



Risking it all

Guest editor **Anna Middleton** opens up about being brave and aiming high

I believe everyone should be in love with their smile.

A healthy mouth can enhance your appearance, boost your confidence and make you happier, but I'm sure you'll agree with me that one bad dental experience in the past is a hard memory to shake.

There is a lot of negative stereotyping in our industry and dental hygienists can face considerable reticence from some members of the public.

In my opinion, the two greatest barriers for patients seeking dental treatment are fear of pain and lack of control.

It was this realisation that spurred me to start my own business and embark on a mission to change the way oral healthcare is delivered to the public.

My mission is for every one of my patients to look forward to seeing me and to feel great after doing so.

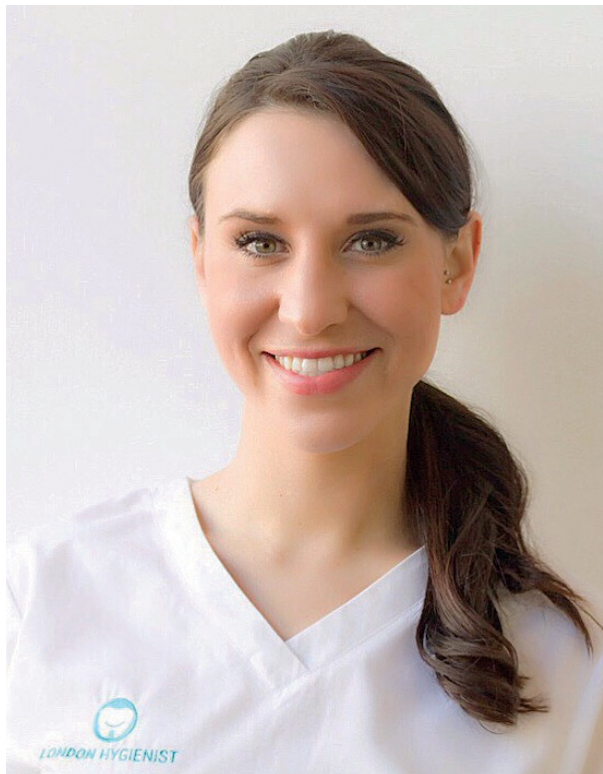
Some may see this as unrealistic; aim too high and you've further to fall! Well, I'm prepared to take the risk.

Changing perceptions

It was the acclaimed US poet Maya Angelou who said: 'The desire to reach for the stars is ambitious. The desire to reach hearts is wise.' How wise was she? This is exactly what we need to do to change perceptions.

In order to do this, we need to surround ourselves with like-minded people who share our ethos, are encouraging, and bring out the best in us. There are so many individuals in the industry who offer me so much love and support.

This positivity prompted me to embark on a new chapter in my life, retraining to be a dental therapist.



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Dentistry is about lifelong learning and there are many different ways that we can improve ourselves. Some are conventional, such as enrolling on one of the many CPD courses available to us. Others are less so – such as trying out something totally new, like creative writing or a presentation skills course.

Try something new

I pride myself on providing the highest quality of preventive and supportive dental care using minimally invasive methods.

By using the best equipment and products, I can assure treatment will be comfortable, and even enjoyable, for my patients.

In order to expand my clinical skills and provide my patients with a pain-free, positive experience, I am about to start a trial of The Wand, a computer-controlled anaesthetic delivery system, which pushes the anaesthetic solution of your choice through a needle.

By controlling the rate and pressure of delivery, it eliminates the traditional discomfort/pain associated with a syringe. To me, this

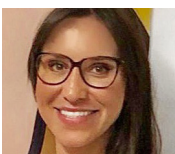
is a natural adjunct to everything else I do to ensure a positive experience.

Reach out

People often ask me how I have so much energy. The truth is, I do sometimes have moments where I feel slightly overwhelmed by all that's going on in my professional life, but by and large the buzz I get provides the adrenalin I need to keep going.

I love being busy. Opportunities don't always come to you; chances are you're going to need to stick your head above the parapet and be brave. You will not be alone. There are many hygienists who are doing so and engaging with the trade, as well as fellow professionals.

Dentistry can be a lonely place, but with social media it really doesn't need to be. Reach out: you'll be surprised who's out there, and how much support you'll get. We're all in this together!



Anna Middleton

Anna is a multi-award-winning dental hygienist. She studied at the Eastman Dental Hospital after working as a dental nurse and graduated in 2015 from the Faculty of Royal College of Surgeons. She is the founder of London Hygienist, which has a mission to change the way oral healthcare is delivered to patients. Anna is a key opinion leader for Philips, a global guided biofilm therapy ambassador for EMS Dental and an ambassador for the BSDHT as well as a member. Anna lectures, and writes regularly for both industry and consumer press. She is currently training to be a dental therapist.