



The Loyal Family

Three generations later, this patient-dentist relationship is going strong

Among those who have experienced the phenomenon of love at first sight is John Group, a 59-year-old mechanic who found his forever love all the way back in the first grade and wasted no time acting on his instant attraction.

That's not true. I just saw you not too long ago and you don't need to have any fillings replaced."

Melinda then learned of Dr. Patel from a co-worker. "I give him a try, and I really liked him," she says. "Back then, he was a one-man show, doing everything himself, and I found him to be such a fine man that we've stayed with him ever since."

After Melinda went to Dr. Patel, John made an appointment.

made his first dental appointment with Dr. Patel," Melinda reports.

"Our relationship with the Group family is how we want our relationship with all our patients to be," says Dr. Jayraj J. Patel. "We want to know them as patients, but we also want them to feel as if they are members of a larger family."

"Our primary focus is on providing exceptional dental care, and we also want our patients to know that we care about what's happening in their personal life and that we're here to accommodate their needs in any way that we can. When a patient has a more personal relationship with their dentist, they're more comfortable expressing their needs and are more apt to keep regular appointments. That naturally leads to better oral health."

Of course, a strong patient-dentist relationship can only be forged if the dentist consistently provides excellent care and personal attention. Melinda says that's never a problem at DeLand Implant Dentistry, and "that's helped us get through all those years with the girls getting extractions prior to braces and things like that."

Melinda says those qualities are why her daughter Erica took Russ to DeLand Implant Dentistry. That first visit was designed to make her son comfortable with a dentist.

"When we have a very young child come in for their first dental visit, we usually let them sit in a parent's lap, and we let them touch and feel some of the instruments we use for cleaning," the older Dr. Patel explains. We then see if they'll let us have a look around inside their mouth to check for any major problems that need to be addressed. It's all about making the child comfortable, establishing a personal relationship and trust."

Melinda says Dr. Patel has done a "great job establishing that trust, maintaining our family's teeth and teaching us to maintain them ourselves."

She sees the same qualities with the younger Dr. Patel.

"I really like him as well," Melinda says. "He's got a different personality than his uncle, but the level of care and personal attention is the same. They're all really great people and we appreciate all that they've done for us and our family."

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Russ Kiel, seated in his mother Erica's lap, is the third generation of the Group family to be treated by Dr. Patel.

"He said, *No, no, no, no; those fillings are fine,*" John remembers. "A sacred trust was developed during that visit because I knew I could trust him, and our relationship has grown ever since. And do you know that, to this day, I have not had one of those fillings replaced."

All in the Family

Dr. Patel no longer runs a one-man show. His nephew, Jayraj J. Patel, DMD, recently joined DeLand Implant Dentistry, where they now treat three generations of the Group family.

"It was natural for us to have our daughters go to Dr. Patel for their dental care, and our daughter Erica made sure when her son, Russ, turned 1 that she

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Rajiv Patel, BDS, MDS, and Jayraj J. Patel, DMD, are known for their exceptional, caring attitude toward their patients and work. They are committed to delivering the most advanced, personalized dental care while offering patients a uniquely satisfying experience. Along with the staff of DeLand Implant Dentistry, they welcome new patients and any questions concerning their range of dental services, including cleaning and preventive care, sedation methods, and cosmetic, restorative, prosthetic and implant dentistry. For an appointment, call or visit the office in DeLand in the Spring Oaks Professional Center:

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DELAND IMPLANT DENTISTRY
RAJIV PATEL, BDS, MDS
JAYRAJ J. PATEL, DMD

As his reward for a cavity-free checkup at the dentist one day, John chose from a children's treasure chest a plastic ring that he took to school the next day and placed in the pencil tray of Melinda Whitten's desk.

"What can I say? I had moves even back then," John says with a chuckle.

The rest of John and Melinda's love story has played out like a matinee on the Hallmark Channel. The couple drifted apart during high school, when John took one path as a partying football player and Melinda took another as a "good grades, cheerleader type."

But while growing up in Sherrill, New York (population 3,071), their families remained close, and John and Melinda found each other again a few years later after both returned home for Christmas, John on leave from the Navy and Melinda from college.


"I think it was the uniform that Melinda found attractive," John suggests. "She was just exceptional, and by then I'd figured out that if I wanted her in my life, I was going to have to change my ways, which I had. We started dating after that."

John and Melinda married two years later, on July 4, 1986. The couple moved to Florida a few years later after John was transferred to the Navy's Pinecastle Range Complex in the Ocala National Forest.


When John got out of the Navy, he and Melinda decided to stay in Florida and raise their family. In doing so, they developed another relationship that has withstood the test of time, with Rajiv Patel, BDS, MDS, of DeLand Implant Dentistry.

"Shortly after we first came to this area, I went to a dentist for a regular checkup, and right away he started telling me how I needed to have six or seven fillings replaced," John remembers. "I was like, *What in the world is he talking about?* So, I called up my old dentist back in New York and asked him what he thought, and he said,

Membership at DeLand Implant Dentistry
DeLand Implant Dentistry offers a membership program for individuals and families. Member benefits include free cleanings, access to prime appointment times, same-day emergency care and reduced fees for any dental work, with no limit on total treatment discounts. For more information, call (386) 738-2006.



Rajiv Patel, BDS, MDS, has practiced general dentistry in DeLand for more than 30 years. He is board-certified in implant dentistry through his designation as a diplomate of the American Board of Oral Implantology/Implant Dentistry. Additionally, he is a fellow of the American Academy of Implant Dentistry and International Congress of Oral Implantologists. He is one of the select few general dentists certified to administer IV sedation in a dental office. He is a member of the Florida Dental Association, American Dental Association and Florida Dental Society of Anesthesiology.



Jayraj J. Patel, DMD, has been practicing general dentistry since graduating from the University of Florida College of Dentistry. His goal is to deliver comprehensive, compassionate care to his patients in a caring, comfortable and professional environment. He strives to provide advanced, personalized and complete care to each patient using the latest dental technologies and treatment modalities, with an aim to build a long-term relationship based on trust, respect and friendship. Dr. Patel has extensive training in dental implant therapy through comprehensive courses such as the AAID MaxiCourse from Augusta University Dental College of Georgia and the Comprehensive Implant Continuum from Implant Educators. He is a fellow of the International Congress of Oral Implantologists, an associate fellow of the American Academy of Implant Dentistry, a fellow of the Academy of General Dentistry, and is pursuing his board certification from the American Board of Oral Implantology/Implant Dentistry.

For detailed information about DeLand Implant Dentistry, visit www.delandimplants.com