

# LEGACY, THE DENTAL PROFESSION

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The Philosophies And Thoughts Of  
Selected Dental Leaders Worldwide

CONCEPTUALIZED AND COMPILED BY

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First Edition

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Bakersfield, CA 93309-2702 U.S.A.

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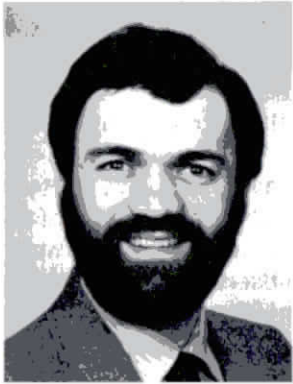
ISBN No. 0-941218-10-4

Library of Congress Catalog Card No. 90-091808

Printed in the United States of America

*“Anything that creates emotional ties  
between human beings must inevitably  
counteract war.... Everything that leads  
to important shared action creates such  
common feelings. On them the structure  
of human society in good measure rests.*

—SIGMUND FREUD,  
IN CORRESPONDENCE WITH  
ALBERT EINSTEIN (1939)



## DR. HARVEY LEVY UNITED STATES

Born in Munich, Germany on March 26, 1949, Dr. Levy is the son of two Holocaust survivors. His parents moved to America when he was six months old and they settled in the borough of Brooklyn in New York, New York.

A graduate of Brooklyn College in 1970, he received his dental degree from Tufts University in 1974. His training also included externships in Edinburgh, Scotland; London, England; and Portland, Maine. Following this training he completed a two year residency at the Eastman Dental Center and the Genesee Hospital in Rochester, New York.

Since 1980, Dr. Levy has been in private practice in Frederick, Maryland, where he serves on the staff of the

Frederick Memorial Hospital.

He is a consultant on the board of many civic, community and health organizations. Among his numerous board consultant positions are the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, and Hospice and Community Living.

In July 1986, Dr. Levy was awarded the Humanitarian Award by the Academy of General Dentistry. His work with the handicapped resulted in the Maryland Governor's Commission on the Handicapped voting him the Doctor of the Year in 1983.

Dr. Levy is a fellow of the Academy of General Dentistry and the Academy of Dentistry International.

## *The Smallest Act Of Kindness*

The basic tenet that has guided me through my life, both personally and professionally, is taken from the 2,000 year old philosophy of the great scholar, Rabbi Hillel: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And being only for myself, what am I?"

As a Jewish child of Nazi Holocaust survivors, a certain empathy for suffering has evolved within me. This heightened sensitivity and awareness encompasses me and radiates outward. It is a dominant theme in my daily life and in my professional practice, which includes a full spectrum of patients.

In my treatment of handicapped or apprehensive patients, I draw upon three images: a basic communication technique, a "ring of keys," and a legacy. For the first few moments with a new patient, I discard everything else I was taught to use. I ignore the fiber optic high-speed hand piece. I forget my efficient staff and bypass the microcomputer.



I shelve the sedatives and do not turn on the nitrous oxide. Instead, I softly reach for the patient. I sit beside the patient and place my hand gently on his arm and say: "Hi. I'm Dr. Levy, and I'm really glad that you came to see us today." Hand-to-hand and eye-to-eye contact have opened more channels for two-way communication than anything else I have tried. It is imperative to open the heart before opening the mouth.

Secondly, I see myself holding an imaginary key ring with 100 keys, each one different. Each patient has a different "lock" on his mouth. Some welcome and invite me to open them. Others challenge me. Still others dare me. I will always try. Usually, I get in on the first try. Sometimes on the third or even tenth try. Given enough options and attempts, I will succeed. In our high-tech, efficient system of health care, it is not profitable to try after the third attempt. But that's where the greatest rewards lie ... in the greatest challenges. I am convinced that if one tries enough keys, the right one will be found.

Hitler's "Final Solution" made both my wife, Fay, and me members of "the generation that was not to have been." Our daughter, Rebecca Sarit, is in "the generation that was not to have been thought of." She will soon bear the legacy that we must pass on to her. We are the baton carriers of our parents' triumphant survival and our grandparents' tormented extinguishment.

I am deafened by what little my parents have told me about their years in the World War II Nazi concentration camps. A potato can save a life. An extra piece of stale bread can prolong life an extra day. The smallest courtesy can sustain life an additional week ... which could make all the difference. Thick soup ladled from the bottom of the barrel may sustain a life; watery soup from the top may not.

Their experiences have greatly shaped my character and my work today. They have taught me the precious value of every life. My service is for all people. To those who need it, I will reach out.

Even the mentally retarded old man deserves to be embraced. Even the psychiatrically disturbed woman merits treatment with respect and softness. The wheelchair-bound girl with cerebral palsy is afforded courteous, highest-quality health care. The poverty stricken boy is treated in the same dignified manner as the wealthy.

I will never forget the frightened look on the face of a seventeen year old deaf girl, upon whom I was performing a minor oral surgical procedure. The sterile gloves precluded my writing notes to her. My surgical mask prevented her from reading my lips. I sensed her isolation and fear. I believe she sensed my anguish and frustration at not



being able to communicate with her. Our eyes were our only link. But that was enough to reassure her. It was also the impetus for me to embark on a new road; one that included learning and using American Sign Language to better communicate with the deaf.

I have learned, and now practice, the concept that the smallest act of kindness can have a far reaching and enduring impact on a patient ... on a person ... on a life.



## DR. HAL LEYLAND

*THE BAHAMAS*

Born in Toronto, Canada in 1918, Dr. Leyland earned his dental degrees from the Faculty of Dentistry of the University of Toronto in 1943. He then served in the Canadian Dental Corps during World War II. After military service he entered private practice in Toronto until 1961 when he moved to Nassau in the Bahamas where he practiced from 1961 until his retirement in 1985.

Although a life member of the Canadian Dental Association, he became a co-founder of the Bahama Islands Dental Association in 1965 and was its president in 1970. For 23 years a supporting member of the Federation Dentaire Internationale, he was the Bahamas national secretary from 1971 through 1975.

His community service in the Bahamas has been extensive and most effective. He established, equipped and operated four unique self-sustaining dental clinics among the far-flung islands of the Bahamas on Long Island, Exuma Island, Andros Island and Nassau from 1964 through 1974. He averaged more than 50 hours of donated time each month, providing dental service that would not have been available under any other set of circumstances.

Dr. Leyland not only presented papers to dental society meetings, he also was active in public health lectures to the PTA, lay and service clubs. He is a Kiwanis Club member since 1947 in Canada. He was the founder of four new Kiwanis Clubs after establishing himself in the Bahamas.