of that opportunity, but I truly hated going to work. I was feeling guilty because I was complaining to my husband every day. It was a ripple effect where I felt like I was losing control of life, in all aspects, not just at work. I got to the point where I was questioning if I made the wrong career move. I was doing some serious soul searching, and realized I was still very passionate about hygiene. It was more so the environment. It's not my employers fault I felt this way. If I wanted my environment to change, I had to take action and change.

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Q. Tell us about the practice you are in now.

A. It's amazing! I feel like I'm doing cartwheels to and from work every day. I feel grateful I did make the change. At first it was scary. The feeling I had before wasn't a new feeling and it took me so long to leave because I was comfortable. I was scared of change even though it was a good and necessary thing. I was afraid to make it but so grateful I did. I've only been with the practice for 3 weeks and feel like the improvements I've made, both personally and professionally, have outweighed any improvements from the previous years.

Q. Many hygienists have felt this way at some point in their career. You have to move past that comfort zone and be willing to take a risk.

A. Realize that you are worth taking the risk for! I felt selfish because my original plan was to temp until I found a position. I didn't want to be right back in that position. Luckily, it worked out and I didn't have to go through that waiting period. I felt selfish because now I have a family to provide for and I'm taking away that consistency. If you don't take the time to be selfish and take that time for yourself, how are you able to give back to your patients and your family.

Kierstin shared a great story! I'm sure we can all relate to this at some point in our careers. You have to step outside of your comfort zone to grow.