



**GROWING UP AS** the exceptionally bright and assertive daughter of a gregarious Lebanese dentist, Dr. Joyce Bassett remembers her father often saying what he regarded as a good-natured jab: “What are ya, stupid?”

Certainly not: Dr. Bassett, who graduated from high school at age 16 and finished dental school at 23, just wrapped up a year serving as the first female president of the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentists. She’s now eager to return to focusing full-time on her patients, her Occlusion II students at the Kois Center in Seattle and the international audiences of female dental professionals to whom she often speaks.

An ardent mountain climber, Dr. Bassett credits her dad’s old line with instilling in her the drive to want to be the best. “There’s always something to learn from every person around you,” she says. “I always want to do better because I can then help other people be better.”

That sense of purpose has taken her in recent years to Japan, Romania, Australia and more for speaking engagements. Her talks typically begin with a rapid-fire introduction to her straightforward, honest style: She shares a story about failure.

Dr. Bassett was one of few women pursuing cosmetic dentistry when it first began to distinguish itself with certification classes in the early 1990s. It was difficult to fit in amid the male-dominated certification system, and she struggled to pass the AACD accreditation test, ultimately taking it seven times. Her message to women: It’s not a big deal to fail. “I would never have developed the character or backbone to move into the future if I didn’t have obstacles,” she tells her audiences. “From failing, you learn how to fix the process.”

Dr. Bassett herself is Exhibit A: She’s now an AACD accredited fellow and an adjunct professor at the University of Arizona in addition to her duties at Kois. And no, she’s not slowing down, with a goal to reopen Women Teaching Women, a facility she established over a decade ago for women who feel they learn better from female instructors. “My goal in life right now,” she says, “is to inspire and ignite women.” ■

# CLINICAL EXPERTISE

“I always want to do better.

My goal in life right now is to inspire and ignite women.”



# DR. JOYCE BASSETT

DDS, FAACD, FAGD

**Age**  
56

**Practice**  
Smiles by Joyce, Scottsdale, Arizona

**Specialty**  
General and cosmetic dentistry

