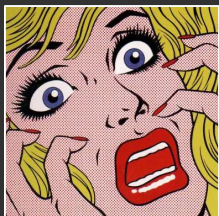


PRIVATE PRACTICE HORROR STORIES

Dr. Julie Helmus, OD
COPE # 77238-PM



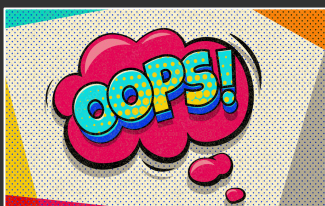
1

DISCLOSURES



Dr. Julie Helmus has no relevant financial relationships to disclose. The content and format of this course is presented without commercial bias and does not claim superiority of any commercial product or service.

2



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4

DISCLAIMER

WHO I AM:

- Second-gen OD
- Millennial (1981-95)
- Transparent
- Californian employer

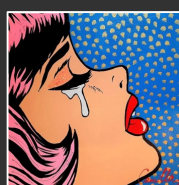


WHO I AM NOT:

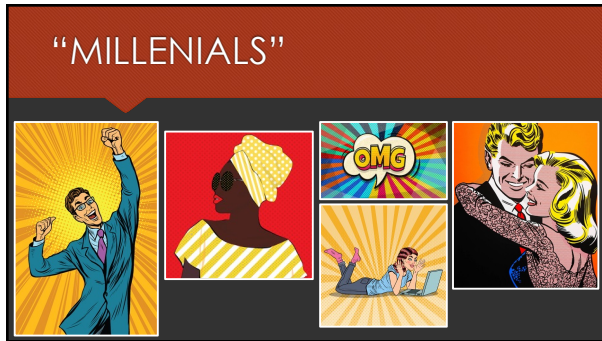
- Lawyer
- CPA
- MBA
- HR specialist

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OPENING SCENE



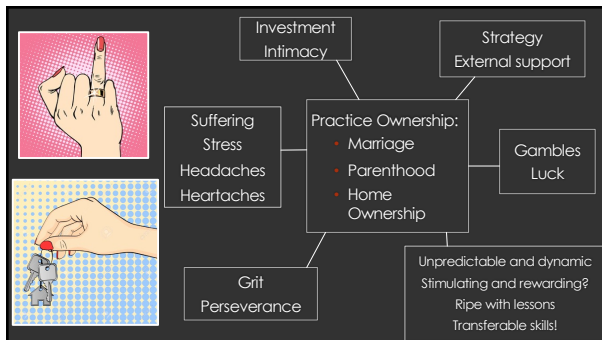
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8



9

ATTITUDE

- Bring it.
- Each new hurdle = a new experience to add to the collection
- Walk through fire and emerge a new version
- Rearrange goals: no longer to get more done, but rather have less to do

10



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12

TIME FRAME



- How long to crawl out of crisis mode?
- More than "two seasons" as predicted by a well-known industry consultant
- Reinvent/rebuild/stabilize requires: 9 months – 2 years
- Flourish in 3 years

13

Is it worth it?



The ongoing question.
Not for everyone.
I haven't sold yet!

14

OUR MEDICAL ROOTS



- "You can't know what abnormal is unless you know what normal is"
- Prevention vs treatment: proactive vs reactive

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(PRIVATE PRACTICE) CASE STUDIES



Expensive mistakes and how to avoid them

16

BAD CONTRACT

Contentious OD Partner Divorce

- S-Corp
- Three Helmus partners, one outsider
- Options: endure vs dissolve vs buy out
- My legal fees: \$26,000
- Mom's legal fees: \$26,000
- Time to close: 10 weeks
- Have an escape clause



17

NOT THIS TIME!





- Buy-Out price tag \$\$\$
- Financing
- Non-Compete
- What now?



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THE IMAGE THAT CARRIED ME THROUGH

WHY IS DIVORCE SO EXPENSIVE?

19

NO CONTRACT


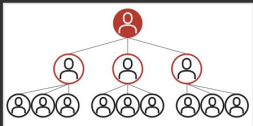
- Independent Contractor
- CA Assembly Bill 5 (2020)
- Medical Biller
- Small Claims Court
- "Meeting of the minds"



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BAD STRUCTURE

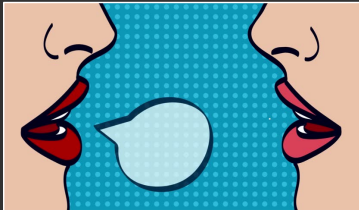
- No staff org chart
- No leaders
- No room for growth
- No investment
- No training of staff

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BAD COMMUNICATION

- No meetings
- No memos
- No one-on-one
- Over-sharing



22

UNREASONABLE EXPECTATIONS


Office Manager as The Savior




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BAD HIRES

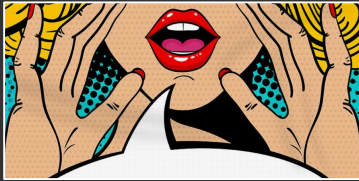
1. The Tidsoptimist
2. The Unvetted
3. The Uninsured
4. The Thief
5. The Con Artist
6. The Bully
7. The Princess
8. The Flake
9. The Airhead
10. The Ghost



24

(POSTPONING) DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

- The receptionist who saw it coming
- Associate OD: partnership off the table



25

BAD DECISIONS

- Paying out vacation before accrued
- COVID dismissal



26

BAD POLICIES

- No frame adjustments or repairs for outside purchases



27

BAD INFRASTRUCTURE

Sorry...
**TEMPORARILY
OUT OF
SERVICE**

- Internet outages



28

BURGLARY DECEMBER 2020

- Friday Morning @ 3:30 AM
- Single male
- In-and-out in 80 seconds
- Straight for Maui Jims
- Alarm activated
- Video footage captured
- Cops on the scene
- No suspects



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BEFORE

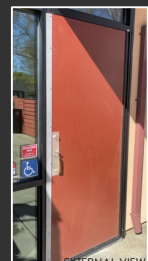


EXTERNAL VIEW



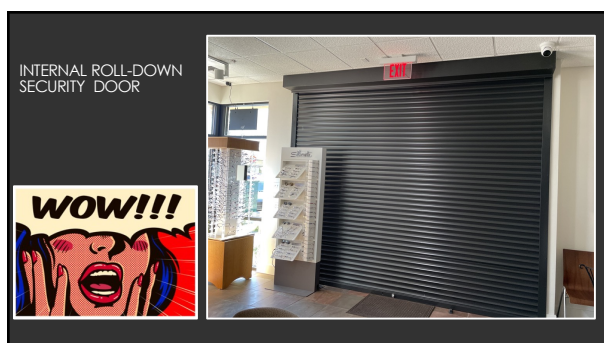
INTERNAL VIEW

AFTER



EXTERNAL VIEW

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FAKE VENDORS

MiCro Shapes

- Initially legitimate frame vendor
- Charged credit card for fraudulent orders under various aliases:
 - Famous Optical
 - Famous Frames
 - Rare Optical
 - Rare Vintage and Overstock
 - Framefling
 - Amel Reproductions
- Sent consignment frames worth \$3

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BAD REVIEWS

- Responding to negative patient reviews on Yelp, Google, Facebook etc
- Sock puppet
- Reviews egged on by competitor
- HIPAA considerations

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REVIEWS: LOVE/HATE

- You can't please everyone
- Check out other businesses
 - Most reviews are either 5/5 or 1/5
- Management:
 - Respond to all?
 - Disconnect + Delegate
- Patients:
 - Give them an outlet to vent
 - Give out business cards
 - Make it easy to praise
 - Get Staff involved

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BAD LUCK

"Patient TS called regarding a pair of glasses that were dispensed to her about a month ago and were made incorrectly and caused her to fall."


Patient tripped in new bifocals

- Injured party TS, 57 YOWF
- Established BF wearer
- Requested Insurance Info
- Outcome...

36




BOARD COMPLAINTS



A sure-fire way
to ruin a day

37



40





- 100% owner!
- Patient Care "Sabbatical"
- Team of advisors
- STAFF: better pay, benefits, holidays, schedules, culture

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BUILD YOUR TEAM

ROSTER
28 Employees (22 FTE staff)


- 7 Teams:
 - Leadership (3)
 - Optical (7)
 - Front Desk (4)
 - Clinical Techs (4)
 - Billing (2)
 - Operations (1)
 - Contact Lenses (1)
 - Doctors (5 = 2.5 FTE)







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AND NOW

- Capacity:
 - 210 comp exams/week across 5-day work week
 - 7,261 comp exams/2021
- Equipment upgrades and additions
- Clinic: Expanded in 2020 (+1,800 sq ft) and remodeled in 2021
- Financial:
 - Collections per exam: \$444
 - 2021: \$3.1 mill
 - 2022: \$3.5 mill?



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Dad's advice:
"Do what's right for
the patient, and
you'll be successful."

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Thank you!

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