

## A Dental Study Club Built on Collaboration, Not Competition



Dr. Gregory Dodd

What happens when a dental study club leaves ego at the door? For Dr. Dodd, it meant 30+ members and a stronger practice culture.

### The Problem

For many dentists, study clubs are supposed to be places where clinicians grow together. But early in his career, Dr. Gregory Dodd experienced something very different.

"You'd get two or three dentists who dominated the conversation," he says.

Instead of collaboration, the environment often felt competitive and intimidating. Early-career dentists hesitated to ask questions. Conversations became more about ego than learning.

At the same time, Dr. Dodd was facing another frustration familiar to many dentists: working hard without a clear system for approaching complex restorative cases.

"Every day you'd just look at those models and think, 'Maybe tomorrow I'll have an idea.'"

The practice looked successful from the outside. But the dentistry felt smaller than what he had imagined it could be.

**Like many dentists, he wasn't lacking effort. He was lacking a framework.**



## The Solution: Study club learning without ego

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Everything changed after Dr. Dodd attended his first Spear Seminar in 2013. He described Spear's Facially Generated Treatment Planning approach "life-changing."

"By the end of that weekend seminar, I could look at those models and say, 'Okay, here's where I'm going to start, and this is how I'm going to work my way through this process.'" For the first time, treatment planning felt structured instead of uncertain.

What stood out most was that Spear didn't just teach procedures. It changed how he saw dentistry. Clinical decision-making, patient communication, sequencing, and long-term planning connected into a system he could actually apply in practice. Just as importantly, Spear showed him a different kind of professional community.

When he learned about Spear Study Clubs, he saw an opportunity to create the learning environment he wished had existed earlier in his career. Rather than accepting the competitive culture he had experienced elsewhere, he decided to build a group centered on collaboration, mentorship, and mutual respect.

"When I started the Spear Study Club, I wanted no egos," he says. "Everyone checks their ego at the door. We're going to share our successes and our failures."

Dr. Dodd built the kind of study club he wished had existed earlier in his career: collaborative, welcoming, and centered on growth instead of hierarchy.

## The Result

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What started with six clinicians steadily grew into one of the largest Spear Study Clubs in the country, now with more than 30 members.

But the real transformation went deeper than numbers. The study club created a space where younger dentists felt comfortable asking questions, specialists and general dentists learned from one another, and disagreements stayed grounded in mutual respect.

"There's never been an argument in the room," Dr. Dodd says. "There are disagreements on ideas, but it's always with mutual respect."

That same philosophy shaped the growth of his practice. Today, Dr. Dodd leads nine offices and more than 100 employees, extending Spear-based learning beyond doctors to hygienists and team members across the organization.

"It's helped team members get more excited about their jobs and learning," he says.

With ready-to-use learning modules and support for study club leaders, Spear provided a framework that helped the group continue growing while keeping members aligned around shared clinical principles.

For Dr. Dodd, the value of Spear was never just CE credits. It was building a practice culture rooted in confidence, collaboration, and better patient care.

"We're not doing this just for CE credits," he says. "We're doing it to become better doctors and give patients better care."

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