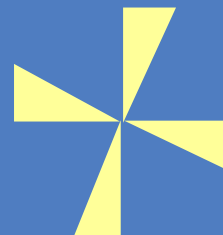




HEAL

Humanism Evolving through Arts and Literature

July 2011 Newsletter



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Daytona Beach Coaching

Andrew Cooke, M.D.
Class of 2012

When Dr. Rodriguez asked me to write an article for HEAL about my baseball experience, I said yes immediately. However, after struggling for weeks, I realized that this experience was much different than my experience in Tallahassee. Instead of the feel good stories of triumph, where my kids came out on top, this coaching experience was different. My players didn't always end on top and my coaching was more about life than baseball.

My story is about the coaching of two brothers, Zeb 12 and Elija 13, who were raised in foster care. These were children, though I didn't know it initially, whose mother was addicted to crack and father was incarcerated. They were raised by various people and bounced around together from one foster parent to another. I met them while they were living with their grandmother, a 40 year old woman who worked as a secretary for a living.

On the first day of practice, Mrs. Smith dropped her boys off and told me that if I were to encounter any problems I should tell her immediately so that she could correct them. I semi-headed her words and focused my attention, as I always do, on producing fundamentally sound baseball players. The brothers were like most of the players on my Daytona Beach team, inexperienced and unwilling to put forth the work necessary to become a good baseball player. I worked intensely with them, both on the fundamentals and on the physical fitness necessary to be an athlete.

Quickly I realized that the older brother, Elija, was unwilling to put forth the effort to excel in athletics. When I told the team to run, he would walk, when I lined the team up for ground balls he would stand on the sidelines and watch. From running the entire team to just him, I found that all my motivational coaching techniques failed: he simply wouldn't work. He consistently would say, "Coach, I don't want to run, I just want to play baseball." After over a month of failed discipline I utilized a resource I never had before, his grandmother. This was the biggest mistake I have made as a coach.

Elija's Grandmother immediately left from work and drove to the ball field. I met her outside the dugout with Elija, waiting for the magic pill that would transform my obstinate ball-player into the all-star I needed. Instead, the lecture I heard put me to shame as a coach. She spent over five minutes telling my player how he was worthless and would never measure up. She said that he was no better than his drug dealing father and his addicted mother. His only retort was "Grandma, one day I will be better than you ever could." At which point she stuck her index finger in his chest and

said, "I hope you get to my level one day."

I watched this all in stunned silence. I realized that my player had more on his plate than just baseball and life itself was tough enough. I called practice and pulled Elija aside. I asked him if everything was alright. His response was short and curt, "Coach, if grandma ever touches me like that I'm going to go to jail." I wish I had stopped and talked with him, I wish I had the courage to pull him aside and see what he meant by that.

Instead, I let it go and my simple un-wareness would haunt me.

The next week I called Elija's Grandma, to tell her what time practice started. She told me that Zeb would be at practice; however, Elija would be unable to make it. Over the weekend he had gotten in a fight with her and gone to jail. Elija had given her a black eye and a fat lip. I dropped the phone when I heard her words. If only I had acted, if only I had talked with him, maybe things would be different. I returned to reality and asked how long he would be in jail. She told me only a week and he would be ready for the game next week.

I spent the next week both nervous and anxious. "How could I have let my player hurt a woman like he did?" I had to act so that this would never happen again. When Elija returned for the game on Saturday, I did the only thing I could think. I took Elija outside of the park and across the street, away from all the players and the fans. I told him, "Elija, if you want to punch someone, punch me, because I'm at fault, not your grandma." His response was, "Coach, you didn't do anything wrong. I'm not gonna hit you." I told him "You felt strong enough to hit a woman, why not punch me?" At which point he took a weak swing and said, "I can't hit you coach." I pushed him and said, "You already did, the second you hit your

grandma and got in trouble you not only punched me harder than you ever could, you hit every one on your team. As both a baseball coach and a man, I will never allow violence towards women, and you are a strong enough person to know that it's never acceptable." With watery eyes he took another weak swing and started to cry. "Coach, I'm sorry. I won't do it again." We left together, with tears in both our eyes, and returned to the team.

The game started without a hitch and my team was down by about two runs. During the second inning Zeb hit my second baseman, who happened to be a girl, in the shoulder. Elija immediately hit him back and told his brother, "Man you don't hit women, no matter what they do to you." Unfortunately we lost that game, but I felt proud that my ballplayer had learned a lesson in life that maybe he will take with him.

Though my coaching experience in Daytona Beach didn't have the same rewards as it did in Tallahassee, I will take my experiences and learn from my mistakes, just as my ball players did.



Palm Tree by Beatriz Maciá



The Beacon
Painting in watercolor
Judy Bond

Just Follow Your Instincts

Laura Davis, Class of 2013

"How are you feeling?"

"I'm nervous. Really nervous."

"Why?"

"I've never done this before. This is a real patient. I've never been the one with the answers."

"Lucky for you, they don't know that. There is nothing to worry about. You will be great. Just follow your instincts. They won't mislead you and if you have any questions, ask. Have fun, and don't worry about the checklist."

....

When I think back to my first day of preceptorship, twelve weeks into my medical school education, so many vivid memories flash in my mind's eye. I remember standing in front of the full-length mirror at home wondering whether it was appropriate to wear my new, shiny red stethoscope as I drove to the office. I remember timing myself to see just how fast I could get through the checklist of pertinent information about history of present illness and social history. I remember wondering if the patient wouldn't want to see me. In short, I was terrified.

It was a great honor of mine, on that very day, to have an amazing preceptor. "Doc" was the cool preceptor. He was boisterous, full of laughter and not afraid to speak his mind, but was always truly concerned about every person he encountered. He treated everyone the same, whether they were a colleague, student, President of the university or the patient who managed to get to the office without any money or shoes. I had known Doc for over a year as he had mentored me with post-baccalaureate research. I respected him not only for his gentleness to patients but because of his true passion and concern for others. His concern was not based on people's socioeconomic status or length of their white coat but because they were members of the human race.

With Doc's instructions ringing in my ear, I entered the examination room for the first time. I saw an African American man in his mid-twenties returning to the clinic for test results from his previous visit. I ran through the appropriate questions of my checklist and attempted to frantically scribble down every single thing the patient told me. And then it was over. It was time for me to present the patient to Doc. His first question to me was, "How do YOU feel it went?" I remember taking a deep breath and saying, "Today I saw...what?" He repeated again with a chuckle, "How do YOU feel it went?" I was shocked. He did not want me to ramble back the information I had received from the patient, he wanted to know how I was doing. He was concerned for me.

As my first year in medical school progressed, I used the words of Doc continuously. I followed my instincts when something seemed awkward in a patient's presentation. I asked questions whenever there was something I didn't know or understand. As many times as I could, I thought about how I felt after seeing the mother of three who had just been told she had stage IV ovarian cancer, or how I felt seeing an obese man who had dropped his blood pressure and weight by simply eliminating carbonated drinks from his diet. I took time to reflect on not only what I was doing but what medicine was doing to me—and it was changing my life.

Continued...

The summer after first year, I participated in a medical service-learning trip. One of the most powerful experiences of the trip was when we visited a special school for people with physical disabilities. I must admit, I was a little uncomfortable. Not only was I with extremely handicapped people, but I didn't speak their language. I did not know what to say or do, and I felt ill-equipped to be there. Doc's advice rang in my ears: "Just follow your instincts. They won't mislead lead you." All I knew to do was smile. So, I smiled at the students and put a warm hand on their shoulders. I remember looking across the room at my fellow classmates, standing in awe at what I saw. Some students were fluently engrossed in dialogue with our new friends. Others were just as uncomfortable as I was, but our fearless leader on the trip was in the corner of the room. He was teaching them by his own example, and it was a beautiful scene.

That night, as I reflected on the day's activities, I realized the importance of having instructors that live the life they teach and the powerful truth that it takes more than memorizing a checklist or knowing how to do a physical exam to be a good doctor. Anyone can learn the motions and, just as our simulated patients, "act" like a doctor. Learning to be a physician is more than a curtain call; rather, it is an accumulation of each of the experiences I have had that led me here. As I continue in my medical career, I will forever strive to practice medicine while remaining true to myself. I want to keep the practice of medicine fun and be passionate, even when I am defeated and exhausted. There are many, many things I have learned in medical school, but the most important lessons I've learned weren't from books or small groups. The most important lessons have come from watching how my professors and preceptors live the lives they are claiming to live. They lead lives of integrity, not because they are required to professionally, but because it is a vital characteristic of their make-up, not as physicians, but as human beings.



Southern Comfort
Painting in watercolor
Judy Bond

Bohio and Chair

Beatriz Maciá



Smiling Eyes

Carol Warren, Circulations

I look at the pictures you send back
 You in your scrubs
 Practicing your art
 You look like my son, my daughter
 Smiling eyes, oh those smiling eyes
 Eyes of compassion
 Seeing pain
 You are able to fix
 Happy because your dream is coming true

I look at the pictures you send back
 Of the children in the places you doctor
 And they look like my little boys
 The tосseled hair, the smiling eyes
 Oh, those smiling eyes
 Eyes of innocents
 Happy because you are there
 Yes, caring for their needs
 But really happy because YOU are there

I look at the pictures you send back
 I know we have made a difference
 You are becoming something more
 And we are privileged to share
 Smiling eyes, Oh my smiling eyes
 Reflect my pride in you
 In me
 In us

The Little Girl Cried

Oretha Jones, MSN, ARNP

Executive Director Neighborhood Health Services

I walked through the door being the best me
 At least I hoped that's all she could see
 She started talking, I began to defend
 Because the goal is to not let her in

She asked hard questions
 And I would respond
 Still yearning to feel the heat of the sun
 That little girl is buried so deep you see
 The heat of the sun is new to me

She is waiting to see the little girl within
 The one with my life I must defend
 She wants to know why the little girl hides
 It's because the little girl is afraid to cry

Why would the little girl cry and hide
 And not allow the sun deep inside
 She is waiting for her father's guide
 For him to lift her up by his side

He'd twirl her around, they would have great fun
 Then he'd lift her face up to the sun

I told her what I wanted to say
 When and if I make it to that day
 I saw my pain in her eyes
 And she saw the little girl cry

My father's love was not shown to me
 The more I asked the more he denied
 The more he denied the more I'd hide

I thought another man could come find me
 But my father's love is the only key

I talked to her as if she was him
 I asked what I'd done and when
 He made me feel as if I was born of sin
 I looked too deeply into his eyes
 The more I talked the more I cried
 Cathartic is the word she said
 Exorcism is the word in my head

Loneliness hate shame and doubt
 Were all the demons we cast out

The little girl hidden deep inside
 Now understands that she is her guide
 There is not a man who holds the key
 The love I need I found within me

The little girl is gone and a woman is here
 No longer hiding in shame and fear
 For far too long I chose to hide
 That all ended when I cried



Rectangulo (left) and Diamante (below)
Pablo Rodríguez

The Value of Medicine

Guimy Alexis, Class of 2013

What is the value of a physician? Or more importantly, how can their value be measured? Why does society see these individuals as essential, their purpose as altruistic?

Is it because of their intelligence? No. Albeit, in order to become a physician, one must be exceptional, this quality alone is insufficient to justify their value.

Is it due to performance? Potential is useless without results, right? No. What about the caliber of their education? It must be due to their class rank, specialty, prestige in the medical community, new medical innovations? No. No. And, no.

Their value is rooted in the relentless attempts to preserve life. Society recognizes the value of life, because all life is valuable.

A physician's worth is ingrained in this unyielding pursuit to treat, if not cure, disease that will ultimately end the lives of their patients. Irrespective of whom that individual is, his or her life is worth saving.

Life is valuable and so are those who devote their lives to its preservation.



I pray for

Peace Love Unity
Family
Prosperity
Generosity
Forgiveness
Blessings
HEALTH
Intelligence
Strength
Friends
WISDOM
PROTECTION
Tact
SALVATION

Lyvie

Prayer

Lyvie Sara Sylvestre,
Class of 2015

Painting by Brittany Jackson, Class of 2013
Inspired by Nicholas Roerich's "Star of the Hero"

Shaken

Tiffany Vollmer, M.D.

You blonde haired, blue-eyed angel baby—
Where are your dolls eyes?
And the rest of your blue iris, shaded in
Large dark unresponsive pupils—
Like an eclipse hiding blue sky forever

Blink, twitch, move your small finger
I wait for something more than the
Machine that moves air through you
And for a moment, or two,
I have no breath

Your impassive face is peaceful
My heart is taken
That which you no longer need
Will go on to save the lives of other babies
All because you were shaken



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Thank you and we look forward to your excellent
submissions.