

This interview will be about 'Extraction,' 'Cavitation,' 'Silver' linings, and I'm sure a few 'Gold' nuggets will be discovered as we 'root' our way to a 'Crowning' achievement.

While most of that may sound painful it really will not be, and if you were to experience any of that (no, not the puns. Sorry. No cure for that.) while seated in a Dentist's chair, let's hope that you can be fortunate enough to be in the skilled care of a Board-Certified Dentist like Dr. Rebecca Roumayah.

Rebecca is (already obvious) a Dentist that has a practice in Belmont, Michigan, but she also has done work at The Grand Rapids Home for Veterans. Rebecca earned her degree in Dentistry from The University of Detroit Mercy School of Dentistry.

Her office website: www.englishandroumayahfamilydentistry.com

I was fortunate enough to work with Rebecca and would sometimes spend a lunch break with her and (Jamie) a Dental Assistant at the Vets Home. We would walk to a nearby eatery called Too-Talls and talk about everything from food, tv shows, siblings and sometimes, yep: Dentistry, but I remember Rebecca talking about growing up in another country and then moving to the U.S. when she was in middle school and what that transition was like.

Rebecca Roumayah is an interesting person, but modest, especially when talking about her accomplishments and she has an affinity for Nut Crackers, so on that note...let's get crackin'!

TS: Thank You for taking time to do this interview. I think I will start off with a bit of getting to know your background. Where did you grow up, and did you experience culture shock, or was that minimalized due to being young?

RR: I moved from Rugby, England to West Bloomfield, Michigan when I was 11 years old. Most people assumed that I did not experience culture shock, partly due to my age, but mostly because of the common language and the close relationship between England and the US. The cultures however are quite different and even the languages at times. There was a huge learning curve. Common fashion, food, music, and hobbies were different from my normal.

TS: As time when on you became acclimated to American Culture, but do you recall any moments that made you realize that America was much different than the country you came from, and do you still have those OMG moments where it the cultural thing hits you?

RR: The things that stand out to me the most are language related. Everyone and anyone introducing me to another person would say, 'This is Rebecca, she's from London.' The American equivalent would be to tell someone that I'm from Washington when I'm a Michigander. I also once put my hand up in class and asked the teacher for a rubber, that was awkward (British English: Rubber=Eraser, US English: Rubber=Condom). I still say things every now and again that aren't commonplace in the US, but I know where all the landmines are now.

TS: Okay, we drilled down far enough into your family background, we can cap that. How about if we root around and discover your desire to become a Dentist, and I promise I will not drill any more puns into this interview. So, what was the influence for you to become a Dentist? Spit it out.

RR: My father was a physician and as a little girl I idolized him and wanted to be just like him, so naturally I wanted to be a physician too. I asked my dad for a job in his clinic, but he said I needed to be certified first. At 14 years old I became a certified medical assistant and as promised, my dad gave me a job. After a couple of years, I realized this was not what I wanted to do with my life and told my Dad I was quitting. He said I needed to have a new job lined up first. I accepted his terms, quit on the spot, and walked down the street to my uncle's dental practice. When my uncle asked what I was doing there, I stated, 'I work here now.' My Uncle graciously agreed, and it changed my life. I absolutely loved working there. Every procedure was so interesting to me, I knew within a few months that I wanted to become a dentist.

TS: Well, I guess this next topic cannot be ignored, especially in the medical field: how has the invention, or I should say intervention of COVID changed the way you perform your job? It seems like it would have drastic implications on what you do.

RR: To be honest I don't feel as if the COVID pandemic has changed my job at all. There are differences of course. I wear a higher-level mask and leave it on all day, our attire is different and there's a hospital grade air purifier in every room, but dentistry has always required a high level of sterilization. Dentistry is so familiar with PPE's that I was not hard to implement a few new protocols. I feel very lucky that we still get to show up to an office every day, interact with co-workers and interact with our patients.

TS: Do you have any thoughts, or long-term projections/predictions regarding the implications from the pandemic as it concerns the medical profession in general?

RR: I do think many of the changes and new procedures will be permanent, especial in the medical and dental fields. I also think virtual appointments will really expand and make some things a little easier. It's hard to think about that fact that some of the changes are good things when no one likes this pandemic and most hate change, but there will be some good things to come out of it.

TS: When I worked with you were a Dentist for The Veterans home in Grand Rapids, Michigan. What was/is your favorite part about being there, and how did you become involved with working at the Vets Home?

RR: I answered an email ad for a dentist needed once a week, which I thought was the perfect thing to do with my day off. My favorite thing about the Vet's home was talking to all the Veteran's. I love hearing about their lives and their stories.

TS: Okay, we will lighten things up here. Are there any tools of the trade that you currently use that are simply awesome and is your "secret weapon" or there's one that hasn't been developed yet that should be?

RR: That's a tough one. I wouldn't call it a secret weapon, but I love my Seri-Saw. It is a teeny-tiny saw, and I just think it's so cute. It's belongs in a doll house garage or something. Also, it's very handy if you have two teeth stuck together.

TS: If you were not Dentist, what would be your alternate career path?

RR: Astronaut. Most people think I'm kidding about that, but that was my plan before I discovered I love dentistry. I've always been fascinated by flight and space.

TS: I've been doing good with the puns, but there is something I do know about you that is nutty – in a good way- you like nut crackers. The kind that look-like soldiers, not the cold, silver kind that are V-shaped. What is it about the Soldier style nutcracker that appeals to you, what made you start collecting them?

RR: No good story here. I just love them, no clue why. I find them so interesting and beautiful.

TS: This is the confessional part of the interview: Have you been to the Nutcracker Museum in Leavenworth, Washington? (<https://www.nutcrackermuseum.com/>)

RR: I haven't, and I didn't know about it, but I need to go there!

TS: Okay, and here it is, the big question: There is a myth-like team that refers to themselves as "Seal team 7", Rebecca, would you be willing to confirm that you were a part of that elite force that once performed a perfectly executed daytime rescue mission, even though your hand was clamped down on by some large wooden teeth. (Oops. I blew your cover.)

RR: I cannot confirm or deny any secret missions or even the existence of such an elite team. What I can say is that I have had all different types of teeth clamp down on my hand, and there is a Nutcracker alive somewhere with a very good story to tell.

TS: And there you have it, readers. Rebecca Roumayah; Dentist and Nut-Cracker enthusiast.

(See? that didn't hurt a bit, did it?)