

Grace Healthcare Annual Meeting 2014 Morning Bell Presentation – 5.1.2014

Good Thursday morning. I am thankful for the opportunity to host Morning Bell on our last day together for Annual Meeting.

As some of you may already know, and for those that do not, I (and Brynna) served on the committee for Annual Meeting this year. Let me tell you that we have had so much fun anticipating your visit. In creating the signage for Never Stop Improving we used a light bulb – signifying thought, process, brilliance... I added the globe to play on your trip to Chattanooga (but *minus* the threat of tornados, I promise! haha), [\[photo on-screen_Light bulb with globe\]](#) but the globe was also intended to be symbolic of our place in this world... what we do on a daily basis that impacts the global scope.

We work in healthcare and our ultimate goal is to be impactful, to provide the highest quality care to each resident and to even provide a level of care for the families of residents. The bell that sounds every day at facilities and also in the Chattanooga office is especially characteristic of the gift of life. The moment our eyes open each day is the ringing of the bell. You and I can *choose* to be brilliant and be the impact in someone's world on a daily basis.

"Melody of a tiny bell..." this phrase I quote from the morning bell video submission from Douglas on Tuesday. I like that – it resonates with me. Sometimes I think it would be fun to have theme music as we go through life – would your theme be melodic (mel-ah-dic) *or not?*

[\[pause\]](#)

How do we maintain an attitude of Never Stop Improving when we are stressed, tired or even sad about something we are experiencing? I can stand here today, happy that we are together and seemingly not stressed, but let's be honest – life, the gift that it is, still comes with many challenges. Here are two of my cute, but nevertheless daily life "challenges" right now, haha... [\[photo on-screen_Puppies\]](#). Tuesday night when I got home around 11 (after the banquet), I surprised the pups who got overly excited and knocked a glass of chocolate milk off of the nightstand... white lamp shade, wall, white comforter... all soaked in chocolate almond milk... *yeah*. How do we get back to finding our center when we start to lose sight of the big picture? ☺ It can become so unfocused so quickly.

I have a few recommendations (and they're for me, too):

First, as I once shared with our Chattanooga office, get back to nature. Enjoy a sunrise, a sunset, a bright starry night sky. Look around at the blooming flowers and green trees that grow strong from the ground. Never forget the natural elements that bind us to creation and that remembrance will hopefully spark inspiration to feel a part of something bigger. It's pretty neat when you **stop** to think about it.

Consider this quote by Ralph Waldo Emerson:

"If the stars should appear but one night every thousand years how man would marvel and stare." (end quote)

We should allow ourselves to *marvel* at the stars every time they are visible... to the melody of a tiny bell...

Second recommendation for re-grouping: breathe. Aah, yes... breathe..... practice controlled breathing. If you have never done breathing exercises, you may be surprised how much more awake your body feels after breathing in deeply and then exhaling fully. We have a group in the Chattanooga office that practice yoga together. I was most excited to learn yoga for the stretching, but learning how to breathe has been the most beneficial to me (i.e. chocolate milk incident, haha).

Third, remember what is good. Oftentimes we are troubled easily by circumstances around us, and I can only imagine that in the facilities you experience a lot of emotional experiences – the sick, the dying, the mentally-impaired, not to mention your co-workers (haha). Seriously though, it is human to be affected by the things we see and hear. My mom is battling cancer right now (there she is!) [\[photo on-screen_My mom\]](#) and it is so difficult to witness her lack of quality of life as she fights *for* her life. When I visited recently and stayed with her in the hospital, I was very thankful for an attentive team of nurses who were kind to my mom. I also overheard the nursing staff caring for my mom's roommate, who'd been going through alcohol detox. I was amazed by the soft, tender patience of the nurses. It made me think of the type of patients y'all care for daily. It made me think of the challenges you face. Let us remember what is good in the midst of difficulties. Recount mentally the things that make you happy and bring contentment. These will recharge your soul.

[\[pause\]](#)

Before we conclude morning bell today I want to take a moment to breathe. Let us close our eyes and take several deep inhales in through the nose – breathe so deeply that you feel the air entering every space in your lungs.

Let's begin by closing our eyes now. Take a breath in as long as you think you can and then take one more deep inhale. Hold and then *slowly* release through your mouth. Let your shoulders drop and relax.

Eyes still closed, on your second deep inhale focus your mind on an image in nature that is serene to you – for me it is a tire swing hanging from a beautiful oak tree by a pond. As you exhale, let your body sink into that place you are imagining. Keep your eyes closed.

On your final deep inhale, recount a favorite memory that brings a smile to your face. Hold it. When you exhale, let your mind, body and soul feel re-charged by what is good. Open your eyes.

We are commissioned to care for others (and ourselves). Shirley's family perspective testimony on Tuesday was a soft, but serious reminder. I invite you today to Never Stop Improving.

Thank you so much for joining us this week.

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A note regarding this presentation: Unbeknownst to me, my Mom had been taken to the ICU this same day (in another state) & passed away the next day before I could get to her bedside. I'll be forever grateful to have been able to talk openly to a room full of caretakers about my wonderful Mom & even showcase her photo on the big screens! There were a lot of tears in the room during my presentation, which was a foreshadowing of the days to come. Writing & sharing our stories with other people is simply one of life's grandest gifts... this vulnerability is what makes us human.