

Friday Night [under the] Lights... 2015



Happy Friday.

Thanks for all your comments last week. As we look at the months ahead of us, it helps to know how many people are ready and eager for the “next chapter” (warning – significant work involved). It’s pretty exciting.

Several of you reminded me how we’ve been able to collectively borrow from each other’s brainpower and unique approaches to move the AMR clinical focus to the front seat. I don’t say it as much as I should, but it makes me *really* proud to see what this organization has done over the past 4 years.

It reminds me of an ad I cut out of Parade Magazine (it was for a life insurance company) years ago because I thought it was a pretty clever way to illustrate the importance of a “team”...



History has shown what a group of **impassioned** people can do.

Have you ever heard anyone say..."There's no 'I' in T-E-A-M, you know..."?

Hang on - I'm going to get even goofier, but it actually sends a really important message.

You see, *there IS an 'I' in collaboration.*

Meaning.....

Collaboration, as in the impassioned people above, requires individual expertise (the "I") to be effective. It means we all work toward the same goal, but we bring different expertise, approaches, styles and skill sets to the table. It makes for a better team.

It's important to have differing perspectives as long as we continue to focus on building the most accountable, clinically focused EMS Practice of Medicine around. We have an opportunity to do just that.

Will it be easy? *No way.*

Fun? *Better be.*

Worth it? *You betcha...*

The Power of Sadness...

Four days ago, a professional colleague and friend of mine died after a relatively brief, but aggressive bout with recently diagnosed cancer.

Susan was the Medical Staff Coordinator at the hospital - she & I worked closely every single day. It was our collective responsibility to manage the day-to-day activities of the medical staff, coordinate credentialing, review clinical cases, review patient care metrics and just about anything that had to do with helping to manage physician activity.

We had some great successes. We had some miserable days. We had everything in between. It was nice to have someone to talk to when things were challenging. Susan had a way of creating order out of chaos. She paid a lot of attention to detail, and if she missed something, it really, really bugged her. Her sense of humor frequently took the edge off tough situations.

She, along with my other colleagues at Piedmont, made my professional life not only easier, but more organized, more productive and, frankly, much more fun.

When she was initially diagnosed, we talked almost every day. She had tons of questions, was understandably very anxious and was eager to make the right choices and begin treatment quickly.

Based on what she told me, I remember thinking I should make it a point to tell her the things I just typed above. She was a big part of my sense of professional satisfaction.

But I didn't want to send a message that might scare her or make her question what her decisions were or cause her to worry. I struggled with when the right time would be and how I would say "hey, by the way, can't tell you how much I appreciate the way you've made my professional life so much better".

So, sadly, she passed away 4 days ago in the early morning hours.

She was a talented, committed, passionate colleague. My life was better because of her.

When special people die, we're overcome with a wave of sadness...

There's only one diagnosis every physician can make with 100% accuracy – everyone will eventually die.

But when people do die (or are dying), we often look back and realize there are things we should have done or things we wanted to say or just simply let folks know how much we liked hanging out with them. Knowing what we know and what we see every day in our profession, it's important to remember how quickly things can change.

So, this week, the power of sadness reminds me that we shouldn't forget to spend a second or two telling people things we want them to know (yes, both ways...). We should try to make it a part of every single day so we don't get jammed up when time gets short.

And, as luck would have it, several of us spent the day yesterday with a large national hospice organization discussing opportunities to work together with end-of-life patients.

Hospice professionals are one of the most under-recognized group of compassionate, knowledgeable providers in healthcare.

Just as we all want a talented interventional cardiologist opening our LAD coronary artery or an expert critical care physician managing our sepsis or an extremely skilled neurosurgeon removing our neuroma, we want the experts in hospice to manage our patients at the end of life.

There are some great ideas for a unique approach to a collaboration (there's the word again) that will have a significant impact on a patient population we have historically not done a great deal for other than transport.

Integrating the hospice skill set with an EMS deployment and access ability will make compassionate care available when people need it most...

I'll miss Susan. She made my world better. Her passing reminds me again of the only diagnosis we can accurately make 100% of the time. And that means we need to always be mindful of the importance of letting people know how much it means to us that they make our world better...

WTH?

Tonight's "What The Heck" is courtesy of Allan Criss, VP of Sales for Physio Control...



While I initially thought it was a joke, I was reminded of Physio's commitment to continually evolve technology to be easier, more effective and smaller.

(It does strike me that perhaps Allan was trying to send me a message...)

Epilogue...

Randy Strozyk [AMR SVP Operations / AMR Air] and Tom Wagner [AMR West Region CEO] were leaving a meeting last week and were headed to the airport in Denver. They had separate rental cars and planned on meeting once they got there.

As Tom was travelling down the Interstate, he heard a traffic warning on the radio that a car was driving in the wrong direction up ahead. Knowing that Randy was near the point of the warning, he decided to call him on the cell phone.

When he answered, Tom explained, "I just heard on the news, someone is driving in the wrong direction on the highway!"

And Randy replied, "One? There are hundreds of folks going the wrong way where I am!"

That's it from my world. *Happy Friday.*

As always, thanks for what you do and how you do it. *I mean that ...*

Ed

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