



DOCTOR TO DOCTOR

Online Reputation: Are We Our Own Worst Enemy?

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More than 250,000 people die every year from medical errors¹ and no one even blinks. The medical profession's reputation is solid because it does its laundry behind closed doors. Unlike our profession, the MD profession is circumspect about pulling colleagues up short in public. What if we decided to improve our profession's image by treating each other with respect and watching what we post online?

Protecting Its Own: The "Art" of Medicine?

I have an attorney friend who handles hospital deaths. She casually said to me, "They gorked another patient, and I had to go in at 3 a.m. to meet with the staff and family."

I asked, "What does 'gorked' mean?" She replied: "A 3-year-old boy was brain dead after surgery. I had to meet with the doctors and nurses and tell them what to say and not say. I also met with the boy's family to explain what happened. It was terrible!"

I was amazed. The medical profession has systems and people in place to handle difficult situations. Medicine maintains a fine reputation in spite of perpetual iatrogenesis.

The medical profession even has private hospitals and rehab facilities that help physicians who become addicted to the very same drugs they prescribe. Everything is handled discreetly and their art is untarnished.

The medics give each other the benefit of the doubt. They respect the title "MD" and what it takes to become one. Why don't we treat each other this way?

Handling Issues With Colleagues

Like the laws of physics, "For every chiropractor, there is an equal and opposite chiropractor."

Differences and hard feelings are inevitable. We are passionate, and believe and practice differently.

I had an issue with one of my colleagues. His advertising was against state law, and he was acting unethically.

I called him, took him to lunch and confronted him. He stopped those activities immediately, and to this day, we're still friends. Many of our differences can be settled behind closed doors.

Why Are We Posting Negativity About One Another - Constantly?

Have the guts to call doctors you disagree with; give them the benefit of the doubt. Ask them why they acted the way they did and handle it in private if you can. Remember, everything you post online will be more eternal than your gravestone, so be careful!

- Give every colleague the respect they deserve for being a doctor of chiropractic.
- Assume they have the best intentions.
- If you have a problem with their position or something they're doing, call them. Talk to them in private and see if you can work out your differences.

Your Patients Check You Out Online - What Are They Learning About You?

Your patients are curious about you and may investigate you after they start care. They want a doctor they can trust and believe in. Will you measure up?

By the way, no one cares what your opinions are concerning sex, politics or religion. Posting your views about these topics on social media will not change anyone's opinion, and may cost you more than a few patients.

Needless to say, don't post pictures of yourself inebriated or use profanity. Inflammatory posts entrench readers in their position. You're not going to change anyone's mind with sarcastic posts on Facebook. You certainly have the right to post whatever you want, but it can adversely affect your practice and the profession.

Some of Our Chiropractic Leaders Aren't Helping, Either

Your favorite chiropractic leaders are posting ideas to appeal to you. Some are posting about inflammatory topics to get your attention and may not even have a practice; they don't care who it ticks off! They want to appeal to you as a doctor and entrepreneur. They think they know your political position and are posting to draw you into their group.

Don't Go There!

Marketing genius Dan Kennedy once said: "Your number-one job as an entrepreneur is to raise your status in the eyes of customers and prospects." You'll never do this by pissing half of them off! That's what many of our casually placed opinions do: push people away.

"For you have in your possession a sacred trust, guard it well" - B.J. Palmer

What you do and express online reflects every one of us and creates our professional identity. "Play nice," build trust and lead people to the most rational health care system in the world.

Reference

1. Anderson JG, Abrahamson K. Your health care may kill you: medical errors. *Stud Health*

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