

The Power of Reciprocity: How Surgeons Can Lead with Generosity

In oral and maxillofacial surgery, technical precision earns respect, but radical generosity builds enduring professional bonds. Drawing from principles in John Ruhlin's *Beyond Giftology*, surgeons who master reciprocity focus on giving value freely without keeping score or expecting anything in return. This approach transforms referral relationships into something deeper and more sustainable, centered on trust and genuine care.

Surgeons who embody this mindset prioritize consistent, thoughtful communication. They go beyond basic reports to share useful insights that help referring doctors navigate complex cases. A quick call to discuss treatment rationale or post operative considerations shows investment in the patient's overall journey. These acts of generosity accumulate, positioning the surgeon as a true partner in care.

Education offers another powerful avenue. Many successful surgeons freely share knowledge through informal discussions, brief case reviews, or study clubs. By explaining nuances in timing or planning, they equip general practitioners with tools that improve outcomes. This is a natural extension of wanting colleagues to succeed.

Thoughtful follow through reinforces the principle. Ensuring smooth transitions, remaining available for questions, and celebrating progress demonstrate care beyond the procedure.

Small gestures like personalized notes create moments that strengthen connections.

Ruhlin emphasizes systems supporting ongoing generosity through mentoring or reliable presence. Surgeons who adopt this often contribute to education efforts, elevating standards in the community. The focus remains on service because it is the right thing to do.

At its heart, this reciprocity is about leading with open hands. Surgeons who practice it commit to being reliable colleagues. Over time, this creates practices known for collaboration, where relationships deepen organically.

The surgeons who make the greatest impact quietly live out generosity, building reputations that draw strong partnerships naturally.

Principles like those in *Beyond Giftology* remind us that giving without expectation yields meaningful results. This surgeon led approach shapes referral networks rooted in trust and excellent patient care.

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