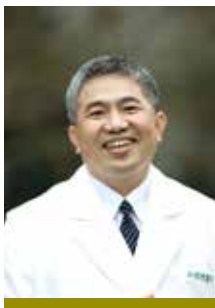


Do Your Best Without Regrets

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While driving with my daughter to a “Tzu Chi Charity Concert for Organ Donors” in Taipei, some flashbacks were going through my mind. Father and daughter were going happily on their way to this concert, and suddenly the passing of my mother zapped my mind. I really missed my mother whose death bothers me to this day. If only she were alive at this moment, we could have had a good time, just chatting together. I wanted to provide and to do more for her, but she isn’t here.

My mother’s death was a shock to me. Being a doctor with extensive medical experience and responsibilities, when faced with her brain tumors, I felt so helpless. For a year and a half, even the best medical team with the best equipment and technology could not save her life.

Looking back, I had a rather smooth journey through College. I was active in the local communities, from medical training to internship. I am grateful to the University hospital and the staff who provided me with the best education. Being able to do what I was trained for is one of my proudest accomplishments. Yet when it comes to saving my mother’s life, I felt I was a failure.

When mother’s life was coming to an end, I attended an eight part series of weekend courses for the families of the terminally ill. It prepared me for her final passing. Medical professionals are trained to handle a patient’s passing with little emotion. But when it comes to a member of one’s own family, it is far more perplexing.

When it comes to my own destiny, I feel I am in control. When the 2003 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) broke out, it was a crisis for all medical staff that had contact with infected patients.

In our Hospital, patients requiring breathing tube are normally in the care of the Anesthesiologists. When a doctor, infected with SARS, passed away in a local hospital in Taipei, my first thought was, “Why

me, why us?" After calming my thoughts, I was able to reason why "Anesthesiologists are chosen to be the first line of defense." It is because Anesthesiologists know what others don't know about what is needed in these kinds of emergencies, and risk goes with the job. Just like good swimmers who spend a lot of time in water, some drown.

Anesthesiologists know best the procedures to save lives, and can minimize the risk. The job is already cutout for us, why should we not embrace it?

During the crisis, the entire Anesthesiology department was mobilized for the life and death challenge. Older veterans lead the pack because they have more experience and if they die before the younger peers, they have no regret.

Dr. Yi Li was the first one who successfully completed the procedure, and came back to share with us his experience. Later, a SARS patient suspect was quarantined and assistance was requested from our department to perform the procedure. I said to myself, "If my time is up, then so be it. I am ready." Master Cheng Yen always reminds us to face the extreme challenges with great fear. Some fear death more than anything, but because we are doctors, it is our responsibility to do what is required of us regardless of the risk involved.

Doctors, nurses, and medics understand the limits of modern day medicine. Some people will not negotiate when it comes to disease and illness, including Dr. Leeland H. Hartwell, a Nobel Prize recipient. He asked Master Cheng Yen: "Why do so many patients often end up dead even though the disease was curable and a massive effort for patients' care was expended?" I had the same question in my mind and my answer to my own question was: "When all means failed, perhaps someday in the future the problem can be overcome." Master Cheng Yen answered simply, "You have tried your best."

Dr. Ming-Hwang Shyr (center in the latter line), the superintendent of Hualien Tzu Chi Medical Center and the president of Tzu Chi Nursing Journal, represents the hospital to show the respect and blessings to all nurses on May 12nd, 2010. Background scene is the celebration poster area of honorable nurses this year. And the front line stands nurses of Putuo District Center Hospital, Shanghai, during their training stay in Tzu Chi Hospital.



Mr. Hartwell finally came to terms with himself. He said, “That’s right, I did my best!” If we can look past the details, we can find what is destined. Death is irreversible, inevitable destiny for all human mankind because we are part of nature.

Medicine doesn’t necessarily mean the curing of diseases. If terminally ill patients can have high quality care to transition them to afterlife, which could be bittersweet for both patients and families. Tzu Chi Lotus Terminally Specialty Care and all the volunteers can help patients to achieve this goal by means of interaction and exchange of communication to alleviate the pain and suffering.

For those of us who have chosen the medical profession as our career, live and death is a daily experience. One by one, our patients, our families, and even we have to face the inevitable.

However, by participating more to live a full life, a meaningful life, perhaps when my time comes, I shall be at peace.