

THE SUCCESSFUL GASTROENTEROLOGY PRACTICE

HARRY SARLES JR. MD. FACG

Disclosures

I am successful because I get up and go to work every morning with enthusiasm and love what I do.

“To each of you, the practice of medicine will be very much as you make it...to one a worry, a care, a perpetual annoyance; to another, a daily joy and a life of much happiness and usefulness as can well fall to the lot of man”

sir William Osler (Aequanimitas, 1932)

Definition of Success

- An event that accomplishes it's intended purpose
- An attainment that is successful
- A state of prosperity or fame
- Achiever: a person with a record of success
- The achievement of ones aim or goal, financial profitability
- You are already a success!

Perspective on Success

- Greater than 50% of physicians relocate within 2 years
- 9% of Gastroenterologist's wish they had chosen a different specialty
- 22% of Gastroenterologist's wish they had chosen a different career
- 68% would pick the same specialty (4th/16)
-(Derm. 86%, Ophtho. 76%, Rheum. 74%)

(Is your practice fulfilling, Med.Ecom. 12/1/06)

Why Do Physicians Change Jobs?

- Need for higher salary
- High malpractice premiums
- Under utilized medical skills
- Need for upward advancement
- Long hours, busy call schedule
- Lack of autonomy/appreciation

(Survey Wendy Abodo, Physician Practice: July/May 2004)

Why Do Physicians Change Jobs Cont...

- Restructuring/declining practice
- Poor relations with hospital administration
- Proximity of work to family
- Physicians desire for another climate
- Family uncomfortable in community

(Survey Wendy Abodo, Physician Practice: July/May 2004)

Summary: Key Factors in a Successful Private Practice

- Geographically comfortable
 - climate, proximity to desires, malpractice climate, economic climate
- Favorable payer mix
- Favorable contract rates
- Access to ancillary services
- Ability to change and take risks

How to be a Successful Consultant: Rules and Realizations

- You are in a public relations business
- You are in control of how you are perceived
- People skills will often trump your medical skills
- Everyone wants respect: give it and you may receive it
- Anger always destroys respect
- Go out of your way to make life easier for everyone else

Cardinal Rules

- Do what is best for your patient and their family
- Never “think” with your wallet or the insurance companies wallet
- Never “think” with your schedule
- Never “think” with your ego
- Always tell the truth and accept responsibility

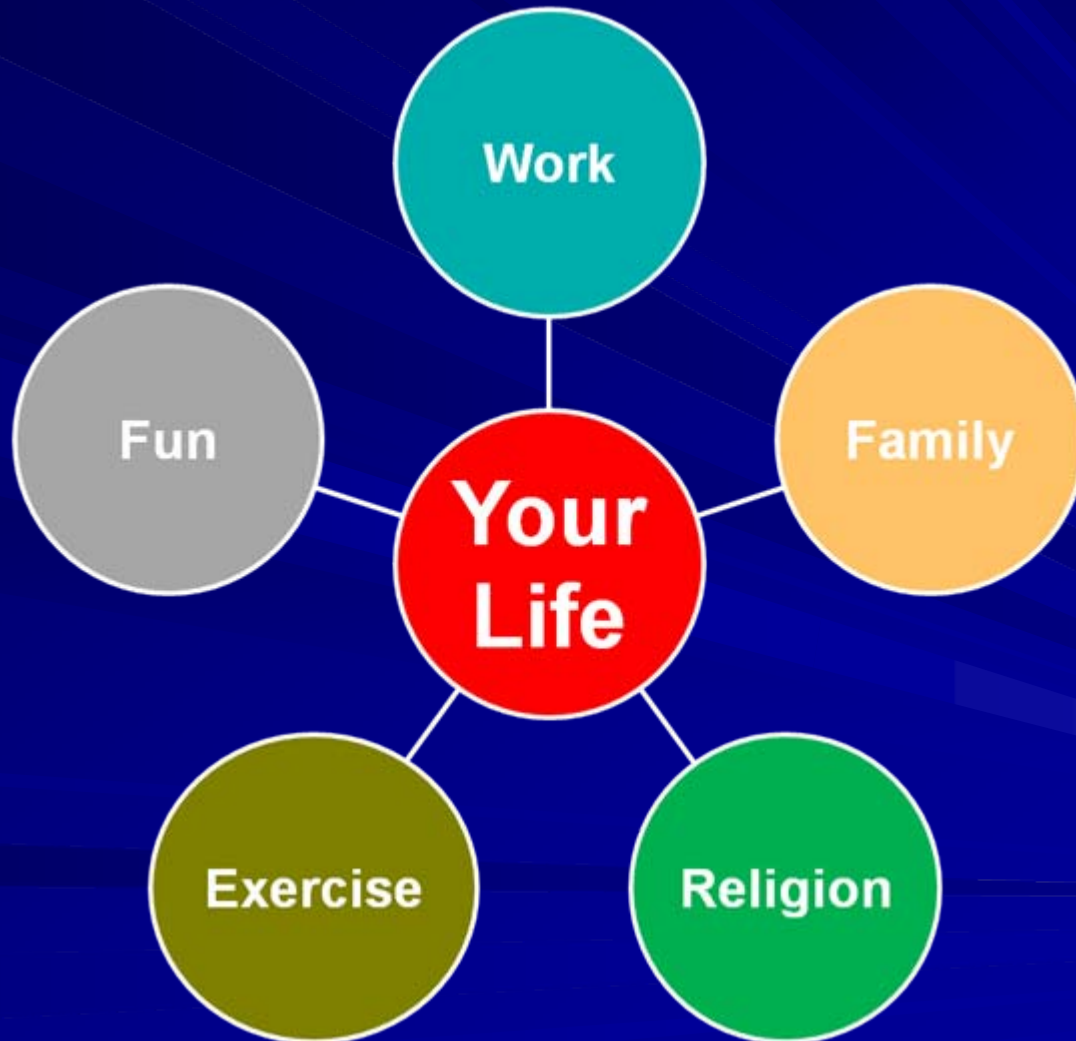
Managing your Professional Relationships

- Family
- Patients
- Referring physicians
- Partners
- Employees

Family

- Don't promise what you can't deliver, surprise them when you deliver anyway
- Stay at home spouse is worth \$117,000 annual salary according to surveys.com
- Make time for spouse/partner and family and stay in their lives
- Balance your work life with your personal/family time
- Take vacations!!

Prioritizing Your Activities



Patients

- History is 95% of your evaluation: listen
- Respect and honor their trust, secrets, schedules; their time is as important as yours
- Respect their lives and accomplishments, especially when they are fading
- Empathize with their suffering and take reasonable steps to alleviate their pain
- Don't look "too busy", sit down to talk to them

Patients cont...

- Communicate: return all of their calls to alleviate their fears
- Its an opportunity not a burden to talk to their family
- Avoid seductive patients = professional death
- Fear and cost concerns can mask themselves as aggression, non-compliance, and intellectualization
- 3% of patients will not like you from the moment they meet you...you will be fired by someone sooner or later
- Wash your hands “foam up” in front of your patients as a matter of ultimate respect

Referring Physicians

- Never complain about too much “work” or too much “rain”
- There are no stupid consults
- Do not flaunt wealth or excess
- Never criticize a doctors care of a patient
- You should be the path of least resistance
- Get to know their office staff
- Always be helpful: sometimes you are just a conduit

Partners

- Income distribution and call distribution are ultimately the only 2 issues that will destroy a group
- Praise in public, criticize only very privately
- Seek mutual respect, service, and trust
- Do extra work and call in their times of need
- Avoid anger, jealousy, and envy

Employees

- Bad employees will destroy your practice
- Choose well, get professional help
- Build them up, and defend them
- Watch them and test your own systems anonymously
- Always avoid extra-marital affairs, but especially with employees, as this is also considered sexual harassment

Harry's Top 10 Rules and Realizations

- In the big scheme you are labor, not management
- You are in sales
- Be a finisher in all that you do; honor your commitments and don't burn bridges
- Stay in a growth mode as you can only coast downhill
- Stay focused on quality care, even though quantity will be needed to survive

Harry's Top 10 Rules and Realizations cont...

- Join and be involved in local, state, and national professional organizations as they will be your network and source for education and fulfillment
- Prepare for disability, jury duty, and life's vagaries.
- When presented with opportunities to lead take them and lead
- Behave daily in a way so that when someone speaks badly of you they won't be believed
- You may turn left out of your driveway today but may turn right tomorrow

Acknowledgements and References

- Pete Pardoll MD, Jay Popp MD, Kern Deshner MD....former speakers on similar topics
- Susan Keane Baker author of Managing Patient Expectations
- Marshall Zaslove MD author of The Successful Physician

■ “If standard of living is your major objective, quality of life almost never improves, but if quality of life is your number one objective, your standard of living almost always improves”

Zig Ziglar