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5 TIPS FOR  
**GOOD  
VIBES IN  
HEALTH  
CARE**



## 5 tips to keep the good vibes in your medical job.

### 1. Leadership is the holy grail in medicine.

Working as a doctor includes much more than what you were trained for. It is not only about the core job, taking care of patients, it is also about non-core jobs, like people management, time management, conflict management, making and leading a good team. All these extra tasks we do by trial (and sometimes error). Often this gives us frustration and stress. 'Can I just do my core job as a medical doctor?' I often hear. So why can't we work like we did back in the days?

- 'It's because of the feminization!'

Back in the days being a doctor was literally 'being' a doctor. It was a big part of our identity. The doctor was mainly Caucasian, male, worked in a solo practice, was fulltime supported by his partner, didn't had any responsibility in the household of the children etc. He had a lot of status, didn't have to be concerned about his communication because he WAS the doctor. Nowadays that type of doctor has become a rarity. Nowadays we 'are' not a doctor. Medicine is our job. Our identity has many facets, that includes working in healthcare, but also includes being a father, a mother, a friend, a child, a sporter, a colleague, a team member etc. Most of us prefer to work together with other colleagues, nurses, logistic support etc. Working solo has changed in working together. Nowadays a doctor also runs a business and is in fact an entrepreneur. So no, it isn't about the feminization, it is the era that has changed!

- 'It's because of the patient'

Nowadays patients are asking more participation. Why are you prescribing this treatment and not what Doctor Google prefers? Patients also want to be treated as customers, asking for a good customer journey. A holistic approach has become more standard. A patient not only asks for a medical consult, he/she also wants a dietary advice, logopedic advice, a blood draw, a consult with a physiotherapist etc. Our medical cabinet has become a cabinet where a lot of professionals have their practice, a lot of professionals are working together. So no, it isn't about the patient, it is the era that has changed!

- 'It's because of the industry'

Nowadays healthcare has become an industry with a focus on patients, care but also efficiency, performance and results. As a medical doctor we can't ignore that our prescriptions, the examinations we suggest and in fact our whole job is linked to that industry. Both the industry, the healthcare professionals, healthcare organizations and patients are dependent on each other. As doctor we like autonomy and are

sometimes struggling with that dependency. So no, it isn't about the industry, it is the era that has changed!

- It's because of the era.

Even before the pandemic this era was quite challenging. We had Brexit, terror attacks, climate changes etc. VUCA is this era, which is an acronym for volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. This word was introduced by the American army as an answer to the uncertain strategy they had to follow during the cold war. Nowadays we have (or maybe had) a big pandemic, a recession, more digitalization and artificial intelligence in healthcare, mergers and forming of networks in care. Times are still very challenging and will stay very challenging. How do we cope with that? Are we just sitting back and watch things to happen? Or are we choosing to be more proactive, embracing these changes and seeing them as an opportunity to make healthcare even better? In 2016 Bill George, professor in Harvard business school and former CEO of Medtronic introduced another acronym for VUCA, namely vision, understanding, clarity and adaptability. He sees these skills as the answer for uncertain times. Maybe we can choose to adapt stable leadership skills as an answer to these uncertain times? Maybe we can keep the good vibes in medicine? That's why leadership skills are the holy grail in medicine.

## 2. **Who can benefit from more knowledge about leadership?**

Working as a doctor taking care of people, solving the problems of patients and being autonomous. That's exactly what a leader does. That's why every doctor is talented to lead others, including leading themselves. Junior-, senior doctors, family doctors, hospital doctors.... We all do these tasks by attempt. How would we perform when we had more knowledge and skills about leadership? Maybe we would feel more secure, structured, efficient to lead our environment, our self and unlock all these potentials?

## 3. **What is leadership specific?**

Leadership is about soft skills. These skills have the potential to see your talent, the talent of the others (patients, family, friends, colleagues) and make it bloom and flourish. That's why I call it smart skills!

## 4. **How can we unlock this potential?** How does nature bloom and flourish? It all starts with light and feeding. It all starts with vision, understanding, clarity, adaptability.

### a. **Light:**

Every direction you or your team takes is influenced by you as a leader, by your vision and your personality. When Michael Jordan claimed that there is no 'I In team', I think he was wrong. Because everything in a team starts with the 'I'.

a.1. Vision: Where do you see yourself in 5, 10 years and by the end of your life? What do you want that people to say about you at your funeral? Is this still the same as when you started medicine? Did something change? And do you feel ok with that? A vision is an internal GPS who guides you through your practice and beyond that, it also influences on the organization of your work.

Example:

- If your vision is excellent specialized care: how do you organize your on-call duty in a team where not every healthcare worker has the same specialized skills?
- If your vision is patient centered care: how do you organize your practice concerning waiting lists, making appointments, time management and really seeing the patient?

A vision is an instrument who supports you to see the big picture. Having no vision often means extinguishing fires instead of stopping the fire, not moving forward. It means micromanagement in your business. A vision literally brings light into your life and your medical practice.

a.2. Self-awareness. What's your talent, your pitfall, your natural communication style? How can you stay self-connected in a challenging environment? More insights in your personality, your drives and passion, gives you knowledge. It also gives you the opportunity to choose how to react, how not to sabotage yourself and how to go in the direction that you choose for.

Example:

- If you have a personality where speed is important (the type of moving faster, better, stronger) and the other person likes punctuality. You sometimes can get frustrated of their perfectionism, certainly when you (or they or both) are in a stress full situation. What happens next? You give a 'hurry up' reaction, the other person also feels frustrated, and conflict is on his way. Or you blame yourself of being so hurried... By realizing that you are frustrated and especially why you are frustrated (checking-in), you can choose how to react and you can choose to react in a connecting way.
- Or if you have a personality where connection is important (the type of tjit-chatting with others) and the other person likes solving problems. Miscommunication can occur because there's a difference in values. By checking in, you can adapt your behavior without loosening your values or your personality. It makes life easier.

Every person reacts in a certain way to nurture his values, passions and drives. How somebody acts always comes from a good intention. The only problem is that we don't always see that intention, we project this on our needs and drives. By having a clear vision, insights in personalities and drives we have a bigger, holistic view. We get more clarity and understanding of the situation.

## **b. Feeding:**

FEEDback is literally about FEEDing relationships (self- and with others). As we all know, communication can be a major pitfall in these relationships. What person A means and says, person B hears and understands can be quite different. A real(istic), honest and connecting communication brings more clarity, understanding and adaptability in every situation. How can we make that communication really connecting?

- a. It all starts with an objective analysis of the situation? What am I really hearing, seeing? What are the symptoms? Are they true or are they an interpretation of the symptoms?

Example:

- i. During my consultation I was interrupted the whole time. An objective analysis gives clarity on
  - how many times was I interrupted? 2 times, 10 times?
  - who was the interrupter? A colleague? Your secretary? The phone? Your Instagram? Mail alert?
  - how was I interrupted?
  - why was I interrupted? Did somebody need my advice? Or is it not clear who and why they can interrupt me? Is it a logistic problem (ex. all the phone calls go directly to my cabinet)?
- b. Do the temperature check. What feeling do I detect when something happens? What is my gut feeling? Is it a positive feeling or a negative feeling? And why is it like that? What's the diagnosis?

Example:

- i. When I got interrupted during my consultation, I felt stressed.
  - because I want to move on with my consultation because I want family time.
  - because I want to give my attention to the patient who is sitting next in front of me.
- ii. Or maybe I also feel a bit excited when I got interrupted
  - because my advice is needed, and I am seen as a doctor
  - because I can take care of a lot of patients
  - or because I make more money that way?

How we feel in a certain situation give us clarity in which values, drives are fulfilled or are not fulfilled. It takes the temperature to make an underlying diagnosis, it is the next step in acting to treat that diagnosis.

Connecting communication is a tool that brings more humanity in the relation with yourself and others, a tool that prevents conflict. It changes from human doing to human being.

#### **5. Leadership is contagious.**

By learning these skills your talent will be unlocked, you will flourish and be contagious with your good vibes. Let's start these good vibes pandemic and put more care in healthcare!