

I ASKED WHY.

THE ONE WHO SAID SHE WAS SATISFIED SAID,

"MY DOCTOR LISTENS TO ME, AND HE TELLS ME WHAT THE PROBLEMS ARE, WHAT HE'LL DO, AND I HAVE A LOT OF CONFIDENCE IN HIM."

THE ONE WHO WAS DISSATISFIED SAID, "I'M FURIOUS AT MY DOCTOR.

IN ORDER TO HAVE SOME SURGERY DONE, I SAW HIM 7 TIMES IN 2 WEEKS, HAD VARIOUS TESTS AND CONSULTATIONS, AND WHEN I CALLED HIM TO ASK A QUESTION, HE SAID, 'NOW REMIND ME WHO YOU ARE AND WHY I KNOW YOU.'"

I SAID TO THEM BOTH,

"IN OTHER WORDS, WHEN I ASKED YOU `ARE YOU SATISFIED

WITH YOUR HEALTH CARE?",

ONE OF YOU SAID "YES", ONE SAID "NO",

BUT WHAT YOU REALLY WERE SAYING IS THAT ONE OF YOU

LIKED YOUR DOCTOR AND ONE OF YOU DIDN'T. ONE HAD

CONFIDENCE IN YOUR DOCTOR, ONE DID NOT."

**THEREFORE, MY MESSAGE TO THE DOCTORS IN AMERICA IS:
WHEN YOU ARE DEALING WITH A PATIENT YOU ARE
REPRESENTING ALL OF AMERICAN MEDICINE, YOU ARE
REPRESENTING AMERICAN HEALTH CARE.**

**WE HAVE MUCH TO DO, BUT LET'S NOT LOSE OUR POSITIVE
ENERGY.**

**THE MESSAGE WE HAVE TO SHARE WITH OURSELVES AND WITH
THE AMERICAN PEOPLE IS A POSITIVE ONE.**

**WE DON'T NEED THE PAST TENSE,... NOSTALGIA ABOUT "THE
GOOD OLD DAYS";**

**NOR DO WE NEED SOME FUTURISTIC MANIFESTO PROMISING
WHAT WE INTEND TO DO.**

**WE NEED CLEAR AND PERSISTENT AFFIRMATION OF THE MANY
GOOD THINGS WE DO,**

DAY IN AND DAY OUT,

**TO MAKE OUR SYSTEM OF MEDICINE --ONCE WE TAKE THINGS IN
HAND -- POTENTIALLY THE BEST IN THE WORLD.**

I HAVE NEVER REGRETTED GOING INTO MEDICINE.

I'D DO IT AGAIN TOMORROW.

**AND I TELL THAT TO ANY YOUNGSTERS WHO ARE CONSIDERING
IT.**

OURS IS A CALLING.

IT IS NOT A BUSINESS.

WE COULD HAVE MADE MONEY DOING OTHER THINGS.

**WE CHOSE MEDICINE --SURGERY-- BECAUSE IT COMBINED A
QUEST FOR KNOWLEDGE WITH A WAY TO SERVE, TO SAVE LIVES,
AND TO ALLEVIATE SUFFERING.**

WE HAVE TO CONVINCING THE PUBLIC WE STILL MEAN IT.

IF WE DO, WE'LL GET WHAT WE NEED TO DO THE JOB RIGHT.

**I THINK I POSSESS A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF CREDIBILITY, BOTH
WITH YOU AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC.**

**I HOPE MY REMARKS TO YOU TODAY DID NOT COST ME SOME OF
MY CREDIBILITY WITH SOME OF YOU BECAUSE YOU DON'T LIKE
WHAT I SAID.**

**I THINK YOU ALL KNOW THAT MEDICINE IN AMERICA IS IN DEEP
TROUBLE, MAYBE AT A TRUE CROSSROADS.**

**IF YOU DON'T WANT TO SEE US TAKE THE ROAD TO CANADA, OR
~~IN~~ GREAT BRITAIN, DO SOMETHING NOW.**

**WE MUST DO SOMETHING, SOMETHING TO REKINDLE THE LOVE
OF OUR PROFESSION, THE PRIDE IN LOFTY ETHICS, THE
ENJOYMENT OF MEDICINE.**

**DON'T JUST WRING YOUR HANDS AND GRUMBLE BECAUSE "THEY"
HAVEN'T DONE SOMETHING.**

YOU ARE THEY.

THANK YOU.

#####

22/25

SPEECH

"EXASPERATION ON BOTH SIDES OF THE STETHOSCOPE"

AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

SAN FRANCISCO, CA

OCTOBER 8, 1990

C. EVERETT KOOP, MD