

Successful Client, Successful Business

Referrals are key to any service business. Referral clients are reliable (they have a lower cancellation rate), consistent and know what to expect when they come into your office. To get referrals, your existing clients must have successful programs. As we all know, the holistic or alternative path is a tough one since there is no “magic pill” and to achieve results, the client must follow the program by eating well and taking their supplements consistently. This can be a challenge for many.

One of the most frustrating things about being a holistic health professional is when clients don't follow their programs. I know some may think it's not our problem, but it is. If the client doesn't follow the program, they don't get results. If they don't get results, they ultimately blame you or your program. There is a way to work with people to help them to stay motivated and get results.

Some professionals will screen their clients. If the client appears not to have it in them to take responsibility for the program, they are simply turned down. I understand this approach but I don't like it. It does make sense because you are avoiding a potentially bad situation of them not getting well, wanting refunds while wasting your time, etc.

However, I like to recognize the part of the person that came into the office in the first place. There is someone inside them that wants help and may listen. I talk to that part of the client. Here are some pointers that may help appeal to the side of your client that wants help:

- During your first consultation with the client – remind them that this is holistic health. There are no drugs that give immediate relief of symptoms. If they have chosen to take drugs to ease pain at first – work with them. They can slowly ease into a holistic health program while taking their meds. One example would be to start the client on a healthier eating program. There is never harm in eating healthy by adding more fresh fruits and veggies.
- Don't give the client too many rules at once. Give them two diet changes (such as no restaurant food and adding 2 fresh green salads a day), and one to three supplements to take - and leave it at that. Gradual changes are easier to follow.
- Let them know its okay to be honest about eating habits. Healthy eating doesn't mean we must be “perfect.” Healthy change comes when we are honest about where we are now then add changes. Some people's body will start to detox just by cutting out milk products! And that may be a huge change for them. Find out what's happening then talk to them and see which changes they are comfortable with at first.
- When it comes to changing habits, it doesn't have to be all or nothing. Start by adding fresh fruit in the morning before the regular breakfast and fresh salad before their regular lunch and dinner. Accomplish this for at least four days then

make another change like cutting out all restaurant food. Then cut out all milk products. Keep each step short like four or five days before the next visit – four days is easier to stay on something than a whole week.

- Don't ever tell or insinuate to the client that negative health issues are their fault. I hear these complaints all the time from clients – “the last person I saw blamed me,” is usually how it goes. People don't like to be blamed. It makes them feel bad and unwilling to come back. Keep in mind that we are all brought up with certain beliefs. My belief was that what I ate didn't have much to do with how I looked and felt. Some believe problems are genetic. Others think they eat healthy... “I only eat ‘light’ baloney.” Talking to the client will reveal these beliefs. In this way you can better help your client and realize with them that it's not their fault. We live in a society that advocates and rewards junk food companies that bombard us with false information about how their food is healthy. It's a tough obstacle for anyone to overcome.
- Remember that as a holistic health professional, you are mainly an educator. Let the client know this up front. No one can heal their body except their own body. You can teach the client how to help their body. Supplements add nutrition and help the cleansing process. Food and herbs give the body the strength/nutrition it needs to rebuild new cells. But these are all only tools you are giving the client so that they may help their body heal itself. This will also empower your client, which is ultimately what the holistic path is about.
- Remind yourself and the client – your body needs ten times the amount of nutrition to heal than it does to live on a daily basis. How are you going to get this amount of nutrition into your body? There are two answers – fresh veggie juice and herbs. Many clients don't realize that herbs are condensed nutrition and many people aren't strong enough to digest that many fresh fruits and veggies. Veggie juice doesn't have to be digested so it's perfect.
- When the client falters such as forgetting/not taking supplements, goes off the wagon and eats junk food, etc., don't get angry. Yes – many so-called “professionals” actually get offended when the clients don't follow their program. I don't know if it's an ego trip or fear of the client not getting results. Either way it's a turn-off for them and chances are they will not return, not get results and not refer anyone.
- Offer to personally help the client who has a hard time committing. I ask some if they want me to call them to remind them to take supplements. If they take me up on it (which they usually don't) at least they don't blame me for it not working. I have done everything I can to help and the offer has helped them to realize this.
- Again, you are supposed to be an educator. Give the client information about health, herbs, nutrition - all you can. People need and like to be empowered. Many will not listen – but a couple years later when they hear it again they will

realize you told them this a long time ago – “why didn’t I listen?” For the ones who don’t listen, they’ll come around eventually. At least you tried. But for the majority who do listen, you will benefit. Even if they don’t follow the program they will appreciate the wealth of information you have given them. They can use that for the rest of their life. In my experience this has encouraged them to come back and try again. And if you have followed the rule of not blaming them, they can come back without shame.

- Remember that as you teach the client, you will have to repeat yourself. Some things may need to be repeated at every visit with them. During each visit remind the client why eating habits are supposed to change. Remind the client what the supplements are for. This is the normal learning process. Remember when you were in school or any type of class situation. We had to hear something, read it, study it and hear it again. If a teacher could tell us something only once and it was learned – it would all be so easy. But this isn’t reality. It is normal to learn something then forget it only to have to be taught again. Gently teach and re-teach knowing that one of those times the information will stick. Patience will be a blessing for both you and your client.

I hope these pointers will help you to build your business with a good, solid reputation. I feel it is important for all of us to educate the public on the importance of responsibility for their own health.