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Solutions

NO SHORTCUTS TO EXCELLENCE

An Interview with Dr. Adamo Notarantonio and Dr. Amanda Seay

Adamo Notarantonio, DDS, FAACD, is an AACD Accredited Fellow and AACD Accreditation Chairman. He specializes in CAD/CAM, implant, cosmetic, and composite dentistry, as well as dental photography. Amanda Seay, DDS, FAACD, is a clinical instructor at the Kois Center and an AACD Accredited Fellow. She specializes in the art and techniques of esthetic and restorative dentistry and owns a private practice focused on comprehensive restorative care.

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Introduction

In this interview, Drs. Notarantonio and Seay answer questions from members of the *JCD* Editorial Review Board relating to their headlining presentation scheduled for AACD 2021 Rockies, titled, *imPRESions... Our Journeys Through the Wonderful World of Esthetics*. It will take place on Friday, April 17, 2021, at the Gaylord Rockies in Aurora, Colorado. Registration is opening soon.

Q: How did your teaching partnership begin? What are your similarities and differences in terms of personalities and teaching styles?

A: Dr. Notarantonio: Well, we obviously knew of each other but had never actually met. We happened to sit next to each other at an ASDA meeting, and started talking and admiring each other's work. A few months later we were both taking a photography course in Florida and decided to do a lecture together. Later that year we gave a one-day hands-on composite artistry course in Charleston and it went over very well. Not long after that, *imPRES* was born. As far as differences in personalities and teaching styles, I'll let Amanda answer that!

Dr. Seay: I truly wasn't looking for a teaching partner. Not that I didn't want one, I simply never really thought about it; I was just searching for a way to teach differently and better. I was traveling and teaching to different study clubs and organizations, meeting dentists from all over and usually would not see them again. There was no opportunity to follow up and learn how they were implementing what I'd taught them. I also didn't like the stress of going to an unfamiliar venue and sometimes having a workshop not set up the way I wanted. When Adamo and I had the idea to just do a one-day course and see how it went we had no idea what would come of it. When we were done with that first course, we realized that we could fulfill our dream of being able to educate, but on our terms. And because most of the attendees already followed us on social media, the connection and relationships were almost immediate, and they were asking when we would do the next course!

As far as personalities and teaching styles we couldn't be more different, yet our styles complement one another. I'm highly analytical and like to (overly) plan everything I do, which sometimes hinders me from making progress because I feel the need to consume more data than necessary. Adamo helps push me along; he's good at making things happen quickly and efficiently.



Q: The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about a new "normal" for patients and clinicians alike. How has this affected the way you practice and educate?

A: Dr. Notarantonio: Except for new measures like barriers at the front desk, surgically assisted air units, and a virtual waiting room, my office has always practiced safety at the highest level. We also have been doing minimally invasive, single-visit dentistry for years. Not only have we not seen a decline in patients' desire for comprehensive dentistry, we actually have seen an increase. As far as COVID affecting how we teach, I don't think it will have as much impact on our courses as it would on a large meeting such as the AACD conference because our class size is small, fewer than 30 participants. They already wore gloves and masks pre-pandemic, and of course, we now provide hand sanitizer. We are going to speak to the hotel about other measures but aside from taking temperatures daily I don't think we will be impacted greatly.

Dr. Seay: I agree. The only thing that has changed is how I see patients but not what treatment plan I decide to do. Most of my patients are already comfortable being in the dental environment, so the pandemic does not stop them from moving forward with the most ideal treatment plan. I do emphasize taking care of active conditions that are time-sensitive and still recommend that patients move forward as soon as they can to avoid bigger problems that could ensue.

Q: Your educational presentations have become very popular. What have you learned about yourselves so far? Long term, how do you plan on continuing to give back to our field?

A: **Dr. Notarantonio:** I think we both knew we were good educators and enjoyed it. That doesn't always mean that two people who are good at what they do can work together, but we realized that we have a special bond and teamwork. Regarding the long term, I don't think we plan on ever stopping! We built impRES from the ground up and the vision is that it will be around for a long time.

Dr. Seay: I'm still amazed at how we seem to have grown overnight. The most rewarding part is the people that have become a part of our circle—we get to see their growth and how they progress on their journey. In the past most of my lectures were transactional holds, and I rarely had the opportunity to get to know the participants. I don't know what the future holds, but I know that we'll always keep trying to give back the best we can through continual improvement and by getting to know our audience better.

Q: When you look back to the beginning of your career, what would you change or do differently?

A: **Dr. Notarantonio:** For one thing, I wish Amanda and I had met sooner. Also, earlier in my career I wasn't an experienced enough clinician or teacher to deliver the treatment and education that I feel I can now. I don't think, however, that I would have done anything differently.

Dr. Seay: I feel the same way, but you don't know what you don't know. Having a partner like Adamo has given me the confidence I needed to believe I could accomplish something like this. When I look back on my career, I'm grateful that I invested a tremendous amount of time and money into my education. I do wish I would have done the same from a business perspective—hiring the right consultant and a personal coach can really change the trajectory of your practice and help you enjoy what you do much more.



Q: What can the audience expect from your presentation at AACD 2021 Rockies?

A: **Dr. Notarantonio:** As always, Amanda and I will try to be as real as possible and give a presentation that is not corporate-driven, but rather, visually stunning and of the highest educational level possible. We'll share "pearls" that have become proven staples in our everyday arsenals. From smile design to isolation and bonding and composite artistry, we'll demonstrate key sequences that allow us to deliver esthetic excellence daily.

Dr. Seay: I want others to know that they can do it, too—that with persistence, grit, and passion they can accomplish things they never thought possible. The journey may not be easy, but even if you aim high and miss, you'll still be further along than if you didn't try at all. And we want everyone to have fun!



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Q: Finally, what brief advice can you offer readers about the current practice of esthetic dentistry?

A: **Dr. Notarantonio:** There are no shortcuts to excellence. It takes a lot of time and hard work. “Natural talent” is overrated, and the difference between experts in their field and the average person reflects a lifelong effort of deliberate practice in a specific domain. In dentistry, excellence comes from involvement in organizations like the AACD, participation in top-quality CE, and plenty of practice

Dr. Seay: Great dentistry is much harder to do than merely good dentistry. You can take all the CE you want but you must put it into practice and implement what you learn. It is through failures, not successes, that you will grow. You need to keep trying!

The jCD thanks Dr. Notarantonio and Dr. Seay for their time and willingness to share their thoughts with our readers.

Editor’s Note: Dr. Notarantonio’s clinical work is shown on pages 13 and 15. Dr. Seay’s clinical work is shown on page 14.