

Painful Decisions

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It hurts here, my new patient told me, "right under my decision." She touched her abdomen, low on the right side.

I did not grin. "I think you mean incision, Mrs. Hall. Where they cut you to take out your appendix."

"Uh-huh."

"Of course," I said, "sometimes decisions can be painful too."

She touched her appendectomy scar again. "Well, mine sure is," she said.

I've been wrestling with one of those painful decisions myself over the past few weeks. My book, *MOTE*, is doing well all across the country. It was published in November of 1990 and sales were slow at first. Then the reviews started. *USA Today* called it, "The funniest serious novel of the year." *Publisher's Weekly* featured *MOTE* twice, and about 20 other literary and review publications all said nice things about it.

Then it was nominated for the Edgar Allan Poe Award. Quite an honor, being nominated. Dixie and I went to New York for the ceremonies and after all the preliminaries the Master of Ceremonies finally got to my category. He gave the names of the nominees and said, "And the winner is ..."

It took him six days to open the envelope, lean close to the microphone and say, "*MOTE*, by Chap Reaver."

I managed to walk up to the stage without falling down, while a thousand people applauded and even made a little acceptance speech. They gave me the "Edgar," a small bust of Edgar Allan Poe, and I made it back to our table.

Later that evening I asked my wife, "What did I say up there on the stage?"

"You did real good," Dixie said.

"Well, what did I say?"

"You did just fine."

"I didn't say --- did I?"

"No."

We get fan mail. Great for the ego and it is a nice feeling to know that people I have never met are deriving pleasure and enjoyment from my book. Twenty-four hours a day. And, I don't have to work at

it anymore.

MOTE has just been released in paperback. My next book is scheduled for publication in November 1992 and titled A Little Bit Dead. So far the advance reviewers like it better than MOTE.

Now I have a problem, a very nice problem to have but a painful decision to make. My publishers want more books from me and I enjoy writing. It took two years to write MOTE. Most of the writing took place in the early morning hours before I showered, shaved, and went into the office. A Little Bit Dead took about the same amount of time. If I quit practicing I could crank out a book a year. Maybe less.

Very tempting. I wouldn't have to fight traffic in the morning. Evening traffic is even worse. I could wear old clothes, stay home and write while the mood lasted. Then I could go down to the lake and fish a while, maybe take in a matinee, play some tennis, grab a nap, and write some more in the evening.

One day a week I have been speaking at schools. Last week I was invited to talk to an English class at a local high school. The teacher had assigned MOTE as required reading and wondered if I would talk to the class.

The kids were wonderful. I like this younger generation and have great faith in them. The class was fun, the students asked marvelous questions and laughed along with me when I was stumped for answers. The teacher let the class run over and we did another hour. Nobody fell asleep and I enjoyed it more than anyone. I think I learned the most too. I could do more of that if I had time.

A difficult decision.

Yesterday was wonderful at the office We never got behind but there were no gaps between appointments. The day went quickly. The last three patients were all relatively new to chiropractic. A 70-year-old man who had suffered back trouble for 15 years asked me, "Wanna race to the corner and back, Dr. Reaver?" Feeling his oats.

A grade school teacher said, "I feel so much better in just one week. I thought I was never going to improve."

"I threw away all that dope," the air conditioning man said. "Ain't had a trace of headache since you fixed my neck."

I never tire of that kind of feedback. It's even better than awards and fan mail. The decision wasn't so difficult or painful after all. Morning traffic isn't all that bad.

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