

11/04

Alumni, Mary Orr, L.Ac. talked about her practice style yesterday at the Practice Building Luncheon seminar.

Her Mission Statement: "To raise the consciousness of the planet, one person at a time."

Mary graduated in December 1999. While still in school, she worked as an assistant at Donna Keefe, L.Ac.'s (PCOM graduate & teacher) office and highly recommends that every student have this sort of experience. From this she learned treatment time management and the business end of an L.Ac. office. You can even do this as a Federal Work Study student in the PCOM clinic, as positions open.

Upon graduation, she began her practice in the same office. After a year, I called her and asked her to run the PCOM college clinic for as long as she would agree to. Mary worked for the Navy for 20 years and had lots of training in leadership and in teaching leadership classes, such as "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People". She had led the clinic in creating a mission statement while still in the program. It was a healing experience. She continued to build her practice while running the PCOM clinic...gradually decreasing her hours, as she increased her practice.

Within two years, she gave notice to begin her practice full time.

She currently works in an office with several Massage Therapists. She is the only Acupuncturist in the office.

She believes that you should run your practice in the way that supports you as a person. For her, at this moment, that means she sees 20-25 patients a week, to ensure she has the time to attend to her family's needs. She refers a lot of patients to other practitioners because of this priority. She prefers to treat one patient at a time, stating that she is easily distracted, and this works best for her style. Slow, comfortable and peaceful is her goal, with plenty of freedom.

Mary does not advertise. Her focus is on her thinking: she believes that your thoughts create your world. She believes in herself: "if you really believe in your own success, it will manifest."

This has worked for her! In addition, she believes that if you do your own, inner work first, your life and practice have congruence...and you can be clear on what you want.

What you need:

1. A phone, so people can reach you.
2. Get a good location, that's visible in a busy area.
3. Align yourself with other practitioners you are comfortable with.
4. A way to handle your record keeping: she uses the TCM Pro System with good success.

Her choices:

1. Keeping it simple: She does her own scheduling.
2. She chooses not to bill insurance; her patients are cash paying.
3. Her focus is on healing, versus support staff: again, keeping it simple.
4. A more spiritual choice: she finds that if her clients make new life choices that suit them better, their pain decreases or ceases.
5. Once a year she sends cards to all of her patients: she offers them 50% off their next treatment: to touch base and to say "thank-you".
6. She offers a package: Buy 9 treatments, get the 10th free. Patients pay in advance.
7. She hasn't raised her prices in five years, but is about to. Her current prices are \$75, first time and \$55 thereafter. In January 2005, her prices will increase to \$80/\$60.
8. She calls her patients the day before to remind them of their appointments: they rarely cancel.
9. She schedules patients next appointment at the end of each treatment: she advises when it should be.
10. She uses TCM, but also Healing Touch, New Thought (Science of Mind) processing, and Chakra work, as well as what she knows about 5 Element work.
11. She mainly treats women's syndromes and Psycho/Structural needs. Others, she refers.
12. She first does TCM diagnosis and a Western diagnosis, then, depending on her clients' openness she may use other methods and modalities.
13. When asked her "greatest strength", she said "Listening." She quoted the following:

“Patients will tell you what’s wrong...and if you really listen, they’ll also tell you how to treat them.”

She says, “Know what motivates you and makes you happy, then make that happen in your life.”