

“Perhaps no sin so easily besets us as a sense of self-satisfied superiority to others.”

Sir William Osler

Hi Everyone!

For this week's Departmental Acknowledgement I have decided to utilize the suggestion of Wissam Khalish and have reprinted what he sent me.

I find it quite heartfelt and an acknowledgement of a vital activity that is often undertaken informally, involves tremendous commitment and has such a vital payoff when done right. This activity is mentoring a junior colleague.

"This reflection goes out to all of you who ever were or aspire to become junior staff in the near future. It is accompanied by a special acknowledgment of two individuals who have assisted me in my ongoing journey to junior "staffdom": **Dr. Therese Perreault and Dr. Guilherme M. Sant'Anna**. Over the past year, I have come to realize how steep the transition from fellow to staff really is. Why is it one of the most well kept secrets around the hospital? It's time that we reflect upon it and recognize it as a pivotal time point in our young careers.

As senior fellows in 2nd or 3rd year of fellowship, we are at the peak of our knowledge. We just passed our Royal College examinations. We feel invincible. We have the answer to everything. We wish we were staff already. And it can really get to our heads. I have lived it and witnessed it around me on numerous occasions. I think it's a normal feeling. But then again, we are delusional! Knowledge isn't everything. We lack experience. Despite all the intelligence in the world, our case sample size is extremely small. We haven't communicated with enough families, or given enough bad news, or seen enough tragedies. Our skin is not thick enough!

And then, all of a sudden, a job offer comes along! This is truly the "make-it-or-break-it" part. How do we react to this news? Where do we go from there? Yes, we might be very nervous at first with our new role. It's human nature. However, we live in a system where becoming a "staff" is perceived as empowering. The title suddenly gives us the impression that we have reached the top of the food chain. And so we feel free! Free to make critical decisions, by ourselves, on clinical, professional and academic matters. But how can we be expected to go from a tightly supervised environment to complete independence, in just a snap of a finger? How can we ensure that we stay on top of our game? Without guidance and supervision, it's easy to fall into the trap and deviate from our intended full potential.

Luckily, I have been blessed to have two amazing role models and friends, Therese, and Guilherme, who have made sure I do not fall into that trap. To say the truth, the process of mentorship began well before fellowship. I was in my third year of residency, and already I was spending numerous hours in their respective offices, chatting about my career. I can never thank them enough for that! I remember to this date, just before moving to Toronto, Therese telling me: "if you want to make a difference, you need to reflect on what "YOU" can bring to the table, what "YOU" can offer, isn't it?" Even during fellowship, she took the time to meet with me and give me precious advice on my upcoming career moves. I had always admired her clinical skills, her exemplary work etiquette and her contagious enthusiasm for neonatology. And so I took her words to heart, and found "MY" vocation. Guilherme was instrumental in helping me find and express my passion to research. And now that I am staff, he is both my PhD supervisor and my clinical mentor. Honestly, he has invested so much of his time coaching me and preparing me to the Big Leagues. And my research career is starting to flourish thanks to his guidance. I am extremely grateful for that. And I continue to learn every single day!"

All of us who have found success in our careers can almost certainly identify a mentor. Have you said "thank you" to your mentors?

Have a great weekend everyone!