

I can't believe another 3 years have gone so quickly. It seems like only yesterday that we were at Camp St Croix for new resident teambuilding; it seems like only yesterday that we were sitting at Tavern on the Green in Central Park discussing the merits of the latest emergency medicine abstracts; it seems like only yesterday that we introduced the electronic medical record.

It's been quite a year, and it has allowed me reflect on several things. These include the concepts of presence, permanence and humility.

Presence

Your class had incredible presence - presence on the floor, presence in the hospital, presence within the community, presence within the region, nationally and internationally. You have led by example, often contributing below the radar screen and making the residency and the EM healthcare community a better place to be. Your class has members that have traveled the country presenting original research, served with national EM organizations, consulted for newly minted residencies, and written for national new organizations.

With presence comes influence. I would urge you to continue your presence both within and outside the clinical EM arena after you graduate. Healthcare is under stress. EM is the canary in the coalmine. The specialty needs people like you to take the lead and influence the future.

Permanence & Living in the Moment

I sometimes confuse presence with permanence. Actually, presence and permanence are quite different. There is a Buddhist notion that everything, without exception, is constantly in flux (or not permanent). Because things are not permanent, attachment to them is futile, and leads to suffering. As

some of you know, I occasionally read a book or two. One of the books I am reading right now is called *Shantaram* by Gregory Roberts. It is a semi-autobiographical book about an ex-con that escapes from prison, flees to Bombay, runs guns and drugs until he starts a clinic in a shantytown and redeems himself. Naturally, there is some discussion of suffering amongst the characters. The most clever definition of suffering in this book, and one that is sharp and barbed, is the definition that suffering is happiness backwards. It hooked me, and it hooked me enough to want to see the film when it comes out in 2008 with Johnny Depp and Brad Pitt.

Well, let me tell you, we've had a little impermanence this year.

Intellectually, I understand impermanence; however, your memories and fingerprints are a permanent part of our residency. I will miss you greatly. I urge you to look at flux in your new jobs and live in the moment - above all, that special moment when you connect with patients that see you in their most vulnerable time.

Humility & Courage

Backward happiness makes me think of humility. In the Christian faith, humility is described as the recognition of the virtues and talents that others possess, as well as recognition of the limits of one's own talents, ability or authority.

Another book that was referred to me by Bob Knopp and Matt Morgan is called "How Doctors think" by Jerome Groopman. I urge you to read it. It's a very insightful and humbling book that looks at the powers of intuition, first impressions and deliberate analysis. In your future practices, look at how you make decisions, how you recognize the talents of others, and how you recognize the limits of your own. Think about how you approach

mistakes, and how you define quality. The quality movement is becoming a major focus in healthcare. In a recent meeting in Texas, one of the IHI people describes quality as trust, respect, repentance, human rights and forgiveness. I suggest to you that medicine is trust, respect, repentance, human rights and forgiveness. Do not confuse humility with meekness. Have the courage to do all you can to relieve suffering. Have the courage to advocate for patients. Have the courage to take a stand. Have the courage to lead. Have the courage to do the right thing.

It's been an honor to work with you. I feel humbled that you chose to train with us, and I am excited to see where your paths will lead you. Godspeed.