

Pass It On®...

Surgery Without Anesthetic?!

Before the mid-1800s, surgery was performed without painkillers. That is, if you were brave enough to even opt for surgery. Then came along William T. Morton, a dentist who was troubled by the pain his patients felt and set out to do something about it.

Imagine going to the dentist knowing you are in for a lot of pain — without anesthesia. And imagine being a dentist who sees people in pain every day and can't do anything about it. William T. Morton decided that there must be a way to numb the pain without harming patients, and he set out to find it.

Driven by his curiosity and compassion, Morton began exploring ways to numb pain during medical procedures. He had moved on to more complicated surgeries, and more distressed patients. He threw himself into research and experimentation, which led him to ether, a substance that was occasionally mentioned in scientific circles but had never been harnessed for medical use on a large scale.

Morton's big moment came on October 16, 1846, at Massachusetts General Hospital. In front of a skeptical audience of surgeons, Morton administered ether to Edward Gilbert Abbott, who needed surgery to remove a neck tumor. As the procedure commenced, the room fell silent — not due to fear or uncertainty, but in awe of the fact that Abbott showed no signs of distress or pain. Morton's surgery and demonstration of anesthesia were a triumph, earning him a place in medical history.

As with any pioneer, Morton had his detractors. He was, after all, a dentist practicing medicine. He was not of the superior breeding of most surgeons. Nor was he from the ivory towers of medicine. But he was curious. Perspiration is the serum we need to succeed. His hard work, trial and error, determination and curiosity propelled Morton into the medical journals.

Morton's story is not merely one of scientific achievement but also of perseverance against skepticism and adversity. His daring to challenge convention ensured that surgery would no longer be synonymous with agony — a legacy that

endures in every pain-free procedure performed worldwide.

So, the next time you complain about going to the dentist, or getting minor surgery, or even major surgery, think about the way it was not too long ago. Be grateful that an unconventional doctor wasn't willing to give up until he found a way to numb the pain. As Morton showed, sometimes it takes a kind person who feels deeply to make sure we don't feel anything at all.

Feeling...PassItOn.com

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