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The three magic L's

Recent times have witnessed an acceleration of scientific and technological progress in dentistry. Even with our best and sincere attempts, it is an uphill task to keep pace with the advances. Given an average span of three to four decades to a dental practitioner, it becomes all the more essential to hone our skills, knowledge and attitude.

It is true that we cannot practise with yesteryears' methodologies, materials and techniques and treat today's patients. It is not only unethical to do so but also immoral. Hence, it is essential to adapt the three magic 'l's' to our lifestyle. Yes! It is the concept of **Life Long Learning** (LLL). It is commitment to learning. It is self-directed, self-motivated, autonomous learning. LLL is the concept that it is never too late to learn. It maintains brain fitness. It is dynamic and keeps the individual mentally agile. It is indeed an attitudinal learning that one has to be open to new ideas, decisions and skills.

Does graduation from dental school give a licence to practise in society for a lifetime? Presently most countries in the world have made continuing professional development (CPD) mandatory to keep one's name in the registers to practice. Number of hours of verifiable and general CPD hours are

specified. Verifiable hours are the speciality society meetings, conferences, educational programs conducted by the colleges, interactive distance learning with verifiable outcomes etc. The courses are recognized and approved by the dental council. General CPD hours are for independent study of professional literature, multimedia etc.

Genetic and molecular biology research have started percolating to clinical levels. Add to that soft and hard tissue digital imaging and advances in biomaterial science and we can see that this is the most exciting and challenging time in dentistry. It is said that "the best of dentistry is prosthodontics". So how are we going to keep pace? Definitely not by mandatory CPD imposed on us but by the urge to learn and give our best to our patients. If we want to attain maximum professional and self-satisfaction, we need to embrace the three magic 'l's. There are tough questions and great answers awaiting us. So let's explore!

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