



## EDITORIAL

# The “What I’ve Learned” series



With this issue of the *Journal of Shoulder and Elbow Surgery*, we will start a new monthly feature, loosely entitled “What I’ve Learned.” This will consist of 1 article per month by many of the grand old names in the world of shoulder and elbow surgery, imparting some of their accumulated wisdom from the course of their careers. All of the names will be immediately recognizable to the readers of this journal.

We often speak now of the importance of evidence-based medicine and trying to publish higher and higher level evidence. These articles will be Level V, at the so-called bottom of the evidence-based medicine totem pole, but I think you may find them the most interesting and important articles in each journal issue.

At a *Journal of Shoulder and Elbow Surgery* Board of Trustees meeting, when I intoned on the importance of publishing high-level articles, Christian Gerber noted, “Charles Neer never published a Level I study in his life.” Christian was correct, yet most of the teachings of Charles Neer are still revered today.

The articles in this series will be very different. Some have no references or footnotes. They are of varied lengths. The authors were given no specific instructions, other than my request to simply tell us what they have learned in their years of practice. I said the articles could be about orthopedics, shoulder and elbow surgery, medicine, or life in general. Some of the articles do not talk much about orthopedics or shoulder and elbow surgery, but all of them contain nuggets of wisdom.

In rereading these in preparation for publishing, I was struck by several things. One was that almost everyone mentioned Charles Neer, and most everyone addressed him almost reverentially as Dr. Neer, similar to the way professional golfers still invoke only the name Mr. Hogan when referring to Ben Hogan. Unfortunately, Dr. Neer cannot provide an article for this series, something I greatly regret. I also wish that E. Amory Codman could enlighten us, but the published writings of Neer

and Codman, the 2 esteemed masters of the field of shoulder surgery, will have to do.

Another thing that is discussed by several of the authors is the importance of how you treat people—not just other surgeons or colleagues. Most emphasized treating your patients well, with empathy, but also the nurses, medical assistants, laboratory technicians, and all the various people at hospitals and clinics who make our lives better by the work they do but receive little notice for it.

Finally, most everyone who discussed things outside of medicine emphasized how important it is to set your priorities and take time with those important to you—your family. They echoed words I heard recently at the University of Arizona orthopedic graduation. Dr. Norman Chutkan, the director of the residency there, addressed the departing residents and told them that one often has to make a choice—do more surgery, see more patients, or do the other. He urged them to do the other, which included being with their families and the people who matter to them, and told them they will never regret it. Wise words.

I hope you will enjoy this series as much as I have enjoyed reading the wisdom of our mentors.

## Disclaimer

The author, his immediate family, and any research foundations with which he is affiliated have not received any financial payments or other benefits from any commercial entity related to the subject of this article.

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