

# VISITORS WELCOME



Opening your practice's doors to visiting colleagues is an opportunity for shared growth.

BY VANCE THOMPSON, MD, FACS

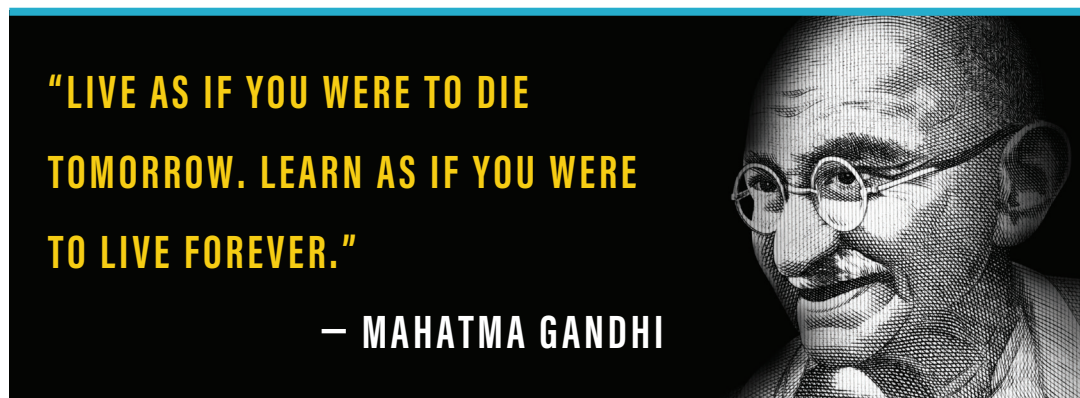
This quote by Mahatma Gandhi is one of my favorite sayings. Living and learning are intertwined in my life's journey. I am attracted to fellow curious people who want to improve and progress daily by learning from others and by learning from experiences. I find that people who value learning also typically excel at teaching, and when fellow human beings take the time to teach me, our relationship deepens exponentially in my mind. By taking the time to teach me, they have given me the gift of themselves.

For someone like me who values learning and teaching, being in a surgical and medical caregiving and teaching institution is incredibly rewarding. I get to work with doctors, business leaders, nurses, technicians, and other professionals who love to educate high school, college, and medical students in addition to nonophthalmic and ophthalmic residents daily. Plus, a comprehensive anterior segment fellowship attracts and exposes me to some of the most brilliant young minds in ophthalmology.

## A MUTUAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

My colleagues and I also have the joy and honor of welcoming doctors visiting our practice to see how we do things. These doctors and their teams may be coming to learn how we deliver care, but they often teach us at least as much as we teach them.

When another surgeon or professional colleague visits our practice to learn our ways, observes something we could be doing better, and takes the time to teach us how they have addressed that particular area, they help fulfill one of my



daily goals: to learn something new and improve in something.

The practice of ophthalmology is a complicated lifelong learning exercise. A good indicator of someone's joy and passion for what they do is their desire to learn and teach it. It means so much to me when someone pulls me aside in a caring way and wants to engage in a dialogue about how they do certain things in their practice and why. That is why surgeons and other professionals visiting a practice are a gift to that practice.

## WHAT I LEARN

Learning the practice of medicine and keeping up with its advances and innovations come naturally to me. That comes from a passionate desire to do my best for my patients. I can't imagine not offering them the most up-to-date technologies and techniques. I stay current by doing a lot of reading, writing, lecture preparation, and teaching.

What doesn't come naturally to me is the business of medicine, but I find that these complexities can be simplified when doctors and their teams share

ways to streamline or improve a process or business area in their practice with other doctors and their teams. Often, a visiting surgeon in our center who comes to learn a new technique or technology will kindly share a pearl regarding a certain area of practice such as electronic medical records, referring doctor relationships, marketing, finance, form organization or simplification, communication, and so on.

Nobody knows the issues in my practice better than another group of people living with those same issues and concerns in their own practice.

## CONCLUSION

By being open to visitors, I often receive more than I give. They appreciate having been invited, and their fresh perspectives can promote innovation in areas that I am too close to on a daily basis to notice. ■

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