



□ A 4-LETTER WORD AND HALLWAY SEX



A client once told me he and his partner were not getting along at all.

They had been together for many years since graduation, but life had taken its turn on both of them and they eventually went in completely separate directions.

He told me they were having hallway sex at work.

I stopped and pondered ‘what the heck does that mean’?

He told me they would be busy running around the practice, but whenever they would pass each other in the hallway they would tell each other to fuck off.

I thought it was funny, but then I realized it was profoundly serious.

The first four letters of the word partnership are **part**.

Because it’s just a matter of time.

Upwards of 70% of marriages part. Those that are failing may stay together for the kids.

100% of business partnerships do not have kids (staff don’t count 😊) and most will end badly.

A few may end swimmingly with happy-ever-after stories to be told, but the large majority break up prematurely because life gets in the way and people take different directions.

One wants to change the office hours, the policies, the uniforms, the carpet and wants to expand into CAD-CAM, AI, social media – whatever – they just want change at all costs.

Change can be a very positive dynamic and it’s also a sign of progression. Profits can follow change.

The other partner does not want to spend a nickel because he is close to retirement and is trying to maximize his earnings and is not interested in investing in anything to do with the dental practice.



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They both reached a fork in the road and went in completely separate directions – slowly drifting further away from the other.

In another scenario – the senior partner was intending to sell a larger share of the office to the junior to make them even at 50:50. Then it happened, his daughter graduated dental school. Oops. They did not plan that event 10 years earlier!

The junior partner is now disgruntled and frustrated. Parents play favorites – it's a blessing and a burden.

One of the funny stories my father told me was about two dentists who were in a cost-share arrangement, where they had completely separate wings where they practiced dentistry. They had a shared reception, business office, staff room and some shared equipment – the compressor, suction and Panorex.

They had 100% use of their own ops and did not brush shoulders often as they worked in their own wing.

But they were not getting along.

One of them went away for an extended holiday and the other had the nerve to bring in a contractor and literally erect a wall right down the middle.

It was not terribly practical, but he did it out of spite and the other dentist did not know until he returned from holidays and opened the door.

It ended badly shortly thereafter with the departing doctor selling his equipment and leaseholds for pennies to the other. He just wanted out at that stage. His staff and patients followed and he recovered just fine – but he was more or less “shot-gunned” out at a fraction of the real value.

And there are so many other stories but I will not bore you with them.

The summation of this article is that partnerships will end prematurely in almost all instances.

If you are in a partnership and it is not working, do yourself a favor and approach your partner with a rational mind and say this: **We should sell together and end this relationship peacefully.**

Because if one wants to sell and the other does not, brokers will have one heck of a time selling your share of the office to another. In short, my dad would say **“we cannot sell your ex-partner.”**

No one wants to buy into a disgruntled partnership.

The long-standing partner has dominance and seniority and the incoming partner is oppressed from the start. They may know all the patients. They do know all the staff.

The buyer's lawyer and accountant will raise red flags and the banker does not want to finance the deal.

My advice:

The best solution, regardless of where you are at in your career, is for both partners to sell at the same time. Get it over with. Cut the umbilical cord and go to the bank with your cheque and carry on with life.

You do not even have to send each other a box of chocolates.

PART is a 4-letter word.

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