

DENTICE

A portrait of Brittanny Cox, RDH, a woman with long dark hair and heavy eye makeup, resting her chin on her hand. She is wearing a white t-shirt and has extensive tattoos on both arms. The background is a solid dark olive green.

REDEFINING GREEN DENTISTRY

BRITTANNY COX,
MA, RDH

SUSTAINABLE DENTISTRY ISSUE

DENTE



Table of Contents

Letter from the Editor

07

Woven with Intent

08

*Miswak's Timeless Wisdom
for a Greener Smile*

24



Table of Contents

The Gentle Mandate

30

The Unseen Axis:

38

*Cocolabs: Weaving
Sustainability into Every Smile*

47

*Brittany Cox: Redefining
Green Denistry*

52





Letter from the Editor

As the seasons turn, bringing with them new light and fresh perspectives, so too does our conversation around sustainable dentistry evolve and deepen within these pages of Dente Magazine. It feels like only yesterday we presented our inaugural Green Dentistry issue, a collection born from a burgeoning awareness and a collective desire to tread more gently upon our shared earth.

We fondly recall the foundational insights offered by Dr. Amanda Hoffmeister, whose wisdom illuminated the practical pathways towards a more environmentally conscious practice. Her contributions were a crucial seed, taking root in our community and inspiring many to begin their own journeys towards greener operations. The dialogue she initiated was vital, grounding us in the tangible steps we could take.

This year, the narrative takes a vibrant, compelling turn, sparked by the introduction of Brittany Cox, MA, RDH – our inspiring cover professional and a true 'firestarter' in the most luminous sense. When Brittany entered our sphere, it was as if a new spectrum of light was cast upon the concept of sustainability in dentistry. Her energy, her profound understanding, and her ability to articulate a more expansive vision have been nothing short of transformative for us, and we believe, will be for you too.

Brittany challenged us to look beyond the essential, yet sometimes singular, focus on being "environmentally conscious." While the meticulous choice of biodegradable materials and the mindful conservation of resources are undeniably vital – pillars we continue to champion – Brittany illuminated the truth that true sustainability in dentistry is a far more expansive tapestry. It weaves together not only ecological responsibility but also social equity, the elegance of digital innovation, the empowerment of patient dialogue, and the profound well-being of the practitioner themselves.

She reminded us that sustainability isn't just about reducing our negative impact; it's about cultivating a positive one across all facets of our profession. It's about building practices that are resilient, equitable, and deeply nourishing – for our patients, our teams, our communities, and indeed, for the planet that cradles us all. It's about seeing the "green" not just in the materials we use, but in the holistic health we foster and the ethical framework we uphold.

Within this edition, you will find this expanded vision reflected. We journey from the architectural poetry of conscious clinic design to the alchemy of materials reborn, from the celebration of "slow dentistry" as a luxurious intention to the personal narratives of innovators who are shaping this gentle revolution. Brittany Cox, gracing our cover, embodies this holistic approach, and her insights thread through the issue like a guiding light.

It is our hope that this issue ignites within you a renewed sense of purpose and possibility, encouraging an even broader understanding of what it means to practice sustainable dentistry. May it inspire conversations, spark new ideas, and reaffirm the beauty of a profession that has the power to heal not just smiles, but in its own way, contribute to a healthier world.

Join us as we journey further under this unfurling canopy, into a deeper, richer understanding of Green Dentistry.

Warmly (Not too Warm),

Carl Demadema



Woven with Intent

The Ethical Elegance of the Modern Dental Uniform

In the sanctuary where science meets solace, every detail whispers of care. The modern dental uniform transcends mere utility; it becomes a canvas for intention, a tactile expression of a commitment that extends beyond the smile to the very fabric of our world. This is an exploration of attire that not only serves but also soothes, crafted with a reverence for both human well-being and the delicate balance of nature. A new narrative for professional dress, spun from threads of responsibility and innovation.





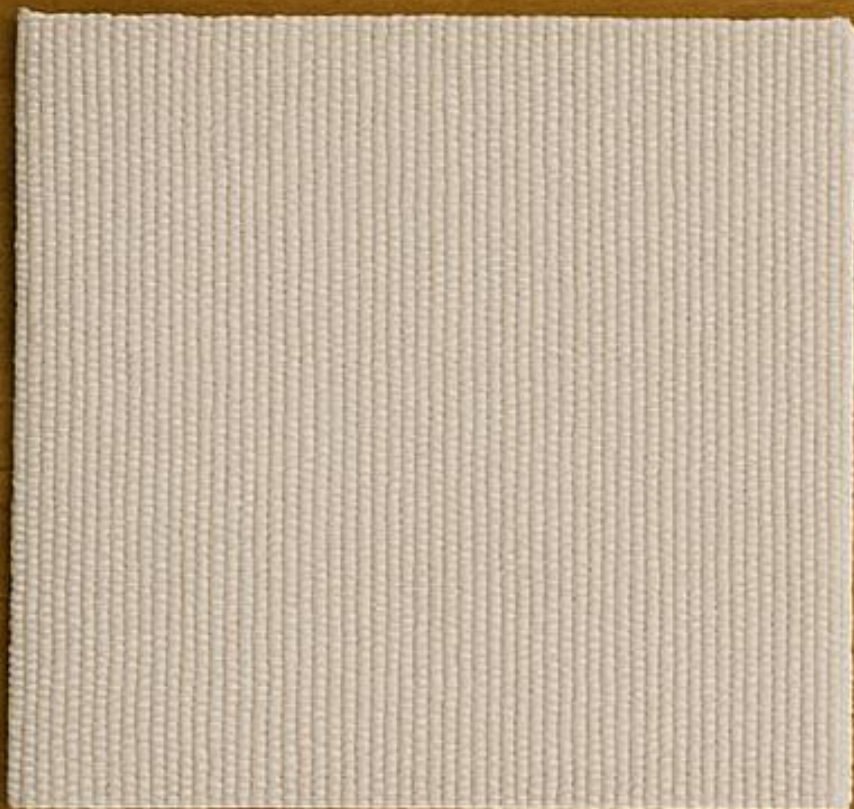
The Soul of the Fiber

Exploring the beauty and benefits of:

Organic Cotton: *"Cultivated without compromise, organic cotton breathes with the purity of untreated earth. Its touch is a soft reassurance, its journey a testament to farming in harmony with nature's rhythms."*

Linen: *"Born from the flax flower, linen carries the legacy of ancient looms and sun-drenched fields. Its characteristic texture, cool and crisp, offers a breathable elegance, growing softer with every touch, a story of enduring grace."*

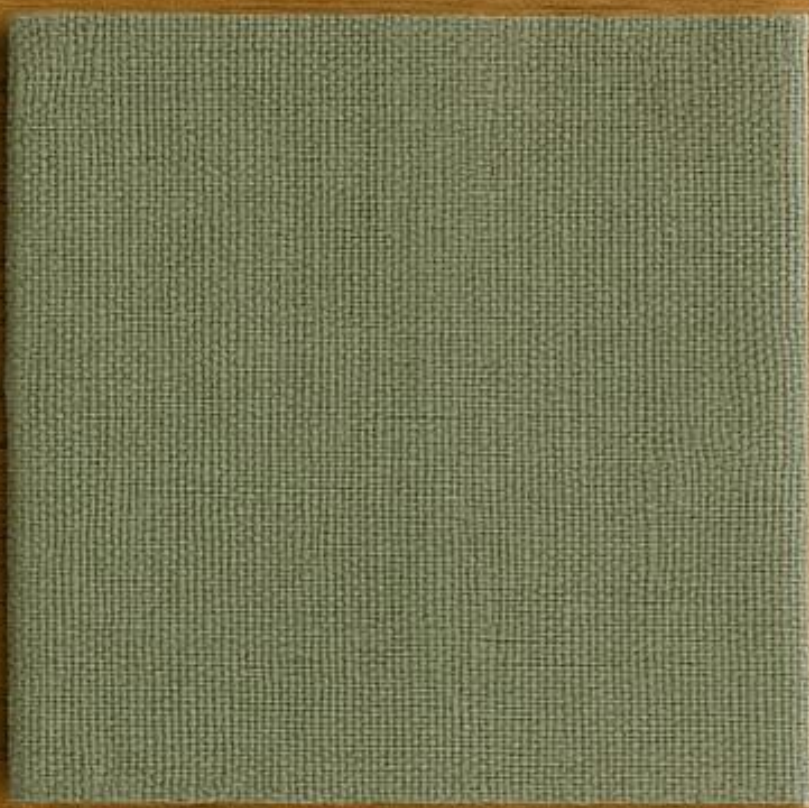
Hemp: *"A fiber of inherent resilience, hemp requires little intervention to flourish. Its robust nature translates into garments of lasting strength, their texture a subtle map of the earth's fortitude."*



ORGANIC COTTON



LINEN



HEMP

The Alchemy of Renewal

Recycled Polyester (rPET): "From discarded vessels, a new vitality is spun. Recycled polyester transforms potential waste into durable, high-performance textiles, a practical magic that lessens our reliance on virgin resources and gives a second life to what was once lost."

TENCEL™ (Lyocell & Modal): "Sustainably sourced wood pulp, dissolved and spun in a closed-loop embrace, yields fibers of exquisite softness and fluid drape. Lyocell and Modal are whispers from the forest, offering breathability, moisture management, and a gentle caress against the skin, all while respecting the woodland's sanctity."



Hues of Conscience

- "The color of our world, mirrored in our attire. Sustainable dyeing transcends mere aesthetics; it's a commitment to cleaner waters and healthier ecosystems. From ancient plant-derived pigments to innovative low-impact dyes that sip rather than gulp water, the palette of responsibility offers a spectrum of beauty without burden."



Crafted with Care

- "Beyond the fiber and the hue lies the hand of the maker and the intent of the design. Ethical production ensures that our choices honor not just the planet, but also the people who craft our garments. Fair wages, safe conditions – these are the invisible threads of dignity woven into every piece."
- "True sustainability also resides in longevity. Garments designed to endure, to resist the rigors of daily wear and frequent laundering, become trusted companions, reducing the cycle of consumption and celebrating the beauty of lasting quality."



The Aura of Well-Being

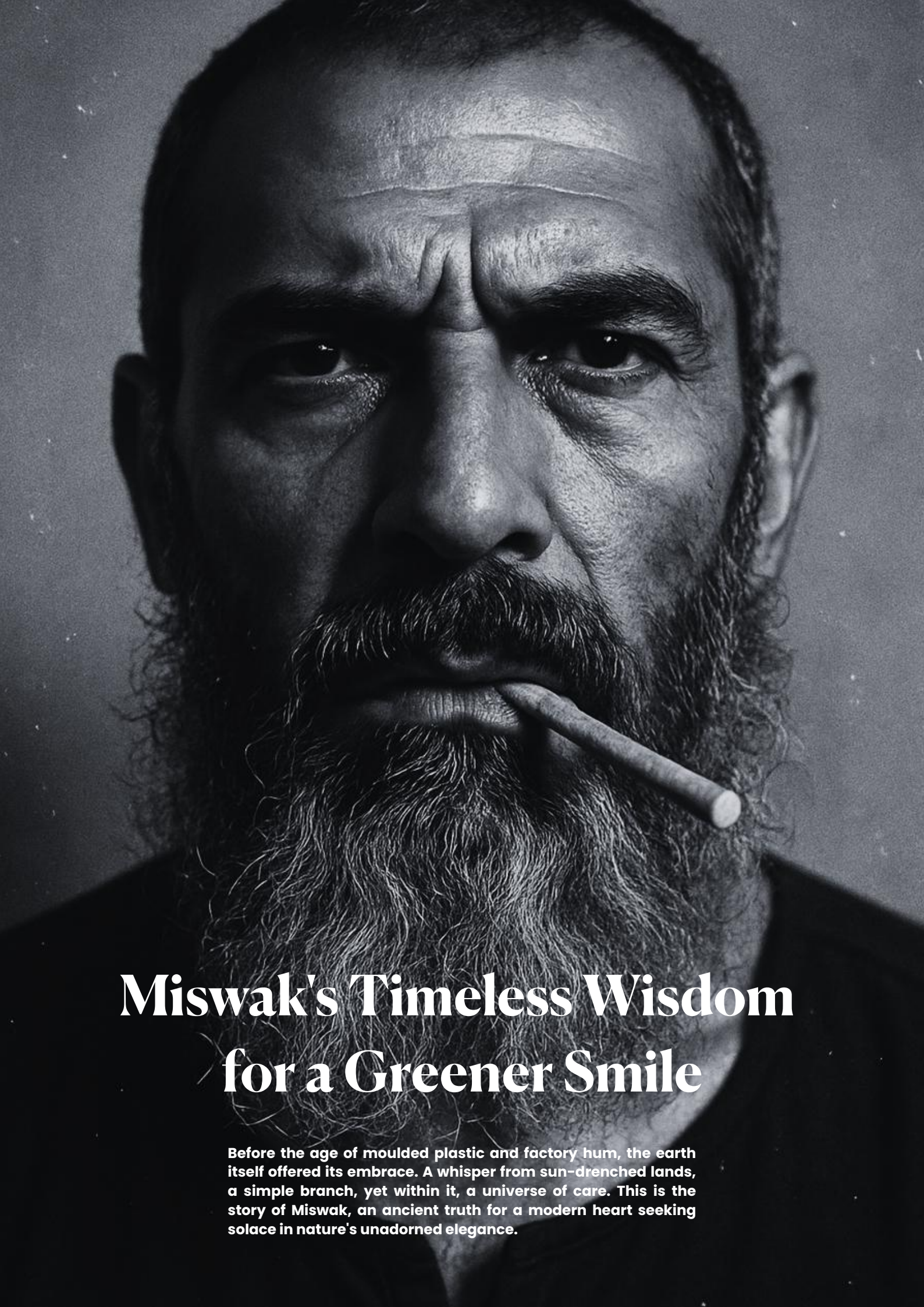
- "The ideal professional garment is a silent partner, enhancing focus and fostering ease. Sustainable fabrics often bring inherent benefits: the breathability of natural fibers, the soft touch of cellulosics, the moisture-wicking properties that keep the wearer comfortable through demanding days. When our attire feels good, physically and ethically, it contributes to an overall aura of well-being that can be felt by both practitioner and patient."



The Full Circle

- "The narrative of a garment doesn't end when it's worn. Considering its next chapter – its potential for recycling, its ability to biodegrade and return to the earth – completes the cycle of responsible design."
- "Pioneering brands are illuminating the path, offering collections that marry sophisticated design with transparent sustainable practices."
- "Choosing sustainable attire is an investment in a healthier future, a conscious decision to align our professional presence with our deepest values."

"To dress with intent is to acknowledge the interconnectedness of all things. The choice of our professional attire, seemingly small, can ripple outwards, contributing to a culture of care that embraces not only human health but the flourishing of the world that sustains us. May our choices be as thoughtful and as healing as the work we undertake each day."



Miswak's Timeless Wisdom for a Greener Smile

Before the age of moulded plastic and factory hum, the earth itself offered its embrace. A whisper from sun-drenched lands, a simple branch, yet within it, a universe of care. This is the story of Miswak, an ancient truth for a modern heart seeking solace in nature's unadorned elegance.

ECHOES THROUGH MILLENNIA

In the quiet annals of human ritual, where well-being and reverence intertwine, the Miswak—the slender twig of the *Salvadora persica* tree—has carved its legacy. For millennia, across the arid landscapes of Africa, the Levant, and the Indian subcontinent, it has been more than a mere tool for cleansing; it has been a companion in daily devotion, a symbol of purity, and a tangible link to the life-giving earth.

Its use, often a meditative practice, transcends the mechanics of hygiene. It is an act of connection—to tradition, to self, and to the silent, generous wisdom of the natural world. Imagine desert caravans halting as the sun dips low, the gentle fraying of the Miswak a familiar rhythm, or quiet moments of reflection in serene courtyards, its subtle, earthy scent a grounding presence. This is not a forgotten relic, but a living tradition, breathing still in the hands of those who honor its enduring grace and profound simplicity. The Arak tree itself, a marvel of resilience, often thriving where other life yields, gifts these branches—a quiet testament to nature's capacity for gentle provision.



In our contemporary quest for a lighter footprint, for choices that honor the intricate web of life, the Miswak emerges not as an innovation, but as an affirmation of what has always been. Its environmental virtues are not applied, but intrinsic, woven into its very essence by nature's patient hand.

Born of Earth, Returning to Earth:

Unlike the spectral permanence of plastic toothbrushes destined for millennia in landfills, the Miswak embraces the cycle of life with serene acceptance. Having served its purpose, it returns to the soil from which it came, biodegrading with quiet dignity, leaving no trace but nourishment. It is a perfect loop, a lesson in impermanence and respectful return.

The Elegance of Unburdened Design:

Harvested with traditional wisdom, the Miswak arrives in its purest form, unadorned by the clamor of industrial processing or the sheath of plastic packaging. Its natural state is its final presentation – a profound statement in a world often suffocated by layers of the artificial. This inherent minimalism is not a deficiency, but a powerful expression of sufficiency, a quiet rebellion against the culture of excess. Its journey from branch to hand is short, its impact gentle.

The Miswak's sustainability extends beyond its lifecycle and minimalist form. The hardy *Salvadora persica* tree, often a sentinel in arid terrains, is a naturally resilient species. When harvested with respect for its cycles of regeneration—a practice embedded in traditional knowledge—the Miswak represents a truly renewable offering, a gift the earth can continue to bestow. (It is a silent prayer that such harvesting always remains guided by reverence and foresight, ensuring the tree's continued flourishing.)

And in its use, a subtle conservation often unfolds. The ritual of cleansing with Miswak can be remarkably water-wise, particularly when compared to the gush of taps accompanying conventional brushing. Each drop saved is a small homage to a precious resource.

But the earth's generosity does not end with its physical form. Within the Miswak's fibrous heart lies a natural pharmacy, a carefully curated blend of compounds that science is only now beginning to fully appreciate. Gentle abrasives for polishing, natural antiseptics to purify, astringents to tone, and even traces of fluoride—all working in concert. This is not chemistry engineered in a lab, but the tree's own intelligent defense and vitality, shared. It is a holistic offering, where efficacy and ecology dance in perfect, unstudied harmony.



To welcome the Miswak into modern life is not to turn one's back on the present, but to enrich it with the echoes of enduring wisdom. It is an invitation to pause, to engage in a ritual of self-care that is both grounding and uplifting, a moment to connect with a practice that has nourished smiles for generations.

The journey begins with selection—seeking Miswak from sources that honor its origins and sustainable harvesting. The preparation itself is a small ceremony: a brief soak to soften the wood, a careful paring of the outer layer, a gentle chewing to unfurl the fibers into a delicate, natural brush. Each step is an opportunity for presence.

The experience is unique, a departure from the familiar. The direct contact with a natural material, its subtly earthy, sometimes pungent taste a reminder of its wild provenance. It encourages a different quality of attention, a more deliberate and intuitive engagement with the act of cleansing. For some, the Miswak becomes a cherished primary tool, its simplicity a welcome respite. For others, it is a thoughtful complement to their existing routine—perfect for travel, for moments of quiet reflection, or as a conscious, plastic-free alternative when the soul seeks a deeper connection with the natural world.

The enduring story of the Miswak is a luminous thread in the grand tapestry of human existence, a testament to the profound and often overlooked solutions that lie nestled within nature's embrace and the repository of ancient traditions. It reminds us, with quiet insistence, that the pathways to a truly sustainable future may not always require radical invention, but often a mindful rediscovery, a turning towards the wisdom that has always been.

As we navigate the complexities of our times, seeking to lighten our collective footprint and cultivate practices that honor both our individual well-being and the fragile vitality of our shared planet, the ancient bough of the Miswak extends a timeless invitation. It calls us to appreciate the inherent elegance of simplicity, to trust in the potent intelligence of the natural world, and to celebrate the profound beauty of care that is deeply, authentically, rooted. In its humble form, we find a powerful symbol: that the most nurturing choices are often those that weave us more closely into the living fabric of the Earth.

The Gentle Mandate

CRAFTING ECO-REVERENT SMILES
FOR A MODERN WORLD

BY DR. AMANDA HOFFMEISTER

A

QUIET HUM OF RESPONSIBILITY RESONATES THROUGH OUR MODERN WORLD, A GROWING UNDERSTANDING THAT SUSTAINABILITY IS NO LONGER A NICHE CONCERN BUT A CORE MELODY IN THE SYMPHONY OF OUR INDUSTRIES. DENTISTRY, IN ITS INTIMATE DANCE WITH HUMAN WELL-BEING, HEARS THIS CALL WITH PARTICULAR CLARITY.

AS WE NAVIGATE THE CURRENTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE, OUR PROFESSION IS GIFTED A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY: TO LEAD WITH GRACE, TO EMBODY A PRACTICE THAT NURTURES BOTH INDIVIDUAL AND PLANETARY VITALITY. FOR WHILE DENTAL CARE IS A CORNERSTONE OF HEALTH, ITS TRADITIONAL RHYTHMS—THE EPHEMERAL DANCE OF SINGLE-USE PLASTICS, THE GENEROUS USE OF WATER, THE ENERGY THAT ANIMATES OUR VITAL EQUIPMENT—CAN LEAVE A SIGNIFICANT ECOLOGICAL TRACE.

NOW, AS AWARENESS BLOSSOMS AROUND THE DELICATE INTERSECTION OF HEALTHCARE AND ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP, DENTISTS FIND THEMSELVES AT A LUMINOUS JUNCTURE.

WE ARE POISED TO EMBRACE PRACTICES THAT LIGHTEN OUR FOOTPRINT UPON THE EARTH, ALL WHILE CONTINUING TO BESTOW THE HIGHEST CALIBRE OF CARE, CRAFTING SMILES THAT REFLECT NOT JUST HEALTH, BUT A DEEPER HARMONY WITH THE WORLD AROUND US.



The Resonant Why: An Invitation to Sustainable Practice

The environmental narrative of dentistry, though often whispered rather than proclaimed, carries significant weight. Traditional practices, with their inherent reliance on certain materials and processes, can contribute to a considerable carbon signature. From the lifecycle of plastics to the thirst of our water systems and the breath of our energy consumption, the cumulative effect is undeniable. Indeed, as Hu (2024) illuminates, the very air we breathe and the purity of our waters—factors influenced by broader environmental health—are already shaping oral health outcomes, sometimes subtly exacerbating conditions like gum disease and dental decay.

To weave sustainability into the fabric of dental practice is to journey beyond the superficial notion of "going green." It is to recognize, with profound clarity, the indivisible interdependence of our environment and our well-being. By adopting practices rooted in this understanding, dental professionals become alchemists of positive change—reducing waste, diminishing pollution, conserving precious resources, and standing as heartfelt advocates for a climate-conscious vision of healthcare.

The Materia Medica of Mindfulness: Choosing Eco-Conscious Materials

One of the most tangible pathways to a more sustainable practice lies in the conscious curation of our dental materials. A 2018 study revealed a sobering truth: 20% of medical waste is composed of single-use plastics. Familiar items – the transient gleam of plastic instruments, the protective embrace of bibs, the slender forms of suction tips, and the sanctity of sterilization bags – often contribute to a lineage of non-biodegradable waste. Embracing materials that are biodegradable, designed for graceful reuse, or readily recyclable can significantly soften a practice's environmental touch. Consider reusable alternatives to single-use bibs and trays, which can dramatically curtail waste.

Simultaneously, the ethereal realm of digital impressions and electronic records allows us to transcend the need for many physical materials, lightening our material load with elegant efficiency. Digital dentistry offers further harmony; many practices now embrace digital radiography, a choice that not only reduces radiation exposure but also eliminates the afterlife of film waste. Intraoral scanners, replacing traditional impression trays, further streamline the choreography of care while minimizing contributions to landfills. As Nadershahi and Ojcius (2024) eloquently note, this shift towards greener materials is not solely an act of environmental responsibility—it often unfurls into improved patient outcomes and more fluid, efficient workflows.



The Clinic's Quiet Breath: Cultivating Energy- Efficient Operations

The energy that animates our dental sanctuaries is considerable, with equipment like X-ray machines, sterilizers, and air compressors drawing significantly from the grid. Transitioning to energy-efficient models is not just a pragmatic choice; it's an act of respect for our shared resources, often leading to a gentle reduction in electricity use and operational costs.

Subtle yet potent shifts—the soft glow of LED lighting, the intuitive wisdom of programmable thermostats, or the quiet vigilance of motion-sensor lights—can collectively transform a space into a haven of energy efficiency. Investing in ENERGY STAR-certified appliances and partnering with renewable energy providers, inviting the power of wind or sun to animate your practice, further deepens this commitment to sustainable vitality.

Water, the lifeblood of our planet, also deserves our utmost reverence. Dental offices traditionally utilize hundreds of gallons daily for the essential rituals of rinsing, cleaning, and sterilization. A traditional wet vacuum system, for instance, can consume up to 360 gallons of water per day. Replacing it with a dry vacuum system can dramatically reduce this thirst. Furthermore, the installation of low-flow faucets and water-efficient sterilization systems can conserve this precious resource without compromising the purity and safety that are paramount to our care.

The Artful Return: Sustainable Waste Management

The stream of waste generated in dental care is a significant consideration. From sharps requiring careful handling to the ubiquitous presence of disposable packaging, much of this material traditionally finds its end in landfills. Yet, with thoughtful intention, we can redirect these streams, transforming waste into a narrative of potential.

Practices can implement in-office recycling programs for paper, cardboard, and plastic packaging, giving these materials a new chapter. Organizations like TerraCycle offer elegant solutions, providing free recycling programs for often hard-to-recycle oral care products, including toothbrushes, toothpaste tubes, and floss containers (Neale et al., 2024). The meticulous segregation and proper disposal of hazardous waste—including amalgam, needles, and contaminated materials—ensures not only environmental safety but also steadfast compliance with regulations. Where permissible, composting biodegradable items offers a beautiful return to the earth, further reducing a practice's landfill contributions and closing the circle of use with grace.



Lightening the Plastic Veil: Reducing Plastic Reliance

The pervasive presence of plastic pollution remains one of our era's most pressing environmental narratives, and the dental industry, with its daily use of countless plastic products from suction tips to gloves and packaging, has a role to play in rewriting this story. Replacing single-use plastics with reusable or biodegradable alternatives can make a profound difference. Consider the enduring elegance of stainless steel instruments, the tailored fit of reusable impression trays, the gentle touch of biodegradable floss, and the earth-friendly promise of compostable toothbrushes—all increasingly available through conscientious dental supply companies (Byrne, 2024). These choices are more than mere substitutions; they are signals of a deep-seated commitment to environmental stewardship, enhancing a practice's brand identity. In a world where, according to some estimates, over 50% of consumers make purchasing decisions informed by a company's sustainability efforts, eco-friendly practices can also attract and retain patients who share these heartfelt values.

Sowing Seeds of Awareness: Educating Patients on Sustainable Oral Health

The ripple effect of sustainable dentistry extends far beyond the clinic walls, blossoming into the empowerment of patients to adopt eco-friendly habits in their own daily rhythms. Preventive and early interceptive dental care is, in itself, a powerful act of sustainability, often reducing the need for more intensive procedures which carry a larger environmental footprint. Early intervention helps to avoid treatments that might have a greater impact; for example, the emissions from a single composite filling (15 kg CO₂) are significantly less than those associated with dentures, which can produce up to 71 kg of CO₂ (World Dental Federation, 2023). Dentists can also become gentle guides, encouraging the use of bamboo toothbrushes, toothpaste housed in recyclable packaging, and refillable floss containers. Offering these options in-office or suggesting reputable eco-conscious brands provides patients with the tools to make informed, resonant choices. Ultimately, reinforcing the luminous connection between good oral health and environmental protection during routine visits can cultivate lasting change. When patients understand how their choices touch both their own bodies and the wider world, they are more likely to embrace sustainable behaviors with genuine enthusiasm (Nadershahi & Ojcius, 2024).

A Verdant Horizon for Dentistry

The dental profession holds within its hands both a remarkable opportunity and a profound responsibility: to illuminate the path toward sustainable healthcare. From the conscious selection of eco-friendly materials and the mindful conservation of water to the reduction of plastic use and the gentle education of our patients, the journey toward sustainability is multifaceted—and imbued with deep, intrinsic rewards. Adopting such practices may initially ask for an investment of time and resources, yet the enduring benefits—for our precious planet, for public health, and for the soul and reputation of your practice—are truly immeasurable. As we stand before an increasingly urgent climate narrative, the time for dental professionals to act with intention and heart is now. By prioritizing sustainability today, we can help ensure a healthier, more vibrant future for generations to come—a future that smiles brightly, both in the dental chair and in the wider world beyond.



A woman with curly hair and freckles, wearing green dental scrubs, is looking at a tablet. The tablet screen shows a bar chart and the text '75 kW'. In the background, there is a large screen displaying various energy usage statistics. The main title is overlaid on the image in a large, white, serif font.

The Unseen Axis: How Planetary Health Shapes Every Smile

By Brittany Cox, MA, RDH

A profound truth whispers through time: “A body can only be as healthy as the environment that surrounds it.” In this epoch of shifting climates, delicate ecosystems, and intersecting public health narratives, this ancient wisdom resonates with a new urgency, particularly within the healing arts. As dental professionals, our gaze often narrows to the intricate landscapes of individual mouths, teeth, and oral systems. Yet, a more expansive truth is dawning: the vitality of our patients is deeply, irrevocably interwoven with the vitality of our planet. To speak of disease prevention and holistic wellness is to embrace environmental stewardship as an inseparable part of the conversation.

The daily hum of our practices, the gleam of our tools, the ephemeral nature of protective plastics—each contributes, often unseen, to a larger ecological narrative of carbon emissions, waste generation, and resource consumption. Consider the energy that animates our equipment, the single-use materials that ensure safety yet swiftly become refuse; even routine procedures can leave a surprisingly significant ecological signature. Yet, within this familiar rhythm lies a quiet power: the potential for dentistry to not merely follow, but to lead a renaissance in sustainable healthcare innovation. With intentional shifts in mindset and a gentle re-orchestration of our operations, we can diminish our impact, elevate health outcomes, and model the kind of visionary care our communities, and our world, deserve.

This journey toward a greener practice transcends the simple exchange of one material for another, like plastic for bamboo. It calls for a deeper current, a cultural blossoming that re-imagines our purpose: to serve not only individual well-being but the vitality of the Earth that cradles us all. It invites us to question the familiar, to ask with courage and creativity: how can we do better? For our patients, for the generations yet to bloom, and for the natural systems that are the very breath of life.

CLIMATE IMPACT

18,750 kWh

+3.6%



Among our most elegant allies in this endeavor is the digital realm. The integration of digital workflows is not merely reshaping diagnosis, communication, and care delivery; it is an act of lightening our material burden on the planet. Imagine: impressions born of light, not plaster; radiographs that emerge without chemical baptism; patient histories that live in ether, not on felled trees. These are not just efficiencies; they are brushstrokes in a masterpiece of conservation, often leading to fewer remakes, more precise outcomes, and a gentler touch on patient time and travel.

And in this digital dance, a new form of connection unfurls. When a patient beholds the intricate landscape of their own oral health through a 3D scan, or visualizes the subtle wear on their enamel, understanding blossoms. Discussions about alignment, protective nightguards, or the nuances of preventive care become more engaged, more resonant. These moments of shared discovery, of illuminated insight, are in themselves a form of sustainability—fortifying trust, fostering informed decisions, and reducing the need for interventions born of opacity.

Beyond the clinic walls, the digital current extends its reach. New AI-powered platforms, such as Overjet, weave invisible threads of collaboration, enhancing diagnostic clarity and fostering seamless communication across care teams. This is particularly transformative in the realm of teledentistry, where technology becomes an emissary of equity, bridging distances to improve access for underserved and rural communities. When thoughtfully applied, these tools can diminish the need for travel, streamline co-diagnosis, and nurture more equitable outcomes for those who might otherwise remain in the shadows.

18,750 kWh





The seeds of sustainability are also sown in the sacred space of patient dialogue. Every day, we converse about oral hygiene rituals, brushing techniques, and product choices. These are golden opportunities to gently illuminate pathways to more conscious habits—perhaps turning off the tap during brushing’s gentle rhythm, or selecting products housed in thoughtfully designed, eco-friendly packaging. Yet, the most sustainable choice will always be the one a patient genuinely embraces. Here, the gentle arts of motivational interviewing and emotional intelligence become paramount. Rather than merely presenting a product for its environmental virtues, we must seek to understand the patient’s unique constellation of values and lifestyle. By asking open-ended questions, listening with attuned hearts, and guiding patients toward their own intrinsic motivations, we cultivate authentic, lasting change.

This awakening extends beyond the individual encounter. Education is the lifeblood of sustainable dentistry, nourishing not just our patients but our own roles as advocates. As clinicians, we are uniquely positioned to become resonant voices within our communities and institutions. We can lend our presence to events like Earth Month fairs, share sustainable products with grace, and champion policies that weave eco-conscious practices into the very fabric of oral health. We can support an expanded scope of practice for dental professionals, thereby enhancing access to care in marginalized communities, and advocate for clear, shared frameworks around national standards of care that honor both safety and equity.

The quiet choreography of our daily practice offers countless opportunities for mindful stewardship. Are we curating our inventory with intention? Are we choosing to partner with manufacturers who prioritize reduced packaging, carbon-offset shipping, or materials that return to the earth with grace? Visionary companies like EnviroPouch, Dove Dental, BeeSure, PureLife, and TerraCycle are already illuminating the path with products and systems conceived to minimize waste. Resources like the FDI World Dental Federation’s toolkit and online course can serve as gentle guides, illuminating step-by-step pathways to implement sustainable shifts. Even modest beginnings—phasing out plastic prophylaxis angles, embracing the soft glow of LED lighting—can build momentum for more profound, systemic transformations over time.

All these efforts, from the grand gesture to the subtle shift, harmonize with a broader understanding known as planetary health. This concept, eloquently introduced by the Lancet Commission, recognizes the indivisible truth that human health and the health of Earth's ecosystems are one. Climate change, pollution, and the loss of biodiversity are not distant environmental concerns; they are immediate public health emergencies. When water systems are compromised, when the air we breathe is burdened, when natural resources dwindle, human well-being invariably suffers. Healthcare, in all its forms including dentistry, must respond with practices that actively reduce harm and cultivate long-term resilience.

Harmonizing our professional compass with global aspirations, such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), lends further coherence to our impact. This could translate into championing good health and well-being through preventative care, taking climate action by consciously reducing our emissions, or embodying responsible consumption through our product choices. Regardless of the specific path, dental professionals are uniquely poised to be architects of health equity and environmental responsibility.

Ultimately, sustainable dentistry is not an adjunct to our mission; it is the very heart of excellent, evolving care. It is a call to embrace a holistic vision—considering our patients' environments, their access to resources, and the subtle ripple effects of our clinical decisions. It is an invitation to move beyond mere compliance and convenience, toward a profession that serves with profound depth and integrity.

Dental professionals are not simply providers of care; we are agents of transformation, cultivators of well-being. When we truly grasp the power of our influence—both within the serene space of the operatory and in the wider world beyond—we begin to see how even the smallest acts of intention can blossom into transformative impact. We become not only healers of mouths but conscious stewards of health and planetary well-being.

Because the truth remains: ***a body can only be as healthy as the environment that surrounds it. And the power to nurture that environment, to shape it with intention and reverence, rests gently, yet profoundly, in our hands.***



Weaving Sustainability into Every Smile

Cocolab's Commitment to Conscious Innovation

In an industry increasingly aware of its environmental footprint, Cocolab is emerging as a beacon of "Conscious Innovation." More than just a tagline, this philosophy is deeply embedded in the company's mission to lessen product waste and improve recyclability without compromising the performance expected in premium smile care. For Cocolab, the health of the planet and its inhabitants is an integral part of a truly holistic approach to oral wellness.

This dedication isn't just talk; it's evident in every facet of their product design, material sourcing, and manufacturing practices. Dr. Chrystle Cu, DDS and Co-Founder of Cocolab, sheds light on the driving force: "As a California-born brand, Cocolab has eco-consciousness in its DNA. I'm acutely aware of the guilt tied to single-use plastics in dentistry, essential for infection control and efficiency. Outside of the obvious plastics like saliva ejectors and barriers, there's also sterilization wipes, pouches, and even our surgical masks and PPE that make dentistry notoriously wasteful. At Cocolab, we're tackling this challenge with every material selected for our products."



EXP 07-2025

cocofloss

COCOSHINE
TOOTHPASTE
LYCHEE BREEZE

with n-HA
REMINERALIZING
SMILE-BRIGHTENING
BRUSH WITH BLISS

COCOLAB

LYCHEE BREEZE

Cocofloss

Med & Pro-Grade

Innovating from Product to Packaging:

Cocolab's product line showcases a tangible commitment to this vision:

Cocofloss: Their popular floss isn't just effective; it's made with approximately 85% recycled polyester, woven from post-consumer plastic sourced from recycled water bottles. It's also designed to be refillable, further minimizing waste.

Cocobrush: The handle of the Cocobrush tackles the pervasive issue of ocean plastic head-on. It's crafted from approximately 98% recycled ocean-bound plastic – plastic trash found within 31 miles of waterways or coastal areas. Through a partnership with the Oceanworks® IMPAC+ program, every Cocobrush purchased helps remove ten times its weight in plastic waste from these vulnerable environments.

Cocoshine Whitening Toothpaste: Toothpaste tubes are notoriously challenging to make eco-friendly. Cocolab rises to the occasion with Cocoshine, featuring a tube and cap made with approximately 46% recycled ocean-bound plastic sourced from Oceanworks®. This marks a significant achievement, as Cocoshine is the first toothpaste tube where Oceanworks® has successfully incorporated such a high percentage of their recycled plastic.

Electric Brush Refills & Great Gums Brush: Addressing the wasteful replacement brush head market, the base of Cocolab's Electric Brush Refills incorporates up to 96% food-contact grade post-consumer recycled plastic. For interdental cleaning, the Great Gums Brush offers a paper handle alternative to traditional plastic brushes. Its FSC® certified eco-friendly paper handle not only reduces plastic but also results in 85% less CO2 produced during its manufacture.

Kids Reflosser: Understanding the need for sustainable options for children, Cocolab designed the Kids Reflosser to be endlessly refillable, providing a smart, eco-conscious alternative to single-use plastic flossers.

Beyond the products themselves, Cocolab extends its sustainable ethos to its outer packaging. Wherever feasible, they utilize FSC® certified paper, 100% sourced from wood from well-managed forests, for items like the Great Gums Brush and Electric Brush Refills.



Sustainability as a Guiding Principle:

For Cocolab, sustainability isn't a marketing gimmick or an afterthought; it guides every aspect of the business, from initial ingredient sourcing to final packaging. This unwavering commitment to conscious innovation and minimizing environmental impact is woven into the company culture.

Looking ahead, Cocolab continues to push boundaries. They are actively using recycled and ocean-bound plastics across their product packaging and offer enhanced recycling options through a partnership with Pact Collective. Their ongoing goal is to further reduce the reliance on virgin materials, constantly seeking new ways to innovate responsibly.

As **Dr. Cu** concludes, ***"Our Cocofloss is refillable, with thread spun from recycled PET water bottles. Cocobrush handles and Cocoshine Whitening Toothpaste tubes are made from recycled ocean-bound plastic sourced through Oceanworks, giving otherwise single-use plastics a second life. Our new interdental brushes, Great Gums Brush, come with paper handles instead of plastic. Through these innovations, we're committed to reducing dentistry's environmental footprint while keeping smiles clean and healthy."***

Cocolab stands as a compelling example of how dental product companies can proactively address environmental concerns, proving that high-performance oral care and planetary health can, and indeed must, go hand in hand.

BRITTANY COX

REDEFINING GREEN DENTISTRY

With the fierce dedication of a mother and the strategic mind of a systems-thinker, Brittany Cox is not just advocating for change in dentistry—she's meticulously designing it. She shares her journey from personal conviction to a revolutionary vision for a healthier planet and healthier patients.

For ***Brittany Cox***, the journey into the heart of sustainable dentistry began not in a sterile clinic or a research lab, but with the profound commitment of a mother. "I'm deeply committed to creating the kind of future my kids, and all future generations, deserve," she shares, her voice resonating with a quiet conviction. This maternal drive, coupled with an early career in oral health starting at age 19, illuminated the intricate web connecting individual well-being with the health of our environment. "I've always felt called to nature and its quiet wisdom," Cox reflects, "but the more I learned, the more I realized how our systems are failing both people and the planet. The connection became so clear: a sick environment breeds sick people, and vice versa. I couldn't ignore it; I knew I needed to be part of the solution."



"A sick environment breeds sick people, and vice versa. I couldn't ignore it; I knew I needed to be part of the solution."

This burgeoning awareness found its catalyst during her master's program at O'Hehir University. "Absolutely, that's when everything clicked," she affirms. "My passion and purpose collided." It was there, amongst a supportive cohort, that the threads of oral health, sustainability, and systemic change wove together, forming the foundational message she champions today.

But how does one begin to untangle the colossal task of making healthcare planet-friendly? For Cox, the answer is surprisingly straightforward: "Start with prevention." She passionately argues that preventative care is "the most sustainable thing we can do," inherently using fewer resources, creating less waste, and fostering long-term health for both individuals and the systems serving them.





This philosophy directly addresses a common concern: that the pursuit of sustainability might hinder operational excellence. Cox navigates this by emphasizing a pragmatic approach. "We track outcomes, stay flexible, and accept that complexity is part of the deal," she explains. "The goal isn't perfection; it's intention." This intentionality, she believes, allows for an alignment where care for people and the planet becomes the central axis around which all other operational aspects can harmoniously revolve. "It's understanding that how we operate matters, and that ripple effects are real."

This demanding mission is deeply personal for Cox. "It supports my kids' future, my health, and my peace," she states, acknowledging the weight of her work but also its intrinsic rewards. Learning to set boundaries, to say "no" or "not right now," has been crucial. "I can't carry all of this if I'm not grounded in my own wellness," she admits. "Ironically, this journey is what led me to become the healthiest version of myself to date."

Her vision of sustainable leadership extends this personal grounding into a collective responsibility. "It looks like mentorship," Cox asserts. "Like not gatekeeping. Like sharing what you know so others can grow." She firmly believes that knowledge shouldn't be hoarded behind paywalls, referencing the age-old wisdom: "That 'teach a person to fish' thing? Still true."

When it comes to practical application within dental practices, Cox urges a shift in perspective. The most overlooked sources of waste, she contends, aren't always the most obvious. "Underdiagnosing," she states plainly. "The entire field is rooted in reactive care. We need to shift to prevention-first protocols, ones that center preservation and proactive care. That's where sustainable impact starts."

"The goal isn't perfection; it's intention. When we center care—for people and the planet—everything else can align."

This challenges the often "surface-level" approaches to green dentistry. "Eco-friendly toothbrushes and recycling are cute," she concedes, "but sustainability in healthcare must go deeper. You're a provider. Look at the full picture. Connect the dots. Treat people, not symptoms."

"Eco-friendly toothbrushes and recycling are cute, but sustainability in healthcare must go deeper... Treat people, not symptoms."

Looking ahead, Cox sees policy as a "huge" lever for change, capable of enforcing waste regulations, expanding scopes of practice, and fostering collaborative, whole-person care that moves "from intervention to preservation." She anticipates an evolution in regulations over the next decade, envisioning "more single-source manufacturing, product accountability beyond end-of-life, and a serious push for renewable energy in healthcare production and procurement."

At the heart of this transformation is a redefinition of ethical healthcare itself: "whole-body, root-cause-focused, and evidence-based." It's about empowering both practitioners and patients through education and fostering "real autonomy in their care decisions."

For dental professionals feeling the call to advocate for such change, Cox's advice is clear and empowering: "Start by identifying what needs to change. Write it down. Then look to your professional organizations and network intentionally. You're not alone. Collaborate. Build momentum."

Despite the daunting challenges, Brittany Cox radiates a powerful hope, rooted in a fundamental belief in human connection. "At our core, humans care about each other," she muses. "We're more connected than ever before, and with that connection comes power. We can demand better, innovate together, and turn awareness into action."

Her final message to every dental leader is a potent call to embrace their own agency: ***"You are the change. Your voice matters. Be bold. Be loud. Challenge the norm—that's how innovation is born."***



DEN TE



www.dentemagazine.com