

# STUDENTS

## KISHAN SHETH



Dear fellow colleagues, friends, ladies and gentlemen, it was fantastic to witness a very positive response to our first two editions of *DentaltownUK*, which featured some incredible content from many of the top figures in UK dentistry.

It also showcased the great work done by Zain Hameed, Awais Ali, Lawrence Sharkey, Ajay Mehta, Aditi Goel, Sahil Sharma, all very positive and inspiring members of the dental student community.

*DentaltownUK* includes a student section because we truly believe that it is important for the future generation of the profession to share ideas and opinions with their more experienced colleagues.

It also provides an excellent opportunity to understand the importance of a work/life balance whilst embarking on a dental educational programme, and discuss food, hobbies, style, travel and student experiences that can happen outside the clinical and learning environment.

This section features a look into the lives of Arjun Puri, a student studying in Madrid, as well as Sunmeet Kandhari, a student at King's College London. We also take a look at the elegantly written article on stress management by Mohammad Moinuddin, as he shares with us his key points in overcoming stress as a dental student and balancing his hobbies with his dental education.

I also share with you all some key tips that I've learnt on the subject of public speaking, and hope that

it serves as a useful learning tool or gentle refresher.

Modern dentistry demands that high levels of quality work be done in a short amount of time. Your patients, colleagues and clinical treatment must also be managed effectively. All of these factors can add to your stress load.

Many dentists and students that I speak to report: feeling inadequate for the task, boredom, a need to develop extreme attention to detail and the continuous striving for absolutely perfect restorations, and challenges regarding treating patients who are anxious.

Challenges regarding developing professional relationships between team members and fighting off eyestrain, back and neck problems also create important considerations for dental students.

However, stress is not always a bad thing. Small amounts of stress are great efficiency boosters, which increase performance. However, surplus amounts can have dangerous effects on health. I am sure that you will enjoy this edition of *DentaltownUK*; it's packed with some great content from very special individuals in the profession. Please do engage with our message boards and let us know about your thoughts. We'd love to hear from you! ■



When we see and hear some of the best public speakers on the planet, we automatically assume that they were born that way. Whilst some individuals may be born with a gift, the art of public speaking is not a gift but an ongoing and developing characteristic. There are many courses out there that may help you to leave your audiences spellbound, but the following is an account of my experiences and learning in the art of engaging audiences.

I'm not an expert in the field but I've been privileged to put on talks with some high-profile dentists in the UK, and I've represented the UK on two occasions at international conferences and taken the stage several times at national conferences. I don't believe there is any secret to public speaking, but having a few tips and tricks in mind can help.

Here are some of my top tips for engaging audiences. Keep them in mind when you next have a public speaking engagement.

**1 Be yourself.** In normal day-to-day conversations we have no problem being ourselves, but when the time comes to stand up and deliver a speech, something dramatically changes! We shift our focus from our content and ourselves to the public audience. I believe that to engage an audience effectively we must focus on the *speaking* and let go of the *public*. My mentors have shared several tricks such as imagining the audience all naked, but I find that imagining I'm talking to myself without anyone listening works best. I blank out the environment. By doing so, I feel much more relaxed and able to deliver a great speech. Don't be put



Kishan with fellow judges at London Material's Society, when he was crowned London Material's Society young lecturer of the year 2015.

off by the size of your audience; be yourself and you'll form a direct connection with the people to whom you speak.

**2 Don't aim for perfection.** Even the best public speakers occasionally make mistakes at some point. And as the speaker you'll notice any mistakes more than anyone in your audience—you're the only one who really knows what you're supposed to say. I've made many mistakes on stage, from forgetting the next line to incorrectly pronouncing a word, but I think it's vital that you don't stop or apologise to your audience for a minor slip-up—keep going. Even when I've 'urmmmeeddd' or left a word out, it has occasionally acted in my favour, because it allowed me to connect with my audience. My audience discovered that I'm not perfect; I'm real and make mistakes too.

**3 Visualization is a great tool: See it and you will speak it.**

Salespeople envision themselves working hard and closing the deal; businesspeople envision developing new ventures that become ultrasuccessful; athletes imagine

themselves taking first place before they even start the activity. This tool is also important for public speaking. In my humble experience, the best way to conquer anxiousness and preperformance stress is your mind. Mindset is the key! Have a positive mindset and a vision of you delivering a spectacular performance to your audience, and you'll be waving goodbye to the shaky hands and sweaty forehead sooner than you can imagine.

**4 Be disciplined—after all, practice makes perfect.**

We've all heard the phrase 'practice makes perfect', but so many of us need reminding that this is also true for public speaking. The best speakers in the world practice, practice and practice. They don't deliver a jaw-dropping performance without preparation. My goal has never been to be a perfect public speaker; I want to develop and continue developing into an *effective* public speaker. I often find that a script provides me with the right framework and structure for my talk, and I begin preparing at least a week in advance of a public speaking engagement.

**5 Every speech needs to be personal and tailored to the audience.**

Regardless of the topic, every audience will respond best when speakers personalise the way in which they communicate toward them. People like to hear about other people's experiences—the successes, failures and everyday humorous anecdotes that make up their lives. I've also found that people enjoy stories more than just facts, so try to make the presentation

resemble a story and work the facts into the story. This is a great way to ensure your listeners warm up to you.

**6 A little bit of anticipation works wonders.** I've learnt that less is usually more. Surprise your audience by making your presentation a little bit shorter than anticipated, and I believe that it's always better to leave your listeners wishing you had spoken for just a few more minutes than having them squirming in their seats waiting for your speech finally to end.

I hope that the above pointers will help each of you, regardless of your public speaking experience, to develop and stretch your skill set. Sometimes we just need a bit of a refresher every now and then about what works for other people, and what strategies you would perhaps like to try. Remember, though—no public speaker was ever born that way, they have developed through experience and knowledge. One of my favourite quotes is, 'You don't have to be great to start, but you have to start to be great'. This is most definitely true in the art of public speaking. ■



Kishan speaking at the International Dental Conference, Sharjah, UAE