

THE PERFECT PRACTICE PLATFORM

“Coaching Case Study With Dr. Mike Meehan”

Dr. Hayes: Hi, everybody. This is Dr. John Hayes. I'd like to welcome you to today's special breakthrough session, whether you're joining us on the live call, the replay or the CD. Today I have a really special call. This is one I've been looking forward to for quite some time. I have on the line with me today Dr. Mike Meehan. Mike, welcome to the call.

Dr. Meehan: Thanks for having me.

Dr. Hayes: Of course. Thanks for taking time out of your really busy day and life to be with us. One of the reasons I wanted to invite Mike to talk with us today is that I've worked with him for over a year now on some personal coaching. Some time ago, he became a platinum client and we engaged in a program of coaching and consulting, as I do with a lot of clients.

One of the things that really strikes me about Mike in particular is that, like all of our top-producing clients, he is an implementer. He gets things done. What I thought I would do today

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is invite Mike to help tell his own story. In so doing, he'll help all of us become more efficient, productive, happier, healthier practitioners.

A good starting point would be if you tell our guests a little bit about yourself, where you practice, the type of practice you have and so on.

Dr. Meehan: I'd be happy to. I'm in Charlotte, North Carolina. I graduated Life University in 1995. It's around 17 years now that I've been in private practice. I have seen a lot of different things in private practice. I've done everything from being a solo practitioner to having a partnership with an MD/DC and a straight upper-cervical doctor. I've gotten to enjoy a lot of different things.

Around the time we started having children, we wanted to make life simple. We wanted to set up close to home. My wife is a teacher. She's not in the office. We just wanted something simple. As life went on, it got more complicated.

Dr. Hayes: Yes. It has a way of doing that.

Dr. Meehan: **As life got more complicated, I found that work got more complicated. I thought, "This would be a good time to get some coaching." I actually got a coach, once. I thought it was going to be this great experience.** I hired a coach who was not that far from me. He was an MD/DC coach and it was something I thought I wanted to do.

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He was trying to give me different things to do: how to bill, code and do different things. I tried doing them. I hired a medical doctor and did all these different things. The long and short of it is I found it was really getting away from what I wanted to do, be a chiropractor.

We were making more money and having more business come in, but the next thing you knew I went from one person and one computer to 17 people and 17 computers. I would make a ton of money in a month, but it cost me a little bit more than that just to stay open. Are you familiar with that model?

Dr. Hayes: Unfortunately, yes. It's not a healthy model.

Dr. Meehan: Right. I decided to go back to some roots about what and why I wanted to do things. I received an autoresponder one time from you. ***You sent out an email and I replied to it. I was just so impressed with the things you were saying in your little paragraphs to me and how they touched me personally.***

Those were the reasons I wanted to be a chiropractor. I wanted to deal with health and not sickness, and with wellness from within. I wanted to spend time with my family, be a coach to my children, do different things and have the ability to have more time. I felt like I was being a slave to my practice. My health was going down and my business was usurping my personal time.

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When you sent out those autoresponders, it really touched me in terms of why I wanted to do what I do and how I wanted that to affect me for the rest of my life. At the point when I called you I was thinking, “I don’t know if I could keep doing this forever, at this pace and having to generate all this money and work so hard.”

When I contacted you and you sent back those autoresponders, you really touched me. I think you touch a lot of different people in terms of who we are, why we do what we do and what our ultimate goal is as chiropractors. That isn’t necessarily to make money but to get sick people well and to run a streamlined, profitable, efficient business so we can work, see and help people and also have quality time with our families.

Dr. Hayes: What a concept. You touched upon a couple of things. We should talk about this a little bit. I have a lot of doctors and PTs. It’s not just chiropractors. Medical physicians are in the same boat. We have many more professionals from all disciplines, nurse practitioners included, calling upon us for the same reason.

What healthcare has become, especially private practice when you are heavily dependent on the third-party system, can be a very difficult road to go down. It can really take a large toll, not only financially on the practice but also on the practitioners. As you’ve discovered, when you turn things around and decide to build the

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practice around your life instead of the other way around, some really significant changes occur.

I thought what might be helpful is if you could describe what I call your “metamorphosis” from the starting point, when we first started to work together, right through the end of that first year and how that whole thing transpired and you evolved. ***My take and the thing I really saw and compliment you on is you went from being someone who knew they had to make some changes to ultimately coming out the other side as a CEO. Congratulations.***

Dr. Meehan: I think that was part of my metamorphosis. We’re in a banking city. There are a lot of things that have to do with banking, management and stuff like that. You said the word “CEO.” I realized that I am the chief executive officer of what I would like to be a million-dollar business. It seemed that people were selling widgets and doing different things. They had their businesses. I am the CEO of a very important corporation that is trying to make a change in the health of people in the city of Charlotte.

You know you have your front-desk person. She runs your life and is awesome, but I think I was kind of dependent on her running my life. Then I had an associate doctor that I was always trying to please. He’s a great guy and I love him, but I have to feel comfortable that he might just leave someday and do the same thing himself. I should do

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things based upon the quality and health of a business rather than trying to please people.

Dr. Hayes: That's a good point.

Dr. Meehan: Sometimes even with my wife, who of course I love dearly, I would put some things on the back burner that I needed to do for my practice that would make my whole life better. I had to actually communicate to my wife, "I really need to get this done. It is a business and what is our sustenance for our quality of life."

When I decided that I was actually the chief executive officer of a business, I began to **do** things. One of the best pieces of advice that John Hayes will ever give you is, ***"Whether it's an hour, a couple of hours, half an hour or a day, you need to sit in a quiet room and think about where you're going and what you want. Without knowing which direction you want to go with your life and where you want to take it, you can't begin planning."***

I **did** that. I sat quietly and thought about what I wanted. I set goals. Then I had some clarity as to where I wanted to take my business. That's where it started. I needed clarity as to the direction I wanted to run my business. Did I want to be by myself or have associate doctors? Did I want to dictate how I want my staff to be run or did I want them to dictate how they were going to run me? What are my hours going to be? How much free time do I have? I just started chopping it down.

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Suddenly I was taking all these things and putting them in a bag. I was dissecting them and taking control of them, and then suddenly I was being the executive instead of being the person that was being led by all these different factors. It was very empowering.

Dr. Hayes: Absolutely.

Dr. Meehan: I've been to different seminars and I've read a lot of books, scripts and different things. For me, coaching is having someone that I'm going to call every week. I'm going to basically tell them that I did something or I didn't do something. That accountability, for me, was important.

One of the best things you ever asked me in the first couple of weeks that we were together was, "Do you have a policy and procedure manual for your office, and is it up to date?" While I had one, I couldn't tell you where it was. I couldn't tell you where the file was on the computer or if it was even applicable to anything I was doing at the time.

I spent three weeks putting that together. The three weeks that we spent putting a policy and procedure manual together put out a lot of fires that went on throughout the year, whether it was, "Do we get paid for this holiday?" "If I'm a part-time employee am I involved in the bonus pool?" "What are my hours as an associate doctor?" or "Should I be required to do this or that screening?" All these different

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things that we normally had to talk about all the time are in our manual.

It puts out a lot of different fires. It sets the rules. People agree with the rules and everyone's on the same page. It's your document that you go to that just keeps everybody in check as to what the goals, policies and procedures of your office are. I think that was probably the single greatest thing that I did in my first year.

Dr. Hayes: I would have to agree. More than that, looking back on our work together, you really have been a great implementer. You've changed so many things. The metamorphosis has been very real. This is a compliment to you and a lesson for everybody on the call.

Just like I do when I get stuck, you go to people who know more business than you do. For example, one of the things we're involved in right now is taking our business to a more international level. The only way I'm going to gain that education is to deal with people who have already done what we're attempting to do. Good coaching, for me, has always been the same. That's why I try to give my clients a great experience.

You obviously had some immediate benefits that occurred relatively early on. What have the longer-term benefits been to you since going through coaching? How did they affect your decision making and how you look forward to the future now?

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Dr. Meehan: One of the long-term benefits of coaching is that I always can go to someone, meaning you, that has been through most things that anyone could go through. I can't bounce these sensitive issues off my front-desk person or associate doctor. You can't talk to your spouse about certain things that they haven't been in the trenches with. It's being able to talk to someone that's in the trenches and has lived different things.

I've been in practice 17 years, but you've been in practice for 35 years. It's being able to talk up, so to speak. If I'm the chief executive officer, you're a coach of chief executive officers of this specialty of what we do, which is healthcare. You see these patterns that people have over time and you help us to talk through it and come up with our own answers. That is what's been amazing for me. If I have a problem, I can just call you.

The other thing about you is that you've been extremely responsive. Sometimes I've missed a call or been a little late because I had a patient walk in, and you've been extremely responsive to any need that I ever had. You've never told me no. It's always been, "Yes. What can I do for you?" I've always felt like you've been there for me 110%. Just like I would be like that for a patient, I love that you're like that for me. That's how I am as a person. That resonates with me.

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As a client, I would say that Dr. Hayes is there 110%. I have never felt like I have bothered him or seen him in a bad mood. He's always just been very responsive to anything I've ever had. That's powerful.

Dr. Hayes: Thank you. I appreciate the accolades, but it's a really simple story. You go through your professional and personal life and treat people as you want to be treated. It really is that simple. It doesn't have to be hard or complicated.

The takeaway here is that you start to take a look at your own life and if there are areas where that's not working, whether in your staff, significant others, family or wherever, the bottom line is we all have a choice. Sometimes we have to make those very difficult choices. You have a right to demand how you want and expect to be treated, and then the world returns in kind.

Are there any other things you want to say to somebody who may be contemplating doing coaching? What are some of the things they may want to look for? What are some of the questions they want to ask themselves?

There's one thing I wanted to ask you. You've been around and in practice a long time. We both know people that have gone to coaching and come out of it and said, "That didn't work. This didn't work." Why do you think that a lot of people fail when they go to coaching programs?

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Dr. Meehan: Why do they fail?

Dr. Hayes: It's rampant, especially in our profession.

Dr. Meehan: I think you have to make a decision. You need to look at a coach as an investment. My son plays tennis. Someone can tell you how to serve a ball, play net or do whatever, but then you need to do what the coach says. People aren't going to exercise for you or implement the thing that your coach says to do.

Listen to your coach. You may have pitfalls, positive things that happen or new opportunities that open up. You really need to communicate all these different things to your coach. Sometimes he'll say, "Yes, move forward with this," and sometimes he'll say, "Put the brakes on this. Let's focus on this task at hand before you move to this." You need to really listen to your coach and implement the things that he is saying.

If you're just listening to him on a 10 or 20 minute conversation and then you go about your day and don't focus on those things for that week, you're not going to move forward. Listen, and practice the things he's saying to practice, which might even be something like, "Send me your stats so you're paying attention to them." It might be something like, "Did you talk to your associate about this issue that we just discussed? Get back to me and let me know how it is."

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It's that follow-through on what you're recommending that I do. When I look back and reflect one year later, I can see the benefits of that. There is a bottom-line benefit, too, from a practice point of view. We probably went up about 20%, and I actually have more time off. I'm exercising more and have more confidence in all my staff around me that I don't need to be here as much.

All those little things are just the product of chipping away on little details throughout the year and having conversations with you on Tuesday mornings. It's having someone like you say, maybe on one of your websites, you're going on a boat ride or fishing or you're on your motorcycle or whatever, and saying, "This is something you should do. You should see people and do things that you like to do, too. This is a vehicle for you to have a good life with your family and help others along the way."

Coaching has allowed me to take those circumstances that I thought I went into chiropractic for that were kind of getting lost and usurped by my practice, and bring them back.

Dr. Hayes: That's great. Once again, I really appreciate you taking time with us today. The last question I have for you is what's the best advice that you could give to a practitioner who might find themselves stuck in a similar situation to the one you were in a year ago?

Dr. Meehan: The first thing I would say is if a person is thinking of getting out of chiropractic for whatever reason, I don't know what their

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situation is, but I can tell you that when you see all the situations out there, we're in a really good situation. We have a great job and career. If a person feels burned out, you really just need to take time and think about what you really want.

Once you make that decision and you want to have a great office and a great life in the world of chiropractic, sit there and think about what your goals are. There's this thing from Napoleon Hill. Two ships sit in the same port. One charts a course and sets its sails and the other one doesn't. One never gets out of the harbor. You have to chart your course and set your sails. Then you just need to watch the compass and the wind and move in that direction.

Take some time. Write out your goals and what you want in practice, family life and all the realms you want to. Get with a coach that you resonate with, who is in line with how you think, and then just start chipping away at it. Not only will you have a better practice, but you'll have a better life.

Dr. Hayes: That, my friends, is the essence. What Mike just said is exactly what we teach. I count myself among the fortunate because that's what I was taught at a very early age, before I even graduated chiropractic college. One of the things I pride myself on is that I was smart enough to listen to the advice of those older than me who had been through what I was trying to achieve.

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Mike, thank you so much for being with us. We covered a lot of things that are very important. One of the most important things Mike and I have discussed today that I want to remind everybody of is that your practice should always be a vehicle to serve you and not the other way around. If you find yourself becoming a slave, something is seriously out of balance.

This is a very critical issue as we move forward to healthcare reform in one way or another in the United States of America in particular and around the world. Having spent this past weekend with a healthcare practitioner from Ireland, I can tell you that some other countries are in an absolute mess, which I certainly hope doesn't get repeated here.

The bottom line is that as individual practitioners we have big decisions to make. If you take the advice that Mike just gave you moving forward, we're all going to have a much easier time of it than those who have not listened.

Mike, thanks again for being with us. I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Dr. Meehan: Thank you so much, John. It was a pleasure being here.

Dr. Hayes: Everybody, have a good rest of your day. We'll talk to you on the next call.

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