



Is this some kind of human fishing expedition? See how many you can get on the hook today?

Please, please be my contact...

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"Make friends, not contacts."

—Anonymous

I am told that networking is a critical, even indispensable part of modern living. As doctors, we are hearing more and more about the value of networking to our practices, careers and patients. And, by networking, at least as it appears to me as a somewhat dispassionate observer in this modern era, I mean having a load of "friends" on Facebook, and a few million followers on Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Yelp, Pinterest, or whatever. And, by this metric, many of us are "failing."

Allow me this rant.

Several times a week, I get an email that comes from one of the social media sites I spend a little time on (I actually do like Twitter; it caters to my rant tendencies), and that email tells me that someone is now following me, or wants to be my contact, or something along that line. Occasionally, I know the person. I have met them, didn't know they did this stuff, too, and am happy to oblige this little modern dance of life.

Often, however, I don't know them. I don't know their name, their face, their leanings or philosophy, their careers, their state or even country of residence, or ANYTHING. In those cases, *on occasion* (and very rarely) they send along a personal note and tell me why they want to be an electronic contact. Maybe they too are a radiologist, somewhere. Maybe they have heard me speak, or have met me somewhere, or hired someone I trained, or some other reason to be familiar with who I am.

The rest? I have no earthly idea. Do you get these, too? What are these people doing? Is this some kind of human fishing expedition? See how many you can get on the hook today? Are they running up a body count of some form? Does the person with the most contacts get a cash prize?

What this does for us is provide a bizarre metric for networking that, I must admit, is meaningless to me. Would I be a better physician if I had 100K contacts on LinkedIn? I don't think so. I don't even do Facebook. So, for me, as the quote I pulled for this little discourse says, I'll take friends. If they become contacts, okay. But friends are better.

Keep doing that good work. Mahalo.

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