



Professional Renewal

Time seems to pass so quickly. Spring moves into summer, summer into fall, and soon it is winter. The people around us seem to grow older, while we do not seem to change at all. We attend a class reunion after many years and observe that other appear to be graying, whereas, to our eyes we are forever young. This is most evident when we observe our child patients mature in to their teen or young adult years. Then we pause to wonder where time has gone, time to do all the things we had wanted to do. It feels as if we are on a speeding train or, perhaps, a merry-go-round which we which we would want to stop for a while. Some thrive in that type of atmosphere and achieve many things, whereas other push off activity to another day and then bemoan never having time to do what they would really like to do. Life seems to pass them by.

In our professional lives, many are oblivious to the passage of time. We begin with the energy of youth when there is a thirst to learn, to develop, to strive, and to change. There is great potential, but then complacency sets in and our activities become mundane. Inertia inhibits change, as we tend to use the same techniques with the same materials that we first used. Just like Willie Loman in Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman, we dwell on achieve-

ments of the past, oblivious to changes that have taken place around us. Almost too late we notice that life has changed, that time has passed, ever so quickly.

In our professional lives, it need not be that way. If we begin with an awareness, there are things we can do to remain current and be excited with what we do. A good place to start is with our bookshelves with a quick review of the textbooks therein. Have they been updated with recent editions, or do they remain the same ones we used years ago in our training programs? Do we periodically open those books to refresh our knowledge? Do we read journals and other periodic literature? Do we attempt to access the latest information? Another source of stimulation is regular attendance at professional meetings and continuing education courses, those sponsored by our Academy and by the many other dental societies or universities? Those not yet Board certified should consider preparing for that goal? Those already certified should think about recertification beginning in year 2001?

Life can continue to be exciting and dynamic, however, we must recognize that life's journey is more important than life's destination. The time to start is now.