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EAD 864 Adult Career Development

How does Chapter 7, entitled “Vision” of the book *Incidental Findings* represent important themes in Dr. Ofri’s career development?

Dr. Danielle Ofri offers readers a glimpse into her intimate thoughts regarding her development as a medical practitioner in the book *Incidental Findings*. In Chapter Seven entitled “Vision,” readers are exposed to Dr. Ofri’s internal struggle with becoming aware of her limitations as a healer and educator through an encounter with Mr. Karlin, a patient whose illness she cannot diagnose. Although initially troubled by this conundrum, Dr. Ofri is committed to supporting Mr. Karlin through providing him with medical care and an authentic connection. Dr. Ofri’s values of establishing credibility, demonstrating skillfulness and listening to patients are dominant career development themes illustrated through the process of caring for Mr. Karlin.

In American society medical physicians are instinctively revered due to the nature of their work and socio-economic status. However, in the internal environment of hospitals this notion of honor has to be earned from colleagues and patients alike. Dr. Ofri goes to great lengths to demonstrate her worthiness of holding the attending physician position through maneuvering the system to quickly obtain medicines and instructing interns about the importance of addressing patients’ pain. Her theory of “gaining credibility by using decisive actions” suggests a readiness to demonstrate situational power to efficiently accomplish tasks.

On the other hand, a doctor’s credibility can diminish when he/she makes mistakes that are seemingly obvious, such as Dr. Ofri’s orders to give Mr. Karlin a high

dosage of Valium disregarding the intern's objections. As Dr. Ofri wrestles with almost losing a patient, she becomes uncertain about her skills, therefore suggesting the normalcy of physicians vacillating between feeling competent and not.

Dr. Ofri values being able to demonstrate knowledge and skills related to internal medicine. Throughout the chapter, Dr. Ofri continuously ponders Mr. Karlin's case and orders several assessments in order to make a diagnoses. Her high regard for being able to provide patients with accurate information about their condition is made evident by her frustrations with her inability to properly diagnose and treat Mr. Karlin. It seems as though Dr. Ofri becomes disappointed in herself personally when she is not able to provide optimal healthcare for reasons beyond her control.

More importantly, "Vision" represents Dr. Ofri's commitment to fostering authentic connections with patients. Mr. Karlin commented that she was the first person to actually sit down beside him to listen to his concerns. Throughout her work, Dr. Ofri has developed an appreciation for listening as a tool to understand her patients and their ailments. The narratives help her to understand the emotional aspect of her work, both in terms of what she and her patients are experiencing. Gathering information is a characteristic of a good doctor. Dr. Ofri has an atypical approach to gathering information, but effective nonetheless. Listening to her patients also forces Dr. Ofri to contend with personal bias. Seeing Mr. Karlin in such a weak state prohibits her from believing that he could have led an active and successful life. Therefore, it requires constant reflection to be aware of personal opinions and their propensity to detract from performance.

While the *Incidental Findings* and “Vision” are specifically about Dr. Ofri’s experiences, the career development themes regarding the process of establishing credibility and demonstrating authority are universal to all fields. Although respect may naturally come with a position, a thorough demonstration of skill will determine if one’s respect will increase or falter. Also, the thoughts of inadequacy associated with not having answers when they are expected can be characteristics of most careers, not just medical. Dr. Ofri’s openness and vulnerability is a call to action for more exploration of emotions and realizing the untold story of work.