

VIEW FROM THE TOP

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Balance. It's something we all strive for in our lives. One aspect of balance is the ability to blend what we want to do for personal fulfillment with what we choose to do as our career. Lisa Kalfas, D.D.S., a Boulder dentist who specializes in cosmetic and restorative dentistry, is one woman who had a goal in mind and, through planning and hard work, reached it.

Throughout high school and college, Lisa had an image of what she wanted out of life. One of seven children, she came from a tightly knit, Midwestern household. Her father was a physician. "We really respected my dad, (as did) the community, so I felt like I wanted to go into the health sciences," she explained. "I went through this thought process about what would be the right area. What if I also wanted to have kids?" As her seven-year-old daughter was in the adjacent room, I knew she had found the right solution.

Lisa now has a very successful dental practice that has been in the same convenient Boulder location for 13 years. Her office is peaceful and family friendly. A pot of hot water and tea bags sit on a table instead of a copy of *Sports Illustrated*. And to design her office she employed someone who hadn't worked on this type of office space before. Lisa explained that she wanted her office to have a nontraditional feel to it; something that was warmer and friendlier.

Beyond the waiting area are several patient-treatment rooms, a cozy conference room for private consultations, a reception desk and a laboratory. Placed on the tables throughout the practice are photos of smiling people (you can't help smiling back at them), which perhaps belong to satisfied patients. A wonderful smile warmed Lisa's face as she showed me before and after photographs of patients who had benefited from her skills as a cosmetic dentist. The results were impressive, and Lisa spoke of each patient as though he or she were a close friend. "They all look natural," she said.

Following her high school graduation, Lisa moved to Colorado to attend the University of Colorado at Boulder. In college she still hadn't determined what her specific career path should be. "I was definitely on the right track," she said. "I was a biology major. I started looking at some different things: physical therapy, veterinary medicine... I wanted to pick something, though, that I felt would have more flexibility."

It was during a conversation with her college roommate's husband that the idea of a career in dentistry was born. "I'd never considered dentistry," she said. "I found out it really fit everything I was looking for. I knew that someday I could pick my own schedule and find time to be a mom, and that's exactly what I do now. I see patients three days a week, so it's a really nice balance." If she chooses to, or in the case of an emergency, such as when a patient has knocked out a tooth, Lisa will come into the office on the other two days.

As the owner and manager of her own business, Lisa has

had the opportunity to build up the relatively small practice. To help her around the office, Lisa has three full-time employees and one part-time employee.

"I really enjoy working with people," she said. "Cosmetic dentistry is nice, because you get to (improve other) people's smiles and outlooks. But it's also nice to help people who are uncomfortable. It's a very rewarding profession." Since the majority of her patients are women, Lisa said she can be particularly sensitive to their "life issues" and concerns that might ordinarily make dental procedures difficult.

Lisa believes in giving back to the community and has used her skills to do just that. For example, she has helped abused, indigent women by donating her time and skills to do cosmetic dental work. Imagine what a confidence builder this might be for someone who is recovering from abuse, starting over or going out for a job interview.

Veneer work and other cosmetic procedures are not the only dental work Lisa performs, though. She also does what the rest of us might consider to be normal dentistry, such as fillings, cleanings and x-rays. She won't use amalgam because she said she doesn't believe the old "mercury" fillings are good for people.

There are a few things she might refer a patient to a specialist for, however, she has confidence in her skills in dentistry.

And, in fact, three or four times a year she takes a few days to a week off so that she can teach other dentists cosmetic dentistry at the Las Vegas Institute.

Lisa said she enjoys teaching for a number of reasons. "Helping students do procedures really strengthens my skill," she explained. "There is never just a black-and-white procedure, since each person and situation is unique."

Lisa has a whole body approach to dentistry, "Sometimes something that is off here can affect you there." For instance, a bite that is offline can cause headaches and muscle tightness.

Lisa believes she has achieved a balance in her life that she sought from an early age. Not only does she combine her artistic skills with her scientific and medical abilities, but she also puts a smile on people's faces. A well thought out and conceived plan has afforded her what she always wanted: A life in which she has control of her work time, a career she finds exciting, and the freedom to spend an afternoon with her daughter.

Would you like a whiter smile? Or perhaps you don't smile as broadly as you might, because you don't like how your teeth look. Maybe you just need to find a dentist who will fix that painful tooth.

Whatever your motivation, cosmetic or otherwise, you might want to consider talking to Lisa Kalfas, D.D.S., a Boulder dentist who loves making people smile.

Call her today for a complimentary smile consultation at (303) 447-9161, or log onto her Web site at www.lisakalfasdds.com. Her office is at 2300 Canyon Blvd., in Boulder, Colo. ■

Lisa Kalfas, D.D.S.

By Linda Sladek

