

Is there life **after** dental practice ownership?

Dentists often put off selling their practices because they are concerned about life after dentistry.

What will they do with all those extra hours, how will they cope with leaving behind the identity that has defined them for decades? This series of articles explores the very busy lives of some of Practice Sale Search's clients, former practice owners who have embraced post-sale life.

Name: Raoul Harrison
Age: I was 59 when I sold
Graduated: 1983 Melb Uni
Practice Owned: Mornington Peninsula VIC

Brief Career Summary:

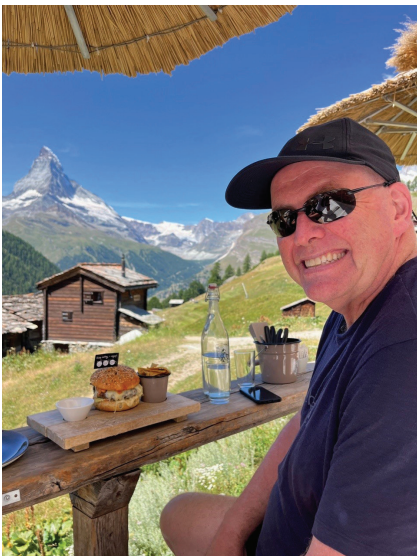
I grew up in Sandringham, but had always loved the Mornington Peninsula and thought it would be a nice place to work.

After graduation, I worked in the area as employee dentist for four years before I bought into my practice. In 1988 I decided to separate from my associate, so I took my part of the practice and relocated into a separate building that was already set up as medical/dental rooms.

We had three chairs and were open five days a week, with three dentists, including me, and one full-time hygienist.

Why did you decide to sell?

I realised that I was working too hard and was too stressed. I didn't have a practice manager; I was doing all the admin stuff,



dealing with staff issues, bureaucracy. I had no time for hobbies, travel or exercise.

I had recently seen friends and acquaintances getting cancer and dying. Watching the mortality of other people makes you realise you don't want to work forever. I was asking myself, "Why am I still doing this?"

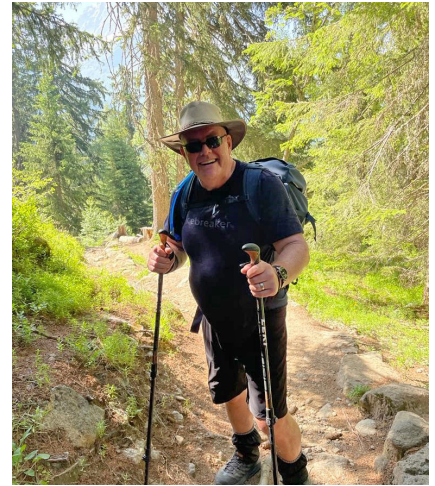
I couldn't think of what I was waiting for and decided it was time to sell.

Tell us about life post sale

I had always wanted to have a caravan, but it just wasn't feasible, I needed to be contactable and available for the business. Taking long holidays was always an issue and seemed to be on hold when I ran my practice.

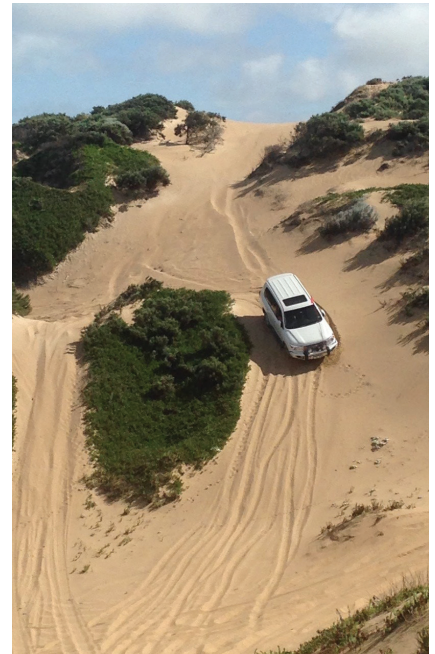
That has all changed since I sold.

We just spent three months in Europe, where we did a tour de Mont Blanc hike. I have been able to get back into bike riding and mountain biking, dirt motorbike riding, track riding, hiking, 4-wheel driving,



caravanning ... I have become fitter and have lost 17kg.

I still work as a dentist one day a week. I like that balance of that in my life. I might increase to two days a week next year. But I can also take winter off and have another holiday next year.



If I had any advice:

If someone is approaching retirement, they need to make sure they have an identity outside of dentistry. I always saw dentistry as work, it never defined me. I am the father, husband, brother, motorbike rider first.

So many people are ready to sell, but they don't know what else there is in life, they are scared to find out what is on the other side of that transaction. In my experience, you don't realise how much stress and pressure you have in your life until it is removed. ♦