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## Small details can make a great difference

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*"Discovery is seeing what everyone else saw and thinking what no one thought."*

*Albert von Szent-Györgyi (1893-1986, Hungary, Nobel Prize in Medicine in 1937  
for his discoveries on cell respiration, vitamin C, and chemistry of muscle contraction)*

It is not my intention to teach you how to become "the best hair transplant surgeon," but rather to present some of the small details that I have collected over the years, some of which originated in our clinic and some that I learned from colleagues during my visits to their clinics. I have included the physician's name in parentheses following the pearl that I learned from them so that they are credited for their hard work. I can certainly say that in my visits I always learned some new detail to enhance my ability as a hair transplant surgeon.

### Service Excellence

I remember once that I was in a very small hotel here in Brazil. I had arrived around 11 p.m. and went directly to bed. When I awoke the next morning, every employee at the hotel knew my name—at breakfast, at the pool, at the bar. Everyone addressed me saying, "How are you Mr. Antonio? How was last night? Are you enjoying your stay?" I was quite impressed. While the employee from reception might have seen my room number on the key so he would know the guest staying there is "Antonio," how did the others know my name? I also remember that when I was in the pool area or on the beach, they would bring me cold water with mint and lemon slices. The lesson here is that they did not wait until I made a request; they just observed and anticipated my need.

This is "Service Excellence," something so critical today that there is a 2-year MBA program just to teach it. To make an analogy, we are not "a big hotel corporation," but rather more like a bed and breakfast, and yet still I think we can provide this service excellence to our patients. In my clinic, this idea is promoted in the following ways:

1. Every member of my staff must know the patient's name. Before the surgery begins, all team members go to the pre-op room to introduce themselves and their function on the team. We also ask what name or nickname the patient prefers to be called.
2. It is important that we anticipate the patient's needs: Should we wait until a patient says that he is not comfortable during the procedure or until he says that his donor region is hurting? Or until he says that he is thirsty or experiencing neck discomfort? Wouldn't it be much better to ask him every 15 minutes or half hour if he is comfortable or if something might be bothering him? A patient might not complain until we ask him, but this same patient will relate this "check in on" positively when describing his hair transplant experience to others. For many years, we have been giving an evaluation form to all of our patients and I am always surprised by some of the comments and suggestions given. To get feedback, I suggest you do the same: provide a simple evaluation form with a space at the end where the patient can write additional comments.

### Patient Consultation

When the patient is inside the consultation room we use a program that personalizes the institutional and educational video, beginning with "Good afternoon, Mr. Smith. Welcome to the Ruston Clinic." It

**There's still  
time to register!**

