

Crossing the Threshold: Rituals to Make Your Spa a True Departure from the Ordinary, Part II

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In Part I, we talked about the guest experience and a few processional items to create a true sense of arrival at your spa, including pausing as part of the spa journey, implementing rituals to usher your guests into a relaxing state, and creating special differentiators. Now, I would like to share some concepts and best practices to help foster a quiet place to heal your healers.

In the real world, most people run out of their homes after completing a series of frantic tasks, such as preparing breakfast for their families and getting children ready for school; then, they maneuver through traffic and finally arrive to work with a caffeine overdose. Our therapists and support teams are first, people, then spa professionals. As people, it is extremely hard to jump from one world to another. In many ways, the spa experience is very intimate and physical. There's a tremendous aspect of trust and touch involved. If we really understand the *raison d'être* behind the spa experience, we should also know there is an important spiritual and energy connection with the healer. For this same reason, we cannot afford to have a stressed healer trying to heal. It isn't fair for the client, and it isn't good for the therapist either. Helping your team to leave the mundane out of the spa could completely change the culture and atmosphere of your location.

Before we start, let me remind you of the obvious: This can't be just a trial exercise. Trying to enhance your spa's culture has to be taken seriously and executed under one condition: Whatever you do, do it every day, even if you are away or busy. Make sure whatever you implement goes on with or without you. Here are some ideas:

Establish "Me Moment" Gathering (formally called the Pre-shift Meeting)

Every morning have very short 5-10 minute gatherings with your team. This is not a regular staff meeting--this is a time to do the following:

---A brief breathing exercise, 1-5 deep inhales and exhales. (I promise you will have a good laugh the first time you do this.)

---A gentle reminder to leave negative thoughts behind. Let the spa be the refuge from the mundane.

---A simple thought about why we do what we do--heal and make people feel better. Obviously, we can't do that in a bad mood or preoccupied with worrisome thoughts. (At Canyon Ranch, we used to read comments guests wrote in a journal placed in the relaxation/waiting room area. Some of them were very touching and incredibly thoughtful.)

---Share positive successes, such as spa goals, a top seller, or client compliments

---Share a positive thought or affirmation. Ask your team to alternate and bring one each day.

Note: Remember, the most successful teams--from corporate America to the NBA--all share one thing in common: One goal. One vision. And then, reputation. Build yours.

Furnish A Quiet Place

If you're fortunate enough to have space for a break room, invest in it. If your team is normally cramped into a tiny space with very little décor, make it feel homey and relaxing, but make sure you aren't playing the same music you have in your treatment rooms. Invest in nice books, industry publications, and some pop culture magazines. If you can, invest in an ionic fan. The most important piece of advice: Keep it clean, uncluttered, and avoid TV (unless you use it for training). Many places offer free WI-FI for their teams, but restrict the use of cell phones and anything that could be disturbing to others.

Teach Meditation

I don't know any spa school in the US where therapists are taught any form of meditation technique. Bringing a meditation instructor to your facility will definitely pay dividends with your team. Meditation is normally practiced twice a day for fifteen minutes. You can always encourage everyone to invest in it before coming to work or during breaks.

Invest in Biofeedback

With today's technologies becoming more and more affordable, look into biofeedback software or a stand-alone piece of equipment. These incredible tools could lower stress levels and quench some of those emotional episodes that could affect your spa's mood.

As I mentioned before, these are just a few recommendations for you to adopt when trying to create your own "Spa Threshold". Not only will your team enjoy the benefits, but your business will also grow by way of customer retention plus something you can't buy anywhere: a good aura.

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