

An 'Apology' Letter: A Patient Speaks from the Heart

Dear Dr. Haddad,

For the well over twenty years I have been a patient of Rochester Advanced Dentistry. Over those many years, you have given me the annual, "You really need an occlusal guard, you are grinding your teeth down to a nub" speech. This conversation went nowhere. Then there were the questions regarding my sleeping habits, "Did I sleep well," "no" I would reply. "Do you have jaw and neck pain?" "Yes" I would say. "Any history of heart attacks in your family?" "Yes," I sadly answered, "my Dad died at the age of 45, my brother at the age of 44."

Next, you brought in the big guns, you insisted (actually, gently suggested) that I take home a sleep apnea monitor. The results of the test showed that not only was I grinding my teeth, but I was snoring most of the night and had indeed stopped breathing several times in the night! Now you had me right where you wanted me; you hit me with statistics of

heart attacks and their relation to snoring and sleep apnea. Still, I fought off the notion of paying for a piece of plastic that I would reluctantly shove into my mouth nightly.

I completely ignored the fact that this device would: 1. Save my teeth (which were now noticeably being ground down) and 2. Would stop my snoring, help me to sleep better, and possibly stave off a heart attack. I waved you off and dismissed you like I had for years, "No thanks, Doc," I replied. I thought to myself, "Who do I think I am, paying such a high price for a device that could save my life?" "Let me just show this thing to you, you won't believe how small it is!" you and my beloved hygienist, Beth sang to me. I huffed, and looked at it. To my amazement, the sleep appliance looked nothing like the Hannibal Lecter device I had imagined! It was indeed small, Beth showed me how the device worked, clearing the airway so I would stop snoring, as well as breathing through the night, so I would no longer wake myself up gagging and gasping for air. "I'll think about it," I muttered.

I've known Beth for close to 20 years as a patient, neighbor and friend. She even trusted me to babysit her children! As she began to banter on about the appliance, she said something that finally and completely caught my attention. "You know," she said, "one of my male patients lost 20 pounds since he started using his sleep appliance." NOW I WAS INTERESTED! Beth began to tell me that her patient had more energy during the day, and was burning all the stored energy from finally getting a good night's sleep. He had changed his eating habits because he was no longer hungry.

I was intrigued, with much embarrassment I admit (in addition to the very good points you were making), what really got me to pay attention was the fact that this device might help me to lose weight. Within a month, I had my own sleep appliance. So, now here it comes, what you've probably been patiently waiting for over the last two years, an apology letter.

I write to you today to say that since using my device, I have lost 20 pounds absolutely effortlessly. I sleep much better, I no longer nap, I feel better, I move better. When people notice my weight loss (and believe me,

they notice!) and beg to know how I did it, I very honestly and enthusiastically tell them about your practice and the wonderful device. My apologies for doubting you. To be honest, it does take some time to get use to it, but the results have been wonderful. I sleep better, have fewer headaches, and no longer keep the whole house awake with my snoring. By retaking the sleep apnea test, it showed that I no longer stopped breathing during the night. Then something I had hoped for actually happened, I was losing weight! By getting a good night's sleep, my body was actually using all my stored up energy

to burn off fat during the day. I actually changed the way I ate because I no longer ate to stay awake and keep moving, I ate only when I was hungry. Any physical activity I partook in resulted in a longer, leaner more toned body. My family physician is thrilled with my results (she of course merits her "diet and exercise" regimen!). You've known me for well over ten years and you know I don't mince words, so I felt it only appropriate to tell you, YOU WERE RIGHT! I am a completely different person since "giving in to you" and purchasing the sleep appliance you're always writing about in the paper.

Incidentally, it turns out my life and ensuing lifestyle are well worth the price of the sleep appliance. With the help of your support staff, I was able to apply to Care Credit which allowed me to make interest free payments over a year's time! Win, Win, Win.

Thanks to you and your wonderful staff for your patience with me.

Signed,
One very happy, very rested, and 20 pound lighter patient.

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Jeffrey S. Haddad D.D.S. of Doolin & Haddad Advanced Dentistry completed his dental education at the University of Michigan in 2001. Dr. Haddad is a fellow of the prestigious Las Vegas Institute for Advanced Dental Studies. He lectures nationally on cosmetic dentistry, TMJ disorders and practice management. For more information, visit www.rochesteradvanceddentistry.com.



Dentally Speaking
by
Jeffrey S. Haddad