



Ten Tips (in no particular order) for Developing Your Authentic Private Practice by Ker Cleary, M.A.



1. **Exist** - Have a business card, a place of business and a business phone and email. You need to exist and be reachable for people to utilize your skills and services.
2. **Talk about it** - Talking about your work is not “self-promotion.” You are not the product! Think about all the people who need your services. What good does it do them if you are hard to find? Practice telling people about your work and handing out your business card.
3. **Share the wealth** - There is enough work for everyone. Build your referral base by referring to other practitioners and asking them to refer to you. Know who your ideal client is, so that you know who to refer out and so colleagues know who to send your way. Don’t work with people you are not able to serve well.
4. **Know yourself** - Know your strengths and capitalize on them. You are allowed to tailor your practice to what you love to do. Be honest about who you want to work with. This is authenticity.
5. **Keep your boundaries** - Know your policies and limits. Be clear on which hours you work and how much you charge, for instance. Good boundaries mean never having to resent a client.
6. **Open your heart** - Let your work flow from self-trust. Let your clients touch your heart. Be grateful for your abilities and the opportunity to share them.
7. **Get support** - Ask for help and feedback from colleagues, friends and family. If you don’t have colleagues, find ways to generate them. Call other practitioners, invite them out for tea, start a consultation group, have a potluck. One of the quickest routes to burnout is isolation. See #3.
8. **Aim for what you want** - Set concrete, measurable goals, break them down into small steps, and map the steps out on a calendar. “Increase client load and income” is not measurable. “Add two new ideal, full-pay clients this month” is measurable, as is “Increase gross income by \$250 over the next two months.” Develop a plan, and have a deadline. Be realistic, be optimistic, ask for help. Be brave and creative. Dare to make a cold call, write a letter, take a class, ask for help, ask for referrals. Make a list of all the ways you could share your work with the world, and pick one. Do it. Refuse projects that won’t bring you closer to your goals, no matter how great they seem.
9. **Walk your talk** - Take exceptionally good care of yourself, and your entire life. Private practice is often stressful. Taking your own good advice - using the stress reduction techniques you share with clients, for example - will influence how well or poorly your business runs.
10. **Relax** - Flexibility and patience will take you farther than fear and trying to control everything. You have the rest of your life to develop your work. It does not all need to happen this week.
11. **Bonus tip: Integrity is powerful** - Design everything you do for your business in the spirit of your work. Think of your marketing tools - newsletters, ads, business cards - as opportunities to benefit others, not just yourself. Communicate in a way that gives a gift to the world each time.