Finding Your Passion

For a time during college, I worked as a waitress to make a little extra cash. Needless to say, it didn't go so well. While waitressing is a great job for those with the patience and personality for waiting on people, it was definitely not the position for me. It wasn't long before I sought out a different job more along the lines of what I wanted to do. It was safe to say waitressing was not my passion. It was just a job I "got through" for a summer.

This week, I spoke with a medical expert who proclaimed to me her passion for the topic of patient positioning. Just from the brief conversation on the phone, her excitement for the importance of proper patient positioning in the OR emanated from the receiver. I was inspired by her enthusiasm.

It got me thinking about how while most of us work towards finding the careerwe are truly passionate about, it seems even more critical for surgical professionals to truly care about their job.

Choosing to be a surgeon or OR professional is a calling. One doesn't choose a career in the OR without knowing that, at times, a patient's life could be in your hands, or without knowing that taking care of surgical patients is what they're meant to do— what they are truly passionate about.

Over time, though, that flame you had in the beginning, the inspiration to save lives and care for your patients, might die out a bit. Basic surgical procedures become routine after years of working in the field—so basic, you might not even think twice about them anymore.

It's important to remember, though, that what is basic for a surgeon or nurse who has been working in the OR for 20 years is generally not basic for the surgical patient. Surgery can be a frightening experience. Hearing, "We'll take care of you," is comforting to a person going into surgery. Frowning, grumbling and uttering, "Just another routine case …" on the other hand, is not.

Take, for example, a surgeon mentioned in a Surgical Products column [1] a few

weeks back who used a morcellator to remove a young girl's spleen. The surgeon was to encase the organ in a bag, use the morcellator to chop the organ up in the body and then retrieve the spleen. However, when the morcellator punctured the bag, the girl ended up suffering serious blood loss and brain damage.

The surgeon did not explain to the parents of the girl before the surgery that he would be using this device. Even though he had not used the device before, maybe the procedure in the surgeon's eyes was still so basic that he didn't find it necessary to talk with the parents about how he would be removing their daughter's spleen.

Choosing to be a surgeon, OR supervisor, OR nurse, etc. wasn't a decision made brashly—it was a career chosen because taking care of surgical patients was something you felt you were meant to do. However, like any job done for years, burnout happens sometimes, and you start taking the routine 'basics' for granted.

When interacting with patients and their families, it's important to recognize that surgery isn't basic to them, no matter how routine the procedure for the surgeon or nurses on board. Remembering why you decided to be a surgeon or OR professional in the first place can help you re-fuel and find your passion for you job—and ultimately help you take care of your patients at the highest level possible.

What's your take? Email amanda.mcgowan@advantagemedia.com [2]

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