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## Nice things

C. Douglas Phillips, MD, FACR

*I get tired of hearing it's a crummy world and that people are no damned good.*

—Robert Fulghum from  
*All I Really Need to Know  
I Learned in Kindergarten*

Every so often nice things happen. Okay, not nearly as often as you'd like, but it doesn't change the fact that it was a nice thing. So, I will break from my nearly uninterrupted stream of cynical observations to point out a few good things I've seen lately. Don't everybody freak out; more rampant cynicism next month.

One of my technologists was faced with a really horrible situation a few weeks ago—a patient that would not be helped and would not accept any explanations of any form and wanted to go home with a scalp on a pole. They were 10 minutes late (Egad! Horrors!) getting on the table. Someone had to pay. The schedulers and the staff had already heard it; now it was the tech's turn. I was contemplating adding my own scalp to the mix to intercede, but the tech was artful in detailing the (true) tale of a day in free-fall and add-ons (this patient was one of those), and that in taking care of each patient appropriately, sometimes a few extra minutes were necessary for those

who cannot move quickly or require help getting prepared, etc. Far from helping, I listened at a distance and learned. The patient actually apologized—it had been a bad day for them, too, and they were sorry to have been unpleasant. Not common, by any means, but a little reassurance that the situation may not be too far gone to retrieve and that people can be nice.

I know of very few radiologists that like the role of disclosing significant findings to a patient—hundreds of reasons, some of them good, some not so good. “I don't have a relationship with that patient.” “I don't know what level of understanding they are at.” “The primary physician always gets upset,” and so on. I have personally been hammered by a colleague for discussing the findings on an exam with a patient—I know. But one of my colleagues spent a good half hour discussing a significant finding with a patient a few weeks ago. And brought the family in on the patient's request. And it was hard. But, it was right. And everyone understood, and all was done in an air of joint respect and at a level that everyone was comfortable with. Nope, no billing code for that. It is just a good thing.

Hey, and that is in NYC. Tough town. Keep doing that good work.

Mahalo.

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