

C R I M S O N
CYPRESS



Photo by Seng P. Merrill

your RESILIENCY
RESOURCE



The cypress tree. It may bend, but it does not break. It can grow in many types of environments. It comes in a variety of shapes and sizes. Flood resistant. Decay resistant. Used to protect others. A giant among the trees. Root systems that are specialized to withstand toppling in storms. It changes in color and appearance, but it doesn't become weaker in the process. It contains its own protectant. It does not crack, split, or warp. While it may be slow-growing, it is distinct and rare. It is so rare, that it isn't harvested, but is so essential to its environment that it is allowed to stay grounded. Famous for its longevity. Strong. Sturdy. Resilient.

The cypress tree is much like the professional student. We are pushed to the edge of breaking, yet we only bend. We withstand emotional floods, learning to shield ourselves and protecting others, and grow stronger in the midst of the thistle. Although we change, we do not waver because of it. We may grow slowly, but we are deep-rooted. We are resilient.

WE ARE THE CRIMSON CYPRESS.



Each person's journey is different, but we are all grounded by the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center experience. The canopy of our professors and mentors shelters us; but that doesn't stop the harshness of life's weather from thundering down upon us. As we flourish from seeds of students and branch out as professionals, we know we'll face tremendous valleys and mountains. We need sustenance to protect us from erosion.

May this publication serve as that nourishment; the water and sunlight that gives you the strength to continue to grow and bloom through the changing seasons.


Clark Bishop


Sara Collins

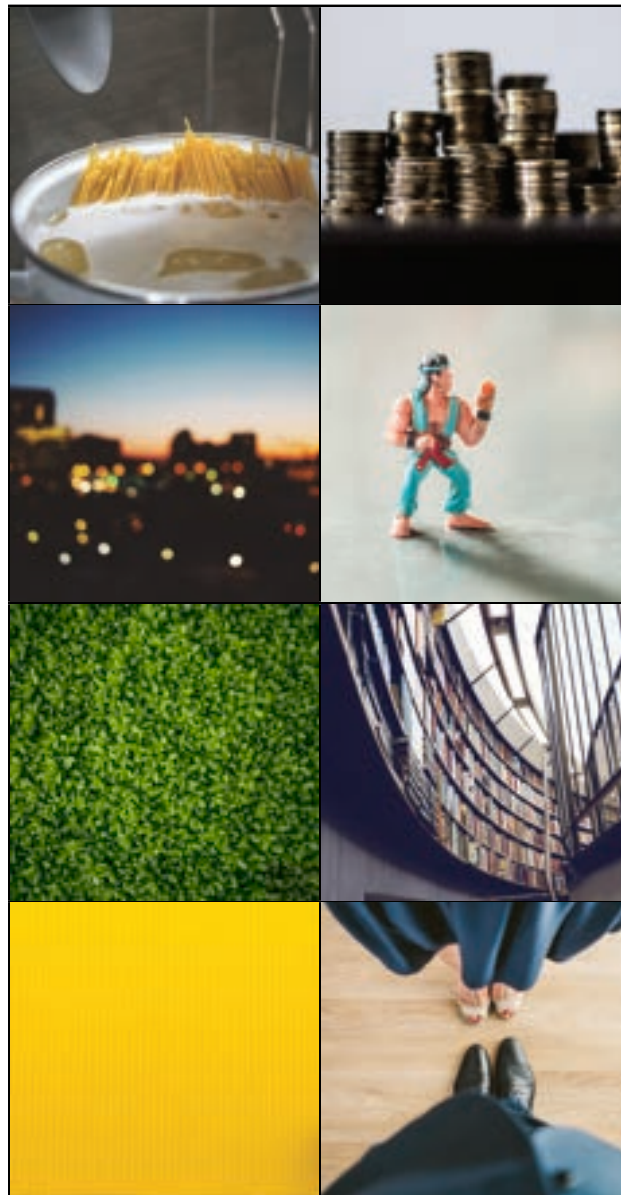

Emily Ford


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Editors: Sara Collins, Emily Ford, Reagan Williams
Layout & Design: Michael Minh Nguyen
Operations: Clark Bishop

Published: Spring 2015
Acknowledgments:
Legacy Leadership Track, Dean Draugalis, Dean Wilson, Dean Smith, Paula Meder

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This publication, printed by University Printing Services, is issued by the University of Oklahoma. 3,500 copies have been prepared and distributed at no cost to the taxpayers of the State of Oklahoma.

Crimson Cypress is a journal dedicated to the evolution of new students into professionals. The works in the journal have been chosen for their interesting and heartfelt descriptions of resiliency and what that meant to each individual. The works do not necessarily represent the opinions, views, interests or concerns, of the editors or the faculty adviser of the journal or of the University of Oklahoma or its College of Pharmacy. The publication was funded by private funds.

THE

1ST YEAR

We asked a group of first-year students to describe what was on their minds entering their new professional programs. We wanted to know what kept them up at night, what concerns they had, and where they needed help the most. Here are their responses.



- 01** ACADEMICS
- 02** FINANCES
- 03** RELATIONSHIPS
- 04** HEALTH
- 05** WORK
- 06** FAMILY
- 07** TRAGEDY

FEAR WORRIES

FINANCES:

How do I balance paying for school and my wedding while completely living off student loans?

RELATIONSHIPS:

Will I be able to make time to spend with my husband while still succeeding in school?

ACADEMICS:

How will I handle the stress of classes with the stress of life?

FAMILY:

How do I get through professional school while pregnant?

HEALTH:

Will I have the time to stay healthy and physically active while handling the stress of school?

WORK:

Is it possible to hold a job while in a professional program?

TRAGEDY:

Do I have options if a tragedy occurs, and how will I balance the workload of school while spending time with my loved ones?





OREGANO

and

GRIT

By Reagan Williams
Pharm.D. Candidate 2016



“...I TAKE THESE VOWS VOLUNTARILY WITH THE FULL REALIZATION OF THE RESPONSIBILITY WITH WHICH I AM ENTRUSTED BY THE PUBLIC.”

Excerpt from Oath of a Pharmacist

I just took an oath. This is real. I'm actually here. I'm going to be a pharmacist. Look at my family out there. They have never been more proud of me.

There I was, all bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, ready to take on the world. My hard work had finally paid off. I was about to start pharmacy school. And this was my White Coat Ceremony. I looked good. I bought new shoes, the kind of shoes that make a girl look smart. I had my head held up high. Nothing was going to hold me back.

I was so nervous my first day of school. I had just moved here from Alabama and didn't know a soul. I had laid out my outfit the night before, had my new pink backpack, and my new pens in my pencil pouch. I had even gotten up early to eat a healthy breakfast. I was prepared, or so I thought.

And then the second day of school rolled around, my first pharmaceuticals class. *What is pharmaceuticals, anyhow?* Let me do a Google search.

“You, the redhead. What is this graph representing?”

Great. I'm that redhead. Honestly, I was paying attention, but I don't even know what pharmaceuticals means, much less this crazy looking graph. I'm going to have to buzz in. I woke up late and didn't wear make-up today. I don't know anyone in my class and they are all going to think I'm NOT SMART ENOUGH. I'm going to have to dye my hair a different color.

“I DON'T KNOW ANYONE IN MY CLASS AND THEY ARE ALL GOING TO THINK I'M NOT SMART ENOUGH. I'M GOING TO HAVE TO DYE MY HAIR A DIFFERENT COLOR.”

I could feel the sweat beading along my forehead, glistening on camera, my heart racing. Can the Tulsa campus hear my heart beating? Can they see my shirt plopping up and down? Because I. am. positive. that my heart is going to explode.

I'm not sure what I said. It may not have even been coherent. But I do feel confident that whatever I said... it was not the right answer.

I do remember that I went home and cried that night. The first of many times I cried that year.

My crying wasn't when just a few tears roll down your cheek, but more like the “Kim Kardashian” type of crying. Ugly crying. Face is all red. Words wobble while you're trying to catch your breath.

My poor father, he doesn't know what to do when I get like that. When I finally calmed down enough to tell him my misery, he replied, “**Reagan, if it were easy, everybody would do it.**”

Are you kidding me? This is what you say? This is your big advice? I know who's not getting Dad of the Year this year.

And then he made me spaghetti. He makes me spaghetti every time I cry. He's gotten pretty good at it. I've sat at the counter and watched him make it so many times. Normally, I'm still trying to calm

myself down from whatever it was that worked me up that day.

Man, it's so good. Maybe it's the way he cuts the pepperoni into perfect little pie slices before he puts it in the sauce. Or the way he gently taps the bottle of dried oregano so that it falls onto the meat, and then onto the sauce, and then one last time right at the end.

“You have to season each layer,” my sister has said a million times.

Or it could be whatever goodness they put into the bottle of Prego®. *We're a semi-homemade*

kind of family. But I think it's so good because he makes spaghetti when I need him to. Because he loves me.

It's now a big joke between he and I. If either of us has a complaint the other responds, "If it were easy, everybody would do it."

I laugh now, but when he first said it, I was infuriated. *You think I don't know that? Of course it isn't easy. That doesn't help me.*

But as time went on, the trueness of his words spoke to me. Not everyone can do this. As professional students... We. Are. Not. Everybody.

There was a long time that Dr. Hussain, the pharmaceuticals professor that called me out, was on my list of professors to avoid, but now, he's one of my favorites. He likes to dance to "Gangnam Style" and "Uptown Funk" just as much as I do. If I had gone through school harboring bad feelings towards him, I wouldn't have learned as much as I did from him. The attitude problem was mine, and mine alone.

No one remembers that day, except me. And in the grand scheme of things, it doesn't matter. I got an answer wrong.

School is a good place to do that.

There were many times that first year I questioned if I had what it took to be a professional — if I was smart enough — if I could learn enough. I compared myself to others way too much.

I seriously considered calling up admissions and asking if they had sent my acceptance letter by mistake.

In my opinion, self-doubt is an evil emotion that tries to steal from you. *It's almost as evil as pharmacokinetics, but I digress.* It almost stole from me a ton of fun times. My insecurities were wrecking me. I needed to find my grit.

My sister has a tattoo in Latin that says, "Aut viam inveniam aut faciam."

I shall find a way or make one. (English Translation)

That's what I did. I found a way. I made a way. I figured it out. I changed my attitude. I let my tears fall when necessary. I ate a lot of spaghetti. I kept trying. I didn't make all A's. I didn't even make all B's. But I did it. I found things that I really like and do well, and I focused on them. I didn't forget about my weaknesses, but I gave myself a break. I kept my hair as red as over-the-counter pseudoephedrine. I danced to "Uptown Funk." I stopped comparing myself to others. I can shine, and so can they. I gave my family lots of hugs. I relied on my friends, and I tried to help them, too. I ate spaghetti.

Most of my grit came from my dad and his advice. Good ole' Randy-Pandy-Puddin-N-Pie. *Don't tell him I told you I call him that.* And don't forget his perfectly oregano-seasoned spaghetti.

Randy's Meltdown Spaghetti

Ingredients:

- 3 Tbsp. butter
 - 1 small onion
 - 1 carton mushrooms
 - 2 Tbsp. garlic powder
 - 3 Tbsp. oregano
 - 1 Tbsp. salt
 - 1 Tbsp. pepper
 - 1 lb. ground beef
 - 1 box angel hair pasta
 - 2 15-oz. cans tomato sauce
 - 1 bag pepperoni slices
-
-

Directions:

1. Chop onion, making sure not to let the fumes irritate daughter's eyes even more.
 2. Over medium heat, sauté onions and mushrooms in butter.
 3. Add the ground beef and cook until done.
 4. While beef is cooking, carefully cut the pepperoni into pie slices so they are aesthetically pleasing.
 5. Add oregano to taste.
 6. Add the tomato sauce, pepperoni, salt, pepper, garlic powder, and more oregano.
 7. Spices may be adjusted to your own liking, but not the oregano.
 8. Cook noodles as directed.
 9. Add one last sprinkle of oregano, for good measure.
-
-



LIVING FOR OTHERS

By Phong Hoang, Pharm. D.

Co-Owner, Creative Care Pharmacy, Oklahoma City

OU College of Pharmacy Class of 2009

My toughest year during school was my last. It was not due to academics or balancing my social life, but due to the loss of a family member – my father. But the story doesn't end there. The beginning is just as important, because it shaped my decisions after my father's passing.

My parents came to America from Vietnam with nothing and unable to speak English. They worked hard – overtime, long hours, and sometimes two jobs – to provide for my four younger brothers and me. Being the oldest of five boys, I was tasked at a young age to care for siblings

and even discipline them while my parents worked. My brothers and I were informed on several accounts that we were fortunate and lucky to be living in America; to be able to make something of ourselves rather than to live in the poverty stricken, opportunity-limited country of my parents. Thus, we were all supposed to study and work hard everyday to take advantage of those opportunities and achieve the American dream of prosperity and success.

Being a boy scout, our motto was, "Be prepared." I took this to heart and tried to be prepared for most situations and misfortunes that crossed my way. However, if we fast-forward to my final year in pharmacy school, we will see a time that would debunk my former statement about being prepared – when my father passed away from a major stroke. At the time, my father was the primary breadwinner for our family of seven. With him gone, I was next in command as man of the house. This new responsibility left me with

a sense of panic of epic proportions. I was worried about planning funeral arrangements, getting paperwork for my dad's death certificate, dealing with the Social Security Office, earning an income for the family, paying bills for the home, establishing health insurance for everyone, fixing my mom's car, and a thousand other things. *How was I supposed to do all this and go to pharmacy school?* I was already in significant debt with school loans and, due to being in full-time rotations, had no time to work more to help my mom with the bills. I had to withdraw from my current rota-

“ I like to think that my father's death was a sacrifice, to steer me away from **simply making a living** to **living for others.** ”

tion site to take care of my family.

I used that month off from school to calculate, assess (much like a SOAP note), and plan my family's future and my own. My financial calculations kept pointing me toward one solution: graduate from school. So I returned to school with a new mindset, changed from my meaningless pursuit of prosperity and success, with motivation to ensure the survival of my family.

There had been a lingering guilt that I had been shouldering since my father's passing. I had the power and knowledge to help prevent his chances of a cardiovascular incident, but did not actively apply that information directly to his hypertensive state. I felt responsible for his death and I blamed my passivity as a healthcare professional. I felt like a hypocrite.

Unbeknownst to me, I would encounter a community resident pharmacist that would change my career path. I met her during a rotation

where she was completing her year of residency. I'm sure I bugged her with the numerous questions about her experience, and her answers kept sticking in my mind. It was one of those transcendent moments, *when you realize that the plan you had for yourself may not be the plan meant for you after all.*

So, I abandoned my notion to become a retail pharmacist. I was filled with a new mission that trailed away from the sole intent of providing money for my family, and looked forward to the opportunity to become a community pharmacy resident. My

new objective was to become the best pharmacist that I could be, so that I

could give my patients the opportunity to see their children grow up, get married, and graduate from school.

In retrospect, I wish I would have been more proactive with my father's health; however, his passing was the catalyst for me to work harder, to learn as much as possible, and to become a better healthcare professional. I strongly dislike clichés but the saying "things happen for a reason" resonates deeply with me.

I hope that no one else experiences the loss of his or her parents early in life. But the loss of my father has allowed me to connect and sympathize with patients who have lost someone. The healing process takes time – a lot of time. And the truth is that the pain never really goes away. You just kind of learn how to deal with it. I like to think that my father's death was a sacrifice, to steer me away from *simply making a living* to *living for others.*

OUHSC

FINANCIAL AID

SERVICES

By the OUHSC Office of Financial Aid

66% OF FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS POLL OF FINANCIAL AID AND PERSON

What is one thing that you want to tell students about the Office of Financial Aid?

The purpose of this office is to provide guidance for students to find resources to fund their education. Our office does not provide personal finance counseling.

What is one feature of the office that would be useful to first-year students?

Our office provides financial aid counselors that the students may use if they have any questions about general loan information. The Financial Aid website also is a great resource to get started.

What are the costs of counseling?

The financial aid counseling is completely free!

Who will I talk to when I come to counseling?

Lori Frazee and Audra Main are the two financial aid counselors that will meet with you based on the first letter of your last name.

How do I get started?

Don't hesitate to contact our office by phone, e-mail, or stop by in-person.

What are your business hours?

Monday - Friday: 8 A.M. to 5 P.M.

What is one piece of advice you would give all students to improve their financial aid status?

Financial aid is for the student and not for the family. Make sure that you think about budgeting accordingly and make adjustments to your spending habits before expanding your family.

1. <http://www.ouhsc.edu/financialservices/SFA/>

CONTACT:

OUHSC Financial Aid Office
David L. Boren Student Union, Rm. 301
1106 N. Stonewall Ave., OKC, Okla. 73117
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lori-frazee@ouhsc.edu

Audra Main
Last Name N-Z
(405) 271-2118 ext. 48813
audra-main@ouhsc.edu

ED FELT UNDERPREPARED ON THE TOPICS AL FINANCE EVEN AFTER ORIENTATION.

Professional students, who may take 20-25 years to repay their loans, and the amounts borrowed could end up being at least DOUBLE the original amount.

Here is a list from The Office of Financial Aid of things for which students have been denied additional loans.

- Loan for new Lexus already purchased
- Student loan payment for a spouse
- \$40.00 onesie for an infant and Elf on the Shelf Book™
- Kids extra-curricular activities
- Speeding ticket, lawyer fees
- Paleo® Diet meal plans for after the baby was born
- Window tint and alarm for car
- Plants from an expensive nursery
- Credit card bill that primarily had lingerie and liquor store charges
- \$10,000 for wedding in Jamaica
- Weight Watchers®

Resources:

Free Application for Federal Student Aid

www.fafsa.ed.gov

National Student Loan Data System

www.nsls.ed.gov

To Complete MPN, Entrance Counseling, Plus Loan App

www.studentloans.gov

OUHSC Financial Aid Information

www.ouhsc.edu/financialservices/SFA/

FINANCIAL AID OFFICE STAFF



Pamela Jordan
Director

Why I do what I do:
“I love providing our students with a means to go to school and reach their goals.”



Mendy Schmerer
Assistant Director

Why I do what I do:
“Higher education is expensive enough, but health professions degrees almost guarantee loan debt. And for many students, a lot of debt. If I can help create an informed borrower, I feel I have done that student a great service.”



Audra Main
Financial Aid Counselor

Why I do what I do:
“Money can be an intimidating topic and I find that I have the ability to calm students about financial aid.”



Lori Frazee
Financial Aid Counselor

Why I do what I do:
“It is incredibly rewarding to help students with a life goal and be a part of their journey of attaining a degree.”



Stacey Harris
Senior Financial Aid Representative

Why I do what I do:
“As a former student, I know firsthand how daunting the financial aid process can be. I want to provide insight and make the process less frightening.”



Casey Blair
Financial Aid Representative

Why I do what I do:
“I like helping students, like myself, achieve their goals. Whether their goal is an M.S. or Ph.D., knowing that I helped them in some way achieve that makes what I do special.”

The Crimson Questionnaire

1. Name:

Pamela Jordan

2. Nickname:

PJ

3. My guilty pleasure is:

Dark Chocolate

4. Draw up a doodle:



5. Most people would be surprised to know:

I am a fanatical animal lover.

6. The best part of my job is:

My staff

Four wonderful HSC students - the best compared to other colleges when I worked.

7. The best advice I got in school was:

If you think you are doing well enough - try harder.

8. When I need advice, I go to:

My best friend

9. When entering an uneasy situation, I get confidence from:

Past Experience

10. If you pulled up next to me at a stoplight, you would see me singing:

I'm still standing - Elton John

11. I am always cheered up by:

stories of kindness to animals

12. The quote I tend to live by is:

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you!

13. Give me

optimism
and I'll be your friend forever.

14. To live life fully is to:

Take time to do what you enjoy (within reason!) Don't always look ahead & think you will find time later.

15. Final words:

Sometimes we need to realize that we really only have the present. Plan for the future, but don't just live for it.





PERSONAL FINANCE



with Kevin Farmer, R.Ph., Ph.D.

*Professor and Vice-Chair, Pharmacy: Clinical and Administrative Sciences
OU College of Pharmacy*

1. What spending habits do students need to break?

The chief problem is living off student loans. Students should work enough to pay for living expenses if at all possible. I have seen people using their loans for all types of crazy purchases that have nothing to do with school expenses.

2. What are some things students can do to minimize debt and reduce spending?

I suggest borrowing only enough for what you need. Create a budget and LIVE BY IT. You are allowed to borrow far more than what you need – avoid the temptation to do so.

3. How can students manage interest that begins accruing immediately?

Pay off the interest before it compounds if at all possible. Even if that means using this year's loan to pay interest on last year's loan.

4. What would be the most important financial advice you would give to new professional students?

Create a budget before you start professional school. There are plenty of apps out there. There is no need to create a spreadsheet you won't use.

5. What resources would you recommend to students concerned about student debt?

Two resources that I suggest are the U.S. Education website and The Dave Ramsey Financial Peace University Program.

6. How should students who were the primary source of income for their families approach paying for their education?

They will need to reduce their living expenses to better match “being a student again.”

7. What other information regarding personal finance do you see as important for new professional students?

It's all about prioritizing. Debt repayment needs to be first on the list post-graduation. It gives students the ability to move on to other objectives in life – it means freedom. If it is not a priority early, it will follow you for the majority of your life and affect every decision you make.

In summary:

Just as preparing for how to get into professional school, one should have a solid financial plan in place when considering loans. This is a significant investment, on the same scale of purchasing a house. Know what you are getting into and how much it will cost.

RE FRAMING

By Michael J. Smith, Ph.D., R.Ph.

*Assistant Dean for Tulsa Operations and Associate Professor
OU College of Pharmacy*

Engaging in physical exercise is an important part of my lifestyle. I spend an hour working out at the gym each weekday morning before work to support my physical health and build energy capacity. Nearly two years ago, I broke my right index finger while I was at the gym. To my surprise the x-ray showed a small mass on the inner space of my bone, which contributed to the break. Fortunately, the mass was benign, but still required surgery to remove it. This also meant that my daily routine and lifestyle was about to be greatly impacted for the next three months.

I began to experience a gamut of emotions, especially fear, frustration, and disgust. Having never undergone surgery before, I was fearful of the experience, outcome, and post-recovery that would occur. I was frustrated because after a significant amount of time and effort invested in exercising, my fitness routine was going to be compromised. I was disgusted because, being right-handed, I would be required to use my left hand for virtually all daily functioning. I felt like my life was going to be greatly interrupted by this health event.

Shortly after the injury occurred, it took having family and good friends around me to bring awareness to how I was responding to the situation. I was focusing on what had happened and how it was negatively impacting my life. Those around me who were observing my behavior led me to “frame” the situation differently. Specifically, they advised I consider what I *can* do and identify what I *do* have in my control over this situation. My trainer at the gym, who knew how much our workouts meant to my daily routine, worked with me to develop an exercise plan without weight-bearing activities, so that I could remain physically active. My parents suggested I have the surgery in their city so I could stay with them for a week and recover. Because of their support, I did not get aggravated when using my left hand, but learned to laugh at how awkward I looked while brushing my teeth, combing my hair, writing, and eating. I shifted my focus to what I was capable of doing and became fully engaged in life as such.

So what did I learn from this experience?

1. A life-changing situation can occur at any moment, often without a “heads-up” warning. It is what it is, so engage it when it does. You don’t have to like it, but you need to address it.
2. Life events, although varied and with different intensities, happen to everyone and no one is immune. You are never alone.
3. You have two options: either focus on what it takes away from you, or focus on what it does *not* take from you. It’s your choice, and your decision will greatly impact your outlook on life.
4. Allow your family and friends to support you. Someone will have a relatable experience and can lead you through it. They will care about you and want to help you.
5. Re-framing how you perceive a challenging situation is good practice.
6. Learn from it, and then be available to others who will need your support.



THE SCIENCE OF TOUCH

By Sara Collins
Pharm.D. Candidate 2016

Let's briefly get into the neuroscience behind resiliency, stress, love and all those other crazy emotions that we experience on a daily basis. Stress, that lovely thing that gives you wrinkles by your eyes and makes your blood pressure spike, is caused by the release of a hormone called cortisol. Normally, your body will use a negative feedback system to reduce cortisol when the stressor is removed; but let's face it, being in professional school is one stressor after another. This often leads to chronic stress (and elevated cortisol) in the very people that are supposed to tell others how to be healthy. If that wasn't enough, studies have shown that alcohol, coffee, and sleep deprivation (sound familiar?) will further raise the cortisol levels in your body. Now, before you start stressing out about stressing out, let us tell you a few ways to reduce those levels of cortisol.

There's another little hormone in your body called oxytocin that is like the anti-cortisol, if you will. It's been called the love hormone, the anti-stress hormone, and basically the hormone responsible for all the good and lovely feelings in your body. The largest release of oxytocin is from breastfeeding and orgasms, but it's also released by physical touch and even the thought of touch.

So, when it's thirty minutes before a big test and you can feel the sweat beading on your brow and your heart rate rising, try a few of these simple tricks to calm yourself. If you are studying with a loved one or a good friend, give them a hug. Don't be weird about it. A few seconds will do the job. If you are not around people who you can do this with, or if you'd cause some problems if you tried to, try placing your hand over your heart or wrapping your arms around yourself. This works just as well when you're alone too. You can also try imagining a time in the past where you've been hugged by someone that you care about. Let those warm, happy feelings settle over you. Remembering a time when you've felt safe, loved, and cherished can also help your body release a burst of oxytocin. While you're performing these few simple acts, remember to control your breathing to a nice, normal rhythm. So, the next time that you feel your stress level rising, remember that little love hormone and the wonders it can do for you.

1. Biology of stress. (n.d.). Retrieved September 25, 2015, from <http://www.humanstress.ca/stress/what-is-stress/biology-of-stress.html>
2. Bock, R., & Weeks, M. (2002). Stress System Malfunction Could Lead to Serious, Life Threatening Disease. NIH Background.
3. Graham, L. (2010). The Neuroscience of Resilience. *The Wise Brain Bulletin*, 4(6).
4. The Physiology of Stress: Cortisol and the Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal Axis. (2011). *Dartmouth Undergraduate Journal of Science (DUJS)*.

ON CHANGE

By Frank Miranda, D.D.S., M.Ed., M.B.A.

“You’ve changed so much!”

Yes...

I don’t dress the way I did

My hair is longer

My views are different

I no longer jibe with you

But here’s the thing...

In this ever-changing world

The only constant left is change

Without it, I would die of boredom

And you would be bored with me

You may have liked the old

Better than the new

But I didn’t change for you

Stick around...

I still wear the same old suit

It’s just been altered a bit

Tomorrow, I may not like the fit

Control Amidst the CHAOS

By Damian Dartez
Community Pharmacist
OU College of Pharmacy Class of 2015

It has been a struggle for me to decide whether or not to tell this story, but after much debate and receiving advice from a friend, I feel like it would be a shame to not share something that could potentially help others. Everyone has his or her own path and struggles, and I feel those experiences are to be cherished and shared. Life, I believe, is not meant to be easy, but instead something to remind you of your own existence. Pain is the antithesis of pleasure, and to realize your own worth and self-value, you must undergo the labors of life and learn how to endure them.

Resiliency is nothing new to me. I don't think I would be where I am today without the strength that I have gained from my journey. There were a few moments in my life where I knew my path would not be easy, but I think the biggest eye-opener was when my mother was arrested - for the second time. I was left alone with my grandmother, and in that instant I knew I had to grow up. I try not to relive the past; instead I try to stay positive about my future. It would be a mistake not to learn from the events that made me who I am as an individual.

As a child, you assume that you have no power or control. The world can whiz by in the blink of an eye, and you feel like you are just trying to keep up. These feelings dominated my childhood. There was always something changing. I had little control. My dad's military background strained our family because of the constant moving, and eventually my parents divorced. I can pinpoint my parents' divorce as the last moment in my life where there was any stability. From that point on, my mom went into an emotional tailspin. Every-

thing that could have gone wrong - did. She was arrested for the first time. She lost her job and bills piled up. The house was foreclosed - we became homeless - and to make matters worse, we had to go live with my grandmother.

I remember my mom saying, "I would rather die than go live in Lawton, Oklahoma with that woman."

To put things mildly, our lives were in chaos. After moving in with my grandmother, my mother was still an emotional wreck and tensions in the household always ran high. I tried to hold it together for her, but when my mom was arrested for the second time, I was completely shaken. I have never felt more alone. I didn't know if my mom would ever come back. I was worried about what would happen to her, to me, and to my future. It seemed like my grandmother didn't care if my mom ever got out of jail, and she stated it was a "teaching moment."

I was 14 at the time of her arrest and I had no idea what I was going to do. I felt lost, confused, and scared. I shut down and felt like a zombie for those first couple of weeks. Finally, one day I had an epiphany that I needed to take control of my own life before it was too late. It is odd to think about now, but I think the first step I took toward controlling my life was scheduling to brush my teeth and floss on a regular basis. It seems so small and trivial, but those simple routines changed my life forever. It was this realization that inspired me to focus on myself and take control of the things that I could, amidst all the chaos that was my life.

The source of my resiliency came from my desire for stability and independence. I wanted to be able to not worry about where I am going to live, to help and take care of my loved ones, and to not feel so powerless. I didn't want to give up on the hope that I would see my mom again or find a way to help her. I focused on getting my life on track and staying positive. I kept telling myself, "Things will work out, and if they don't, I will figure it out when the time comes."

At some point, I was able to convince my grandmother to get my mom out of jail, and I remember realizing that there is hope in every situation. The task you do, no matter how small, can make a huge impact. The key is to DO something, because doing nothing will result in just that - nothing.

I now realize that the emotional shock was what I needed to take control of my life. There wasn't much that I could do, but I did what I could and started improving myself. I only wish I would have come to this realization sooner.

The advice I would give to those going through something similar is this:

- 1. You need to grieve. Give yourself a pity party, but like most parties, there is a time where you need to leave.**

"...Sometimes good things fall apart so better things can fall together."

—Marilyn Monroe

- 2. Focus on yourself. I can't stress this enough. I feel like people forget that it is okay to be a little selfish. I like to think about it like this - if you are a cup full of water and you keep on giving drops of your water away, your cup quickly becomes dry. After awhile, your water runs out, and you cannot give away what you do not have. It is only when your cup is running over with water that you are truly able to give freely. This analogy is the same with people - you cannot help someone if you yourself are in need.**

- 3. Be positive. If you think there is no hope, then there really is no hope, because you have already given up trying.**

"To different minds, the same world is a hell, and a heaven"

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

- 4. Take forward steps toward your goal, no matter how trivial it may seem.**

"If you always put limit[s] on everything you do, physical or anything else, it will spread into your work and into your life. There are no limits. There are only plateaus, and you must not stay there — you must go beyond them"

—Bruce Lee

- 5. It all starts with you, and you have to be the one to make that change. No one can do it for you.**

"Be the change you wish to see in the world"

—Mahatma Ghandi

From the moment I took my first step toward taking control of my life, I knew that everyday forward would be better than my yesterday. Although they started out small, I know that those steps are what have pushed me to run toward my future and provide the strength I need to continue to go forward.



PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL AND PACIFIERS

By Selma Alami

Pharm.D. Candidate 2016

Two weeks before I started my first year of pharmacy school, I got the news that my little family was about to get a little bigger. My feelings bounced from excitement to pure panic. I wasn't sure whether I wanted to defer my first year or just go ahead and take on the challenge. Questions flooded my mind:

How am I going to deal with morning sickness?

What if I have complications and I have to take a leave of absence?

How am I going to raise a toddler and a newborn, while still fulfilling all of the requirements of pharmacy school?

After considering all my options I made my decision - I was going to give pharmacy school a shot. It was challenging to go through my first year while pregnant. Physically, it was exhausting and mentally, it was draining. I found great support in the Student Affairs Office and knew I could rely on their staff if I had any worries. My professors were also great. They supported me and were very understanding when I needed to miss class because of doctor appointments and "bad days." My advice to expecting mothers in school is to not be afraid to ask for help. Talk to your professors. Reach out to other mothers or students who have gone through the same experience, as they will be more than happy to share it with you and support you.

Pregnancy is scary enough even without the added stress of professional school. If you become pregnant while in school - Don't Panic! - my advice is to contact student affairs right away. Ask them about the steps you need to take to be prepared and about all the options you have as a student. Being prepared and letting others help you will allow you to stay on track and ease the stress.

Pregnancy in itself was a challenge; but even more so was what came afterward - caring for my newborn. There were many times that I took an exam on two hours of sleep. But I survived. I took it day-by-day, and you can too. While there were many resources available for me while I was pregnant, there are also resources for new moms. The Student Union has rooms that can be used for breastfeeding, and the counseling services can aid those battling post-partum depression. Keep asking questions about what's available to you.

Do your best, but don't set unrealistic expectations. Remember your priorities and make sure to set aside time to take care of yourself and baby. And most importantly, don't be afraid to ask for help.



EMPATHY EVOLUTION

By **Kelly Murray, Pharm.D., BCACP**
Clinical Assistant Professor
Department of Clinical and Administrative Sciences
OU College of Pharmacy



When I started at OSU Medical Center Emergency Department over two years ago, my second day officially on the job, we had an ambulance come in with an infant in asystole - aged two months. She was found in her crib not breathing and unfortunately neither the paramedics nor our ED physicians could revive her after 45 minutes of CPR and advanced cardiac life support measures. I was heartbroken, seeing a tiny, lifeless, colorless, beautiful little baby girl who didn't get to see her first birthday, let alone any of the other wonderful things this life has to offer. I cried a lot that day and actually for a few days after that, because I was constantly in fear that every day in the ED would be like that awful day.

Being a woman of faith, I know that there is a better place than here on Earth, and I know that God had a plan for her little life, so that provided me with some comfort. However, I was still unsure of whether this was the job for me. I am always tender-hearted and emotionally invested in my patients, no matter how long I've known them, so seeing this made me question my place in the pharmacy world.

After much reflection, I realized I was now on the forefront of situations like this, and sadly they happen every day. Where previously I had been very sheltered, I was now vulnerable - exposed - to this alternate life where death or the potential thereof is part of everyday work. I quickly had to learn to be objective and as helpful as I can in situations like hers, which means I am present and ready to recommend dosages of medications or run to the pharmacy for a stat drip if needed. While I will always be shaken by death, regardless of the age or cause of death of the patient, I now can balance the subjective and objective sides of my heart and brain in order to do my job - a job that asks quite a bit for a pharmacist. What I must always remember is that I'm ready to face any challenge that comes my way. There's nothing wrong with letting a patient's illness, diagnosis, or death get to you - after all, we're taught to treat these people like they are our family members. Know how to compartmentalize and process after the job tasks are complete. Grieve, pray, and meditate about it, but allow yourself to move on from it and learn from each patient and situation. Most importantly, never lose your compassion for your patients. Your compassion helps you to be a better healthcare professional in any setting you find yourself in.

OUHSC COUNSELING SERVICES

By **Victoria Christofi, Ph.D.**
Director of OUHSC Student Counseling Services
Licensed Health Sciences Psychologist

Top 10 reasons why people seek counseling:

1. Stress management
2. Adjustment to rigorous academics
3. Test anxiety
4. Depression
5. Generalized anxiety
6. Relationship challenges
7. Relationship breakups
8. Death of a loved one
9. Body image concerns
10. Adjustment to new life situations

What types of counseling do you offer?

Individual counseling is our most common but we also see couples in counseling, and offer group therapy on an as-needed basis. We use both long and short-term therapy depending on what is needed for each individual. We also do psychological assessment (at an additional cost) if there is a concern that you may have a learning disability or ADHD.

How do I get started?

You can give us a call at (405) 271-7336 or e-mail us at counselors@ouhsc.edu and let us know your availability, so we can find a time that works for one of the counselors.

What can I expect on my first visit?

Expect to come 15 minutes early to complete the paperwork for your first visit. When you enter Suite 224 of the DLB Student Union, there are chairs and a table with clipboards. Take a seat, grab a clipboard, and complete the paperwork. Your counselor will come out to get you at your scheduled time. The meeting will be 50 minutes. There's more questions in the first meeting than subsequent meetings, as we gather some background information in addition to asking questions about what brought you to the appointment.

What are the most common barriers people face when making the decision to seek counseling?

Stigma is the most common barrier. Unfortunately, there is still some social stigma surrounding seeking services for mental health or other counseling concerns. We work hard to counteract this barrier by normalizing the counseling experience and highlight how we all go through rough times in our life – that's what counselors are trained to help with.

Who will I talk to when I come to counseling?

All of our staff have had at least four years of training and experience in the field. Trainees are one small step away from their doctoral degree and are working on their pre-doctoral practicum or internship. We also have a Licensed Professional Counselor and a Licensed Psychologist on staff.



What are the costs?

You have already paid for counseling within your student fees, so there is no additional cost unless you are seeking psychological assessment for a learning disability or ADHD assessment.

Is it confidential?

Yes. Our services are confidential except as described in the Notice of Privacy Practices. Some examples where we may have to disclose information are: 1) with your written consent or authorization, 2) where failure to communicate essential information would result in clear, imminent danger to yourself or others, 3) to report child or elder abuse or neglect as required by law, and 4) in order to obtain appropriate professional consultations.

Is there after hours support?

For after hours, we encourage people to call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at (800) 273-TALK (8255) or the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health Reach-out Hotline at (800) 522-9054.

What if the concern is not about myself?

You can still come in to consult about a concern you have for a fellow student. We will help you navigate how to approach the potentially sensitive situation and provide support for you.

Should I approach my friend for whom I am concerned?

It depends how comfortable you feel with your friend and their concern. Have a conversation with us if it will help you determine the best way to proceed.

What are signs I might need to seek help?

- You've noticed that you are not behaving as usual.
- You are more irritable or impatient.
- Your appetite has increased or decreased significantly.
- You no longer enjoying activities you used to enjoy.
- You are using substances inappropriately.
- You have become distracted or unable to focus.
- You are experiencing tension or anxiety.
- You are experiencing feelings of worthlessness, excessive guilt, or suicidal thoughts.

What is one piece of advice you would give all students to improve their mental well-being?

BALANCE! Make sure you are eating, sleeping, exercising, and engaging in healthy, social interaction. Research is clear about the benefits on your performance if these elements are in balance.

What are resources you recommend for students seeking help? (hotlines, websites)

1. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: (800) 273-TALK (8255)
2. Oklahoma Department of Mental Health Rech-Out Hotline: (800) 522-9054
3. OU Advocates: Interpersonal violence, sexual assault, sexual misconduct or stalking: (405) 615-0013.
4. Domestic Violence Hotline: (800) 799-SAFE (7233)
5. YWCA Rape Crisis Helpline: (405) 943-7273
6. Daily Wellness Inspiration: <http://www.mindbodygreen.com/>
7. Self Compassion Resource: <http://self-compassion.org/category/exercises/#guided-meditations>

COUNSELING SERVICES STAFF



Victoria Christofi, Ph.D.
Director

Why I do what I do:

"The pressures and stressors of university demands can be overwhelming. Tunnel vision can often result from being overwhelmed and our role is to help our students not lose sight of their future goals."



Michelle Olson, M.A., LPC
Staff Counselor

Why I do what I do:

"My goal is to leave this world a better place than the way I found it. My path is walking with others in their time of need. Accomplishing this goal is the motivation that drives me to be the best that I can every day."



Jocelyn Barton
Psychology Intern

Favorite quote:

"Don't ask yourself what the world needs — ask yourself what makes you come alive, and then go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive."
~Howard Thurman



Aubrette Kinne
Psychology Intern

Favorite quote:

"Don't let mental blocks control you. Set yourself free. Confront your fear and turn the mental blocks into building blocks."
~ Roopleen



Stephanie Womack
Psychology Intern

Favorite quote:

"Your present circumstances don't determine where you can go; they merely determine where you start."
~ Nido Qubein



Lauren Dunlevy
Psychology Intern

Favorite quote:

"Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom."
~ Aristotle

The Crimson Questionnaire

1. Name:
Victoria Christofi
2. Nickname:
Doc C.
3. My guilty pleasure is:
Dove Milk chocolate
4. Draw us a doodle:



5. Most people would be surprised to know:
I love to play games on my PS4.
6. The best part of my job is:
Working with students and helping them through tough times.

7. The best advice I got in school was:
It'll get better. It's not always going to be this awful. Maintain patience.
8. When I need advice, I go to:
My mum - she is wise and always positive.
9. When entering an uneasy situation, I get confidence from:
Positive self-talk
10. If you pulled up next to me at a stoplight, you would see me singing:
Bon jovi "You give love a bad name."
11. I am always cheered up by:
My awesome Minion collection.
12. The quote I tend to live by is:
"Education is the best provision for the journey to old age."
(Aristotle).
13. Give me your trust and I'll be your friend forever.
14. To live life fully is to:
Be in the moment. Get out of auto-pilot and experience your current moment in time. Take a deep breath, be grateful + enjoy yourself.
15. Final words:
It's easy to get lost in our stress. Take breaks + get a breather from your current worry - it won't be there forever.



MOVING FORWARD

By Clark Bishop
Pharm.D. Candidate 2016

“You, me, or nobody is gonna hit as hard as life. But it ain’t about how hard you hit. It’s about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward. How much you can take and keep moving forward. That’s how winning is done!” - Rocky


My ability to move forward in life ceased on May 20, 2013. That day, mere days after finishing my first year of pharmacy school, an EF5 tornado mercilessly devastated the city of Moore, OK. I emerged from the storm shelter in my garage that afternoon, thankful to be alive. My house was damaged, but not beyond the point of repair. No one I knew was seriously hurt, and everything that I had lost was replaceable. I knew that there were many others who had lost so much more than me, including loved ones. Looking back, it’s hard to understand how I let the events of that day impact me in such a negative way.

After I took a few minutes to assess my surroundings, I did what so many other people would do. I decided to hike to the areas that suffered the most damage to lend a hand where I could. It was what I witnessed over the next several hours that would haunt me - that *still* haunt me. It took a matter of minutes for an unimaginable force to reduce entire neighborhoods into mounds of contorted

and disseminated debris. It would take an equal, seemingly impossible amount of force to piece it back together again. I have never felt more helpless or powerless than I did when I found myself alone, standing in rubble that stretched as far as the eye could see, all while listening to the faint cries for help beneath it. What could I possibly do? Hours of seeing and sifting through the death and destruction that was cast upon the city I called home would prove too much to bear. I helplessly watched life slip from the innocent - and thus began my slow demise.

For the next two years of my life, I made a significant amount of bad decisions. I isolated myself, told lies, destroyed relationships, and sacrificed the things I knew were right - in an effort to keep those mistakes hidden. It was *so* easy to find an excuse, and it was *so* easy to believe that I convinced myself it was true - I had the tornado to blame. I had PTSD to blame. And I had others to blame.

In reality, these shortcomings existed in me long before the day a tornado steam-rolled through my city and through my life. The effect of the tornado was just the vehicle that brought my shortcomings to the forefront. I was responsible. I *AM* responsible for the decisions I made. The first part of Rocky’s quote goes like this,



“Let me tell you something you already know. The world ain’t all sunshine and rainbows. It’s a very mean and nasty place and I don’t care how tough you are it will beat you to your knees and keep you there permanently if you let it.”

Well, I let it – for far too long. Finally, I came to the realization that what I was doing was not working. The way I was living my life was not serving anyone close to me or myself. I decided to start moving forward.

When I was standing in the middle of that demolished neighborhood, listening to the cries for help, smelling toxic fumes of leaking natural gas mixing with freshly splintered wood, and feeling these overwhelming sensations of helplessness and weakness, something truly amazing happened. Within minutes, hundreds, if not thousands of people flooded the devastated areas. Board by board, brick by brick, they worked tirelessly to free those trapped under their own homes. My undergraduate studies in sociology taught me numerous good definitions of the word community. It wasn’t until I witnessed all of these people working together toward one goal that I truly understood what community meant. They worked together with no regard to the race, gender, age, socioeconomic status,

religion, or any other potentially divisive label the person next to them may have carried. It was a group of people – a community – working with their neighbors to save their neighbors. When I decided to move forward, I clung to this. I made every effort to make this definition as true in my life every day as it was that day. I opened up to many of my friends and family. I let some of them back into my life. I let go of my shame and accepted their forgiveness. I started to allow my community to save me, much like the community of Moore saved so many that day. The process is ongoing and it is slow; there is work yet to do, but I am finally unafraid.

My experiences have led me to believe that part of resiliency is being vulnerable. It is opening up to those you trust, to those you love, and letting them provide perspective on the situations you seek counsel. The truth is that everybody at some point in time goes through something difficult. Everyone will make mistakes that will require forgiveness. So learn from your mistakes, and use what you have learned to better the lives of those in the communities you have chosen. Be quick to forgive and quick to show remorse. But above all – keep moving forward.

MINDFULNESS

By Reagan Williams
Pharm.D. Candidate 2016

First of all, what is mindfulness?

Kabat-Zinn, the founder of mindfulness-based stress reduction, describes mindfulness as, “paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally, to the unfolding of experience moment to moment.”

Essentially, this means to simply be present, to put aside all distractions, and to observe a moment – whether good or bad – without judgment.

What isn't mindfulness?

It's not religion, nor does it take the place of it. It doesn't require you to burn incense. It's not sitting cross-legged on the floor, humming or chanting. But it certainly can be those things, if you want it to be.

What can it do for you?

Practicing mindfulness can improve your working memory, attention span, reaction speed, and promote creativity. It can boost mental and physical stamina. It can reduce addictive and self-destructive behaviors. It can enhance brain function and soothe the parts of your brain that produce stress hormones. It can promote self-control and enhance self-awareness. It will improve your immune system and overall health. It will lessen feelings of anxiety, stress, and depression. Most importantly, it helps you develop resiliency.

What it can do for you. (n.d.). Retrieved September 27, 2015, from <http://franticworld.com/what-can-mindfulness-do-for-you/>

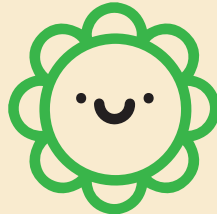
What are ways that you can put it into practice?



1. Put your gadgets away – Facebook can wait.



2. Pay attention to your breathing – in and out – feel your chest rise and fall.



3. Express gratitude for something in your life – be it a person, an activity, or simply being alive.



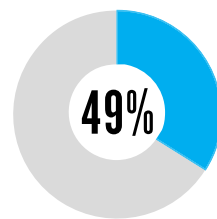
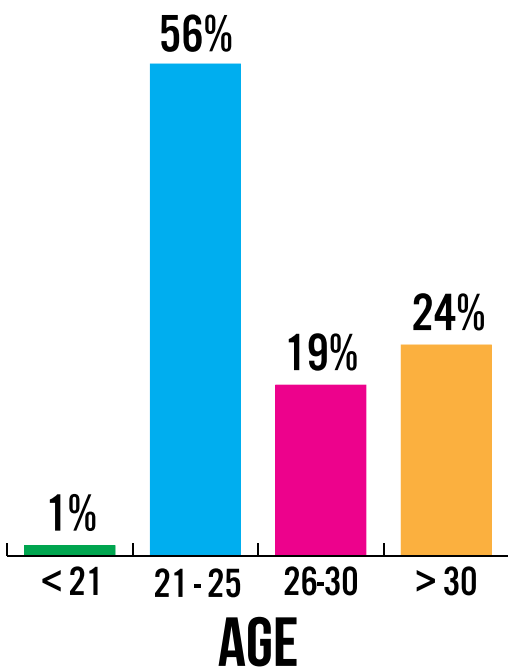
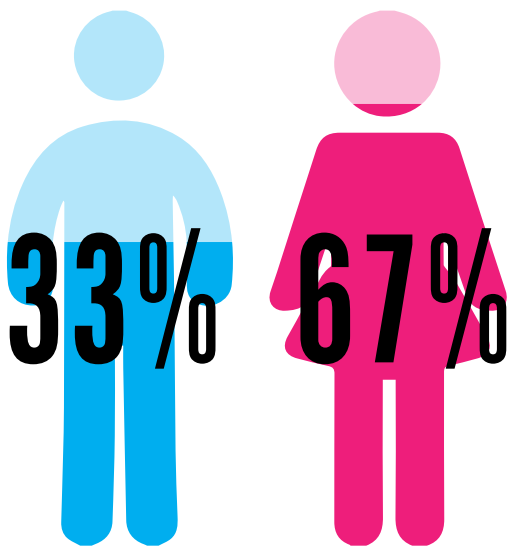
4. Avoid judgment in this moment – of yourself, and of any thoughts that come into your mind.



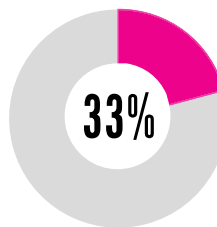
5. Take five minutes for yourself each day – allow yourself the freedom of not worrying.

upperclassmen insight

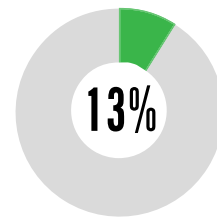
We surveyed the upperclassmen to get their helpful tips on how to be resilient in the academic world. Check out the results on the next few pages!



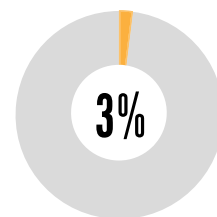
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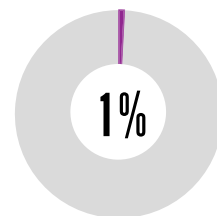
PUBLIC HEALTH



DENTISTRY



MEDICINE

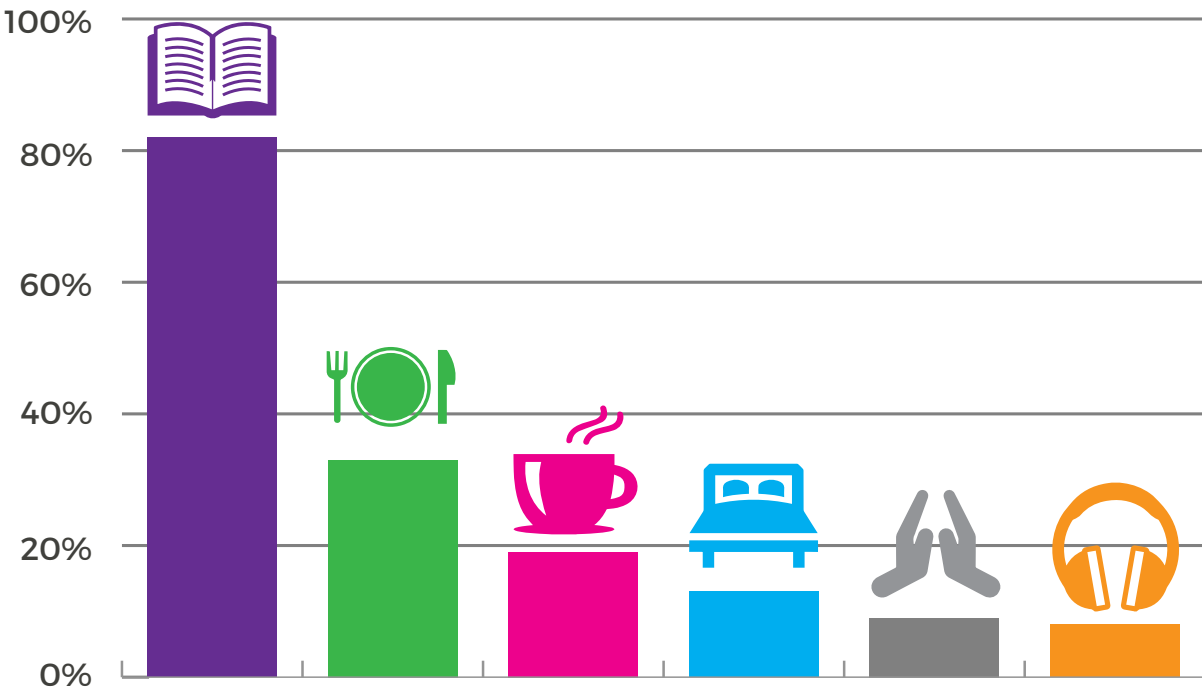


ALLIED HEALTH

upperclassmen



WHAT IS YOUR TEST DAY ROUTINE?



"Coffee, quick review before test, and sweet success!"

"Wake up early to study, eat a good breakfast and dominate!"

"Eat breakfast, but nothing too heavy or too much. Either breakfast sandwich on english muffin or protein shake. Listen to music. Do a very quick review sometimes but nothing 30 minutes before the exam."

"Start the day earlier. Arrive to the testing site early, at least fifteen minutes. No studying during those fifteen minutes. Just breathe."

"Study, study, study, pray."

"Review for an hour before the exam no matter what time the exam is. And right before the exam, take a few minutes to just play on my phone or clear my head."

"I make sure that I get at least six hours of sleep the night before. I get up at my usual time. I try to look nice on test days (make-up, dress up a little) because I feel as though I perform better when I look my best."

"I usually go to bed early the night before, then wake up really early the day of to study. I always use the last 30 minutes or so before a test to 'go to my happy place'."



insight

HOW DO YOU CALM YOUR NERVES?

"Spending time with my family and friends, working out and going on walks and runs, also taking naps."

"Talking to my counselor I was assigned at OUHSC through Student Services. I also listen to music and work out at the campus Health Club."

"Counseling, motivational talks (TED talks), talking with family."

"Talking to family. Helping others less fortunate to get perspective on my problems."

"Taking 'me time', talking to friends/family, working out, doing mindless things such as cleaning the house just to clear my head to get a re-start."

"Student affairs has been awesome in helping me get through tough times and remain in school. My family and friends are far away, but a phone call always helps."

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO BE RESILIENT?

"Remembering I was accepted into the program for a reason and I can overcome any obstacle in front of me."

"Knowing that it is just a difficult moment and not a permanent situation."

"Demonstrating to my children what it means to not give up. Reminding myself that the outcome is greater than what is going on now."

"Thinking about what I had to go through to get here in the first place helps to motivate me to keep going and not let all that effort go to waste."

"Faith. Everything in this life is temporary; whatever happens now is not representative of my future."

"The fact that I'm already 100K in student loan debt and there's no turning back now."



RESOURCES TO HELP YOU PERSEVERE

- "Praying, yoga, running, breathing exercises."
- "Music and talking to friends. Sometimes I will go for a run or lift weights at the gym to burn off the anxiety and it helps take my mind off of what is making me anxious."
- "Reminding myself how small and insignificant all of this really is."
- "I like talking to my friends and family. I also take time to relax before bed each night by reading or watching Netflix."
- "Having a glass of wine with a friend."



PUMP-UP PLAYLIST



About to dominate that test? About to rock that interview? Here's a list of pump-up songs recommended by your peers. Just scan the QR code at the bottom of the page for a link to the Spotify® playlist!

- 1. Lose Yourself**
Eminem
- 2. Eye of the Tiger**
Survivor
- 3. Power**
Kanye West
- 4. Yeah!**
Lil John, Usher, Ludacris
- 5. The Champ**
Nelly
- 6. Badlands**
Bruce Springsteen
- 7. Overcomer**
Mandisa
- 8. I Will Wait**
Mumford & Sons
- 9. Who Run The World? (Girls)**
Beyonce
- 10. Gold on the Ceiling**
The Black Keys
- 11. Feel It**
TobyMac
- 12. So What**
P!nk
- 13. I Gotta Feeling**
The Black Eyed Peas
- 14. Tú Me Quemas**
Chino & Nacho
- 15. Black Betty**
Ram Jam
- 16. Need Your Heart**
Adventure Club feat. Koi
- 17. A Little Party Never Killed Nobody**
Fergie
- 18. Survivor**
Destiny's Child
- 19. Gonna Fly Now (Rocky Theme Song)**
Bill Conti
- 20. Invincible**
Kelly Clarkson
- 21. Last Ride of the Day**
Nightwish
- 22. Ready or Not**
Britt Nicole feat. Lecrae
- 23. Remember The Name**
Fort Minor
- 24. Ruff Ryder's Anthem**
DMX
- 25. Love Runs Out**
OneRepublic
- 26. Closer**
Kings of Leon
- 27. Brown Eyed Girl**
Van Morrison
- 28. Limbo**
Daddy Yankee
- 29. Uptown Funk**
Mark Ronson
- 30. Happy**
Pharrell Williams
- 31. Riot**
Three Days Grace
- 32. Work B**ch**
Britney Spears
- 33. Roar**
Katy Perry
- 34. Intergalactic**
Beastie Boys
- 35. Single Ladies (Put a Ring on It)**
Beyoncé
- 36. Some Nights**
fun.
- 37. Bennie And The Jets**
Elton John
- 38. You Shook Me All Night Long**
AC/DC
- 39. Sweet Child O' Mine**
Guns N' Roses
- 40. Holy Grail**
Jay Z
- 41. Heavy Crown**
Iggy Azalea



Pump-Up Playlist on Spotify®

OKC ADVENTURES

By Sara Collins
Pharm.D. Candidate 2016

One important way to stay resilient through professional school is to set aside time to spend with loved ones. It is important to have a support system with people who truly know you. It is also important to spend time away from school, clear your mind of the daily jumble, and focus on the people closest to you. Here are a few things to do in OKC that will get you away from Netflix and off of the couch. So grab your peeps and take a break from studying!

1. Take a few of your buddies to practice your stroke at Top Golf.
2. Grab a cocktail and watch the sunset in one of the restaurants on the Lake Hefner shore.
3. Play the ponies – or a few games of “21” – at Remington Park Race Track and Casino.
4. Take a water taxi down the Bricktown Canal.
5. Check out the food truck cuisine at Bleu Garten.
6. Visit any of the various museums found around the OKC area, including the Oklahoma City Museum of Art, Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum, Museum of Osteology, and the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum.
7. Take a bike ride along the Oklahoma River Trails.
8. Stop at POPS - home of the 66-foot-tall pop bottle – for a drink and to see one of the landmarks of OKC.
9. Take the kiddos (or leave them at home) and hangout for a while at the Oklahoma City Zoo, Science Museum of Oklahoma or the Frontier City Theme Park.
10. Check out a few select OKC bars – like Deep Deuce Grill – that have specific nights for trivia or scavenger hunts.
11. Rent a bike or Segway® in Bricktown to see the sites and enjoy some fresh air.
12. Learn about local food and fare on a foodie foot tour of OKC.
13. Spend a few hours kayaking, dragon boating, stand-up paddle boarding, or cycling with rentals from the Chesapeake Boathouse.
14. Take a pleasure cruise along a seven-mile stretch of the Oklahoma River on an Oklahoma River Cruiser.
15. Check out the Riversport Adventures and fly down the 700-foot Sandridge Sky Zip, venture onto the six-story Sandridge Sky Trail, or try the 80-foot-free-fall Rumble Drop.

Check out more ideas, including some seasonal events by month, at the websites listed below!

<http://www.visitokc.com/events/this-month-in-okc>
<https://helpokc.com/50-things-to-do-in-oklahoma-city.html>

leaf of faith

By **Christina Juris Bennett, J.D.**

Assistant Professor

Department of Health Administration and Policy

OU College of Public Health


I was one of those people who was sure she knew what she was going to be. I had this deep-seated calling – like a James Earl Jones-type of voice resonating from my gut – that I was going to be a judge. I can't describe how deeply I felt it, but it led me through my undergraduate studies, and then it led me through my legal studies. Everything I did was aimed at becoming a judge. I realized I like stories about criminal law, and I had it all figured out: I'd clerk for a criminal appellate judge, I'd become a prosecutor, and I'd eventually become a judge. **DONE.**

My mother was diagnosed with stage IV endometrial cancer just 17 months after I began my clerkship; she had less than 12 months to live. It turned out to be nine. My world was shaken to the core. I struggled to balance my professional life in Tennessee, filled with murders and child rape cases, with

providing comfort to my crumbling family in Ohio. I learned everything I could about cancer and the medical system – I had to be a rock, a fountain of knowledge, and even a spring of peace.

After my mother's death, I thought I'd resume my life plan. The problem was that I'd missed the hiring cycles, and the recession hit, so no district attorney offices were hiring. I eventually took a job at a small firm, and it was miserable. I despised going to work every day, and I was embarrassed to say where I worked. After nine months, I quit. I had no plans, but I knew I couldn't stay at that job.

After informing my boss that I was quitting, I left work early feeling very light, yet also in complete disbelief – I don't do things like quitting on the spot. I am responsible. I have plans. I sat at a diner with my head in my



“Hello, I’m Christina, and I quit my job today.”

hands marveling at who I had become – who is this turkey-burger-eating-quitter-with-no-plans person??? I left the diner for the solitude of my church’s sanctuary. There, in the silence, I prayed on my knees in front of the altar for thirty minutes. I was lost. I sang hymns, and I prayed, prostrate, for a lack of any other idea of what to do.

When I got up, I went to a committee meeting. It was my first time serving on this committee, and I introduced myself, “Hello, I’m Christina, and I quit my job today.” It sounded so AA-ish. A faculty member at a local university pounced on me like a lion – “I’m Roger. What are you going to do?” “I don’t know. I’m an attorney.” “Would you want to conduct research with me about Medicaid?” “What?” (I was thinking to myself – I don’t know what Medicaid is, but thanks to my mother’s experience, I do know how awful the medical system is in this

country).

“Let’s get a grant and write a book – I’ve got a great idea, and you’ve got time. I can mentor you.” This man did not know me, and I did not know him, but his enthusiasm was infectious. I agreed. After all, really, what else was I going to do?

Nine months later, I had a book. It was toilsome. It was tiresome. I wanted to throttle my mentor sometimes (or maybe even a majority of the time). It was completely worth it. Because of that book, I entered academics, and I found a place where I get paid to be me – to teach, to think, to read, to talk, to influence – and this is my true calling, at least for now.

INSTITUTIONALIZED

By Sara Collins
Pharm.D. Candidate 2016

It was Thursday night and I was studying for the last final of my first semester of pharmacy school. At that time, I was living in Norman with some of my friends who were still in undergraduate classes. They were finished with their finals and wanted to have a party at our place, so I (selflessly) volunteered to go to my sister's empty house to study for my final. I was mentally exhausted and growing more frustrated by the second as I kept getting text messages from my friends as they had the time of their lives. I tried to keep studying, but after a couple hours of this, I reached my breaking point and started to cry. Not wanting my minor psychological break to impact my grade, I continued to study *while* I cried.

Of course, I realized this was absolutely ridiculous, and thus began to simultaneously laugh while tears streamed down my mascara-stained face. I'm sure that I must have looked completely insane! This was precisely when my sister and brother-in-law walked in. I was mortified, but they took in the situation and simply nodded their sympathy and understanding. They had both graduated from a professional school and assured me

that I wasn't crazy. Though in this instance, instead of a white coat, I felt like I needed a straitjacket!

If there is one piece of information to pass along that I've learned through my years in professional school, it is that everyone will have a breakdown moment. Yours may look different from mine, but it will happen regardless. It is not important how you fall apart, or why; the most important thing is that you pick yourself up and keep on going.

In the end, I survived the final, got some much needed R&R, and learned a valuable lesson. It doesn't matter what profession you have chosen or the level of your intellect, there will be a time (or two) when you will simply become overwhelmed by all that is expected of you. When I experienced such a moment, it helped to remember that I was not alone, this stressful time would eventually pass, and that I could – and would – be resilient. Professional school will certainly have its challenges, but as far as I know, no student has ever perished from the stress of school; needing to be institutionalized, however, may be a different story.



Photo by Jane Wilson

The Resiliency Tree

By Jane Wilson, Ph.D., M.S.

*Associate Professor and Associate Dean for Student Affairs
OU College of Pharmacy*



This Ponderosa Pine was cut and then pushed over. The amazing thing is – the tree did not die. Its root system reached deep enough into the earth to allow it to continue to grow. In order to survive, this tree took advantage of its roots and is growing, but in a different way than its original shape.

I call this my resilient tree. When I feel as if life is handing me more than I can manage, I remember this tree. I admire its singular beauty and courage. I think about its strong root system and how the path it is now on is very different than the one it began. For me, the strong root system symbolizes values and the importance of honoring those values in the face of adversity. I am also reminded that as humans we, like this tree, are constantly adapting to our environment. Resilience is built through adaptation to change and a desire to move forward. This tree reminds me that if we are grounded in our values, we can continue to grow and thrive even though our path may be different than envisioned.

BIT: Behavioral Intervention Team

By Amanda Miller, J.D., C.R.M.

OUHSC Director of Enterprise Risk & Real Estate Management

1. What is the BIT?

BIT stands for the Behavioral Intervention Team. The focus of BIT is proactive, caring, early intervention with individuals whose behavior is disruptive or concerning. The goal of the BIT is early intervention that focuses heavily on encouraging success for all faculty, staff, and students, and providing information about and access to campus resources to assist and support such success at the University. The BIT is not expected to serve in a disciplinary capacity, but is intended to play an intensive support role to students, faculty, and staff who may be struggling.

2. Who is on the BIT team?

The BIT is a multidisciplinary team, composed of OUHSC employees from across the campus community with differing areas of expertise, and all have received national certification in behavioral intervention.

The current BIT membership is as follows:

- Amanda Miller
Director of Enterprise Risk & Real Estate Management
- Kate Stanton
Executive Director of HSC Student Affairs
- Dr. Victoria Christofi
Director of Student Counseling Services
- Dr. Jane Pippin
Assistant Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
- Dr. Jane Wilson
Associate Dean for Student Affairs
- Captain Chuck Ligon
OUHSC Police Department
- Lieutenant George Schmerer
OUHSC Police Department
- Scott Landgraf
Assistant Director of Human Resources
- Missy Warma
BIT Scribe

3. How do I contact the BIT?

The three primary ways to contact the BIT are:

1. Call (405) 271-9BIT (9248)
2. Send an email to bit@ouhsc.edu
3. Complete the Online Reporting Form at www.ouhsc.edu/BIT

4. Who will I talk to when I contact the BIT?

One of the ways to reach out to the BIT is by calling (405) 271-9BIT (9248). Your call will be answered by a member of the BIT. If a team member is not immediately available, please leave a message and your call will be returned within 24 hours. If you report via the online system or the BIT e-mail address, a BIT member will contact you within 24 hours.

5. Is it anonymous?

You can report information anonymously through the BIT online reporting system. The BIT encourages reporters to identify themselves as there are often follow up questions, but certainly people can and do report anonymously.

6. Will the person I report get in trouble?

The BIT serves as a resource, and as stated before, does not take action in a disciplinary capacity. However, the same behavior that warranted a BIT report may be noticed by a variety of persons and trigger other actions that do not fall under the purview of the BIT. In other words, a report to the BIT will not shield a student or employee from the natural consequences of their behavior.

7. What if I am afraid of retaliation by the other party?

You should identify your concerns to the BIT member you speak with and/or include that in your online report. Retaliation is a broad term, but certain forms of retaliation are prohibited by law and University policy.

8. Is it confidential?

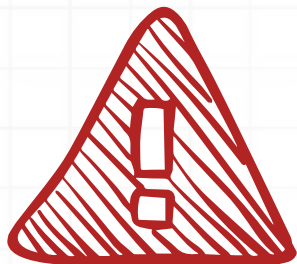
If a reporter requests that their identity be kept confidential, the BIT will make all reasonable attempts to do so. However, circumstances could arise that, in order to best protect the campus community, the reporter's identity might have to be disclosed to others. In addition, if the reporter is the only person that has the information being provided to the BIT, the source of the information may be obvious to third parties.

9. What advice would you give to someone who thinks their friend or peer needs help?

I would encourage them to keep the line of communication open with that friend and provide them with resources (depending on the struggle their friend is facing) that might be helpful in getting that friend past this hard time and back on a successful path.

10. What other resources do you recommend?

The BIT refers people to many resources, including the Employee Assistance Program, Student Counseling Services, Disability Resource Center, OU Advocates, Campus Police and after hours resources like crisis, suicide, domestic violence, and sexual assault hotlines.



11. What types of behaviors would I report to the BIT?

The following are examples and not an exhaustive list. Individuals are expected to use their judgment as to what is reportable, erring on the side of over-reporting if in doubt. Encourage the community that, even though an incident may seem minor, it is critical that all such behaviors are brought to the attention of the University so that information can be aggregated to determine whether a concerning pattern exists.

- Extreme changes in behavior
- Classroom or workplace disruption
- Marked changes in personal hygiene
- Drunkenness or being under the influence of illicit drugs
- Threatening words or actions
- Writings that convey clear intentions to harm self or others
- Observed self-injurious behavior, such as cutting, burning, eating disorders, etc.
- Excessive or changing absenteeism
- Suicidality, including threats ("I'm going to kill myself"), gestures (intentionally erasing one's hard drive), ideation ("I've always thought about killing myself by jumping off a cliff"), or attempts
- Paranoia or delusion that a student, faculty or staff groundlessly believes that he/she is being targeted
- Stalking
- Relationship/Domestic/Intimate partner violence (in coordination with reporting to Sexual Misconduct Office)
- Hazing
- Flat affect or extreme lack of responsiveness or lack of empathy or concern for others
- "Accidental" overdose, including all involuntary hospitalizations for non-responsive intoxication
- Disappearances or missing persons
- Alarming references to bombs, ammunition, or ordnance
- Alarming infatuation with fire or firearms
- Poor decision-making and coping skills
- Notable changes in academic or work performance

BY THE BOOK: THE STR

By **Laura Bergs, Pharm. D.**

*Ph.D. Student and Graduate Teaching Assistant
OU College of Pharmacy Class of 2015*

Many people will struggle in various ways in professional school. It's a hard curriculum. You might be away from family for the first time. Many of you may be in four years of school – which is a long time – and you'll inevitably have to deal with various life events outside of school. My biggest struggle during my years at the College of Pharmacy was self-induced. I used to be someone who let what other people say influence how I felt about myself, and I took criticism way too personally.

Once, during my fourth-year rotations, I was faced with my biggest criticism yet. Halfway through that month's rotation, I got my mid-point evaluation. My preceptor gave me a horrible score, told me that I hadn't been performing according to his expectations, and that I was on my way to failing the rotation. I'm not much of a crier, but that put me in tears. Here I was, two months away from graduating, and I've basically been told that I would make a terrible pharmacist. It was incredibly difficult to hear; especially when my evaluations on rotations had all been great, and I thought I was putting a lot of effort toward being a successful student on this rotation.

Instead of convincing myself that I would never become a successful pharmacist, I decided to do

something about it. While my intentions were to be a good student, my actions were obviously not coming across that way to my preceptor. I reflected on my interactions during the past two weeks and admitted to myself that, despite my good intentions, I could do better. I arranged to talk with my preceptor to see what I needed to do to succeed in the rotation, and I used the feedback I was given to improve during the next two weeks. My preceptor and I also discovered that our thought processes were different, and we came out of the conversation with a better understanding of each other. From this point forward in the rotation, we were able to respect each other's differences and communicate more effectively. By the end of the rotation, my evaluation was much better!

Any professional school will be full of struggles. You may already have people in your life who have told you that you can't do something, or that you'll never be anything, but don't let yourself be another one of those people. Criticism might not always be easy to accept, but don't let it bring you down. Be open to growing in ways you never thought you could, and use those times as an opportunity to improve yourself. One day you'll look back on those experiences and feel more resilient for it!

“**CRITICISM MIGHT NOT ALWAYS BE EASY TO ACCEPT, BUT DON'T LET IT BRING YOU DOWN.**”

LESSONS FROM SCHOOL

By **Lindsey Crane, Pharm. D.**

Community Pharmacist

OU College of Pharmacy Class of 2015

During my third year of pharmacy school, I took on a LOT of things. I was president of the pharmacy leadership society, vice president for two national organizations, in the pharmacy leadership degree option doing various challenging projects and presentations, working on creating a pharmacy business plan (both fall and spring semesters!), keeping up with all of our classes, going to lunch meetings almost every day, working a couple times a month, fitting in exercise, and still trying to have some sort of social life on the weekends. On weekdays, I'd be at school most of the day, and would then go home and continue studying into the night. I'd send and receive SO many emails every day. As I type all this out, all I can think is, "WOW!" I honestly do not know how I managed to do all of that. I remember one incident where something went a little wrong in one of my organizations. I started crying in my adviser's office (and I am not really a crier!). It was such a small thing, but it pushed me over the edge.

The curriculum in the first few years of pharmacy school revealed to me my strengths and the things that energize me. I realized that being productive and having things to do helps me thrive. My third year, however, was a little too far over the line. It was definitely challenging, but looking back, I am so proud of myself for doing everything I did that year. I learned that when people are able to overcome such challenges, they become stronger and more resilient afterwards. I feel like I can handle anything after conquering that year. Would I want to repeat all of that? No, but it taught me the importance of balancing work and life.

My advice for those who may be going through something similar is to take a break every once in a while, even if you feel like you can't. Let your friends, significant other, or family distract you with something fun, something other than school. And don't feel guilty about it, which was always tough for me. If physical activity is already part of your life – keep it up. If it's not, consider doing something, even if it's just going for a walk. It will help refresh you and give your mind a break. In the end, believe in yourself and know you can do it!

"It always seems impossible until it's done" - Nelson Mandela

As a new pharmacist, resiliency has already played a role in my work life. Unfortunately, I've already made a few prescription-related mistakes at work. It really shakes your confidence. "How could I have missed that??" It takes resiliency to move on. You accept that it happened, learn from that mistake, move on, and don't make that same mistake again. You can't let it weigh on you too much. If not for the things that I learned during school, I think that lesson would have been a lot harder to accept. I know that all these little steps will add up to me being a great pharmacist!

"If it doesn't challenge you, it doesn't change you" - Fred Devito

ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

By **Chris Brown, Pharm.D., PGYI Resident**
Norman Regional Health System

One thing that they don't tell you when you are starting professional school is that life moves on. It doesn't wait for you to finish writing that paper or to study for that test. It just happens. As I was finishing my second year of pharmacy school, life decided to issue a wake-up call — a wake-up call that would profoundly change my life. My wife was getting a routine dental exam with x-rays so she could schedule the removal of her wisdom teeth, and the x-rays showed an abnormal shadow on her left mandible. We were referred to a specialist and he told us not to worry until he had a chance to take it out and see what it was.

Easier said than done.

Pretty soon, we got the news that the growth on her mandible was an ameloblastoma, a benign tumor. While that seemed like good news, considering the worst-case scenarios that had been playing through my head, the issue was the regenerative nature of the tumor — it would keep growing back and each time it would erode away more of her jawbone. The surgeon recommended a short-term fix to cut out the back half of her mandible and to install a titanium plate. Then, about 6 months later, provide a long-term solution by installing a cadaver bone with bone marrow from her hip to serve as scaffolding for a new jawbone. In doing this, they would have to sever the nerves that run through her mandible, and my wife would lose feeling in the lower left side of her face all the way up to her lip.

I was in shock. It was a dark time for me. I was so angry. I didn't know what to do or think and everything was out of my control. Why us? Why

was this happening? I didn't know how I would have the time to be there for my wife while still being successful in pharmacy school. It was a scary thought, and one that I tried not to share with my wife. I felt so scared and victimized by the situation.

But not my wife.

She was truly amazing. She was so strong and didn't seem scared or angry like I was. She accepted what was, held a positive outlook, and was eager to take care of the problem. Not only was she like this with me, she was the absolute best patient to the surgeon and the nurses. She developed close relationships with most of the staff. And every time we went to see them, they were happy to see us and were uplifted by her mood. I saw the surgeon and the staff working harder for her and I could tell that they were completely stunned by her attitude.

I was taken aback by this. Here I was, angry at the world, resistant to what was happening and feeling victimized, and my wife — who this was actually happening to — is strong and positive and trying to make sure that people don't feel sorry for her. Even after the first surgery, when she had incredible swelling and lost feeling in most of her face, she held the same happy and optimistic attitude. She continually chose acceptance, non-resistance, and to look at what life had thrown her way with gratitude.

This completely changed my life.

I was so overwhelmed with her reaction to the entire process that it began to change my outlook. I tried to become upbeat and positive like her. She completely pulled me out of the depths and showed me a new perspective on life. What I saw in her and what she taught me is that life doesn't control your emotions. Rather, we have the ability to choose from what perspective we see life. So why not choose to express gratefulness? Why not choose acceptance, gratitude, and happiness every day? Looking back, I am so grateful for this experience which allowed me to grow and become closer with my wife. Looking at life from a positive perspective will not only change you, but will enrich the lives of everyone around you.

cour•age

(kûr'ij)

By Alice Kirkpatrick, Pharm.D., M.S.
*Experiential Education Coordinator of Tulsa Campus
OU College of Pharmacy*

In the mid-1990's I attended a meeting sponsored by a group of Tulsans that were working with the group RESULTS. [As background, RESULTS is an international organization that works to reduce poverty and decrease death from preventable diseases. RESULTS members attribute their successes in promoting increased micro-lending and worldwide vaccines to strong citizen advocacy.] Sam Daley-Harris, the founder of RESULTS, was the speaker at the meeting I attended. I learned a lot at this meeting both about RESULTS and myself. Though I support the mission of the RESULTS group and appreciate what they are accomplishing, their work did not become my passion. But I do remember one truth that Daley-Harris communicated that has motivated me in both my personal and professional life.

“Loving people is about being courageous to complete something you otherwise wouldn't do.”

The word courage is defined in the American Heritage Desk Dictionary as follows: The quality of mind or spirit that enables one to face danger with confidence, resolution, and firm control of oneself; bravery; valor. If you read further in the definition you come to the root of the word. Middle English corage, heart (as the seat of feeling), courage, from Old French, from Latin cor, heart.

And this is what Sam-Daley Harris communicated to me that day. Courage isn't about not being scared. It is about love – that you love someone or everyone enough to work hard toward a goal, fight for something or someone, stay committed to the endeavor when perhaps otherwise you would give up, or maybe stop working so hard, or not speak out or speak up.

Thus, when I am feeling burdened with a task ahead of me, I do think about being brave and loving. The key to being motivated to complete a task, or perhaps to stay up all night working on a project, is to understand what is motivating me to complete the task or project. Will this goal help others or is the result important to someone other than myself? If the answer is yes, I am more likely to continue.



1. The American Heritage Desk Dictionary, Vienna, FM editor, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston 1981

EAT. SLEEP. EXERCISE.

By Emily Ford
Pharm.D. Candidate 2016

These are basic tasks that are essential to surviving the stress of professional or graduate school. As school progresses, so does the demand on students, and these simple acts can get lost in the daily grind.

Sleep Facts

The research shows that insufficient sleep impacts students' health, mood, GPA and safety.

In a recent review article, about 70% of students report getting less than 8 hours of sleep per night. This can be problematic, because according to the CDC, adults should get 7-9 hours of sleep.

Lack of sleep has been linked to:

- Lowered immune response
- Stress
- Weight gain
- Decreased academic performance
- Depression and anxiety
- Automobile accidents
- Decreased coordination

Tips to improve sleeping habits

- Establish a sleep schedule
- Practice a relaxing bedtime ritual
- Avoid naps
- Exercise daily
- Create a dark, cool, quiet environment
- Avoid alcohol, smoking, and caffeine
- If you can't sleep, get up and do something
- Don't study in bed

Exercise Facts

The CDC recommends staying active while in school. They say, "Regular physical activity can help keep your thinking, learning, and judgment skills sharp. It can also reduce your risk for depression, and it may help you sleep better."

According to the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, you need two types of physical activity each week. They suggest 150 minutes of aerobic activity per week plus muscle strengthening activities on 2 or more days.

Exercise tips:

- Do what you can. 10 minutes at a time still counts!
- Raise your heartbeat and breathing rate.
- When strength training, work all your major muscle groups.
- A normal set is 8-12 repetitions.
- Try to do 2-3 sets for the most benefit.

Aerobic exercise

- Brisk walking
- Jogging
- Mowing
- Swimming
- Biking
- Sports

Muscle-strengthening

- Lifting weights
- Resistance bands
- Yoga
- Manual labor

Nutrition Facts

Tips to boost energy

- Eat often - every 3-4 hours
- Eat light - enough to get you to the next meal or snack
- Balance your plate with fruits, veggies, whole grains and lean protein
- Snacks are a bridge- don't skip out
- Remove energy zappers like soda, sugary coffee, and energy drinks

Foods that cause stress

- Energy drinks
- Candy
- Alcohol
- Coffee
- Fast food

Foods that relieve stress

- Water
- Fresh fruit
- Fresh vegetables
- Fish
- Yogurts

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LIFE DOESN'T STOP

By **Melissa Medina, Ed.D.**

*Professor, Associate Dean of Assessment and Evaluation
OUHSC Graduate College Director of Preparing Future Faculty*

I, Dr. Melissa Medina, am many things:

- I am a wife and have been married for 19 years to Dr. Pat Medina.
- I am the mother of 2 amazing children. My daughter, Maddie, is a freshman and my son, Drew, is a 5th grader.
- I am a Presidential Professor, Associate Dean for Assessment and Evaluation, and Director of Preparing Future Faculty at the University of Oklahoma College of Pharmacy - a community that I am so grateful to be a part of and have loved dearly for the past 16 years.
- I am the PTO President at Russell Dougherty Elementary School in Edmond where I have the honor to serve a remarkable group of teachers and families for the past 4 years.
- I am a marathon runner who loves running with my great group of friends who humble me by wearing "Marathoning with Melissa" shirts and patiently stay with me until the Garmin records the exact mileage set for the day.

What you may not know is that I am also a breast cancer survivor who is nearing the end of my year-long treatment for stage III breast cancer. Since my diagnosis last year in October, I have completed 14 rounds of chemotherapy, a mastectomy, and 2 months of daily radiation. I will finish chemotherapy on the most fitting day of the year this November - Thanksgiving.

The start of my treatment coincided with the start of the OKC Memorial Marathon training season. I have run the Oklahoma City Memorial Full Marathon since 2012, and when I learned that my chemotherapy

and mastectomy would occur during my marathon training, I was worried I would not be able to participate. When I asked my oncologist if I could still train for the race, she said I would be lucky to run a mile while on treatment. I do not take kindly to being told I can't do something, so I registered for the full marathon and my friends made race shirts that said "Marathoning with Melissa." With the support of my loving family and tolerant running group of friends,

I am the first person in the history of the Oklahoma Stephenson Cancer Center to successfully train for and run a marathon while on chemotherapy.

On those winter weekends I ran 16-20 miles after receiving chemo. I was so tired and just wanted to stay in bed, but I remember thinking that I had to go and train because my friends were waiting for me and I had a shirt stating in writing that I was running a marathon!

Four days after completing the marathon, I had a mastectomy and then spent the summer receiving daily radiation treatments. I am currently training for the Route 66 Half Marathon in November and am still receiving chemotherapy every 3 weeks. Continuing to run has not only helped me take each day as it comes, it has helped my family and friends face my cancer; because if I can complete a marathon while on chemotherapy,

I can fight cancer.

I want others battling cancer to know that life does not have to end with your diagnosis.

Cultivating Gratitude

By Jane Wilson, Ph.D., M.S.
*Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Associate Professor
OU College of Pharmacy*

I was recently leading a class of fourth-year pharmacy students enrolled in an advanced leadership course who began discussing how much the practice of gratitude had changed their outlook. One student noted that in the past he complained about his day, but that he now identified things for which to be grateful. Another student had googled a mantra on gratefulness to help her get through a difficult work situation and turned the experience into a positive one. I left the class feeling very grateful to be part of their pharmacy school experience and part of their leadership journey.

What is Gratitude?

Gratitude is something everyone should practice every single day. What exactly do I mean by gratitude? There are several definitions of gratefulness but the one I like is put forth by Dr. Robert Emmons, a leading expert on gratitude. According to Dr. Emmons, gratitude is first an affirmation of goodness. We look at the totality of our lives and affirm that there are good things in the world and in our lives. The second ingredient of gratitude is deciding where the goodness comes from. We accept that the source is external and that it did not necessarily come from anything we did. Gratitude is an

acknowledgement that other people and/or a higher power contribute to the good we find in our lives. A core principle of gratitude is humility – that we are, for no apparent reason, the beneficiary of goodness.

Benefits of Gratitude

Dr. Emmons has conducted multiple studies involving over 1,000 people, ages 8 to 80, and found that those who consistently practice gratitude benefit in many ways including stronger immune systems, lower blood pressure, better sleep patterns, a greater sense of well-being, better cognition, and a greater willingness to help others. Those who are grateful feel less lonely and isolated. Gratitude allows us to celebrate the present as well as block negative emotions like envy, resentment, and regret. Give it a try – it's impossible to feel gratitude and anger at the same time.

Research also shows that grateful people are more resilient and also have a higher sense of self-worth. Once people are aware of receiving something good from others and realize that they must be worthy of this, they begin to see themselves in a positive way. Bottom line: gratitude produces emotional and physical health.

Grow Your Gratitude

Dr. Emmons recommends the following activities to become a more grateful individual.

- **Keep a gratitude journal:** Every week write down five things for which you are grateful.
- **Count your blessings:** Once a day, think about what you are grateful for today.
- **Use your senses:** We gain an appreciation of the gift of our body and our surroundings when we plug into what we touch, see, smell, taste, and hear.
- **Make a vow to practice gratitude:** Making a promise to practice a behavior increases the likelihood that we will practice that behavior.
- **Use Gratitude Language:** Think in terms of good things that others have done for you and use words like fortunate, abundance, and goodness.
- **Engage in Grateful Behavior:** Say thank you, smile, and write notes of thanks.
- **Think Big:** Look for new situations in which you can practice gratitude.

GRATITUDE BOX

By **JoLaine Draugalis, R.Ph., Ph.D., FAPhA, FASHP**

OU College of Pharmacy Dean and David Ross Boyd Professor

Phil C. and Fern Ashby Endowed Dean's Chair



“ Lord, help me to sort out what I should do first, second and third today and to not try to do everything at once and nothing well. Give me the wisdom to delegate what I can and to order the things I can't delegate, to say no when I need to, and the sense to know when to go home. ”

– Marian Wright Edelman

For as long as I can remember, I have written favorite quotes in a journal, tossed cartoons into a drawer, and clipped editorials that inspire (or infuriate). Over the years, loose photos from meetings/gatherings and notes, cards, and letters have been added to the collection. Nowadays, much of this can be stored electronically. The themes that emerge as I review some of the contents are about hard work, dedication, responsibility, having fun, sacrifice, and ultimately – gratitude. Be grateful and tell others. You may lift them up more than you know and for a much longer time than you know. You may be a source of inspiration when someone returns to their gratitude box/drawer/file for solace or inspiration.

Last May, I received an e-mail from a 2015 graduate relating her experiences during

her senior trip to Yosemite. She likened her pharmacy school experience to the long, steep trail that she hiked to get to Glacier Point. Along the way, she tired and even thought about giving up. Yet at every juncture, there were magnificent views of the valley, and right when she thought she might not make it, other hikers and friends were there for encouragement. Slow and steady, she made it to the summit and the view was worth the struggle and sacrifice. She recognized that faculty and staff provided opportunities and support throughout the Pharm.D. curriculum. She appreciated administrators, professors, advisers, and fellow students – all of whom contributed at various points in the journey. She was proud to be an alumna of this University. I was happy to tuck this note away in my gratitude box.

What is YOUR nail?

By Lance Lugafet, Pharm. D.

Community Pharmacist

OU College of Pharmacy Class of 2014

To you, who carries the torch so that others may see, and fetches the water so that others may drink:

It's time to start living a dream. At some point we all have to ask ourselves, what are we doing with the few precious moments we are fortunate enough to have on this planet?

There's an old adage about two farmers and a dog. The two farmers are sitting on the porch talking when the dog leans up and begins to howl, "Ooowwww."

The farmers continue talking and the dog leans up, "Ooowwww."

This goes on for a while, then finally one of the farmers looks at the other and says, "What's wrong with your dog?"

"He's lying on a nail" the other farmer states.

"Well why doesn't he move?" says the first.

"Because it hurts just bad enough to complain about."

That's how many of us go through life: lying on nails that hurt just bad enough to make us complain but not bad enough to make us move. The bad thing about lying on nails is that they make it easy

to complain. The bad thing about complaining about lying on nails is that most people will think you're stupid for lying on them when you could just move. Or they will think you are lazy because you refuse to move. The nails you lie on do not define who you are, but your willingness or unwillingness to move will speak volumes.

If you want a simple step to get off the nails, here it is — *stop having bad days*. When anyone asks you how you are doing, the answer is: "Great," "Amazing," "Outstanding," or "I couldn't be doing better."

Think about this for a minute. You just get to work after braving the cold from the house to the car. Someone cuts you off on the highway. Then someone takes your parking place when you clearly were there first *and* had your blinker on. You get into the office just in time to see the last donut get shoveled down the throat of the laziest employee your company has. You turn away from the breakroom and head to your desk when a coworker asks, "Hey, how's it going?"

At this point, I want you to ask yourself this question — if these were the worst things that happened today, would it really affect the outcome of my day? Do you really think anything

great has ever happened without some bumps? Do you think Shakespeare ever spilled his ink well? Probably. Do you think our soldiers ever missed a meal on the way to victory? Definitely. What makes us any better than anyone else? Nothing.

When you make a conscious decision to stop having bad days, things change, and they change for the better. You have made a decision to *not* let the guy that cut you off on the highway control even a millisecond of the precious few moments you have on Earth. You made the decision to *not* let the parking space thievery impact how you go about being *awesome*. You made the decision to *not* let the donut vulture deter you from what you are there to do.

The first change you notice when you stop having bad days is that now everyone wants to find out how you're doing. They do this just to hear the answer. I've found people like to hear pleasant words like *awesome*, *amazing*, and *fantastic*. Sometimes, I even make words up like *magnitastic*. Often, the next thing they do is challenge your response.

"Sure you're doing amazing, yeah right," they think, as they unload the big gun, "Well you could be off today."

Ah, the old — you could be off today — trump card. But then I ask myself, if being at work was the worst thing that happened today, was it really a bad day? Not even close.

To sum it up and give you action steps to stop having bad days: *you* have to make the decision to not lie on nails when moving is all that is required. *Always* answer the “How are you doing?” question with a positive word that demands attention. “Good” is a mediocre word and it doesn’t express the *awesomeness* that you bring to the table. “Good” is a placeholder that should not be used for something that is so much more — YOU!

I tell you this, not to say that my life has been without challenges or struggles. I tell you this, because I want you to understand that it is *not* the struggle that will define you. It is the victory over the struggle that will define you.

My father passed away about a month before my 16th birthday. He taught me to drive but didn’t get to see me get my driver’s license. He never got to teach me how to shave or how to balance a checkbook. He wanted a daughter more than anything, and he never got to meet either of my two beautiful daughters or my beautiful wife.

The most valuable thing he gave me was the knowledge and full understanding that hard work trumps almost anything else. He used to tell me when I was playing soccer, and not getting to play as much as I thought I should, “Son, sometimes it’s not how good you are at it, but it’s how bad you

want it.” After his passing, I would reflect on these words often, and I still do. How bad do you want it? How bad do *you* want it? *How bad do you want it?!*

We moved back to Oklahoma my junior year of high school, and I was faced with starting over: new school, new friends, new teammates, and new coaches. This worried me, I felt because they didn’t know me, I wouldn’t have a chance to play. But how bad did I want it? I was at the school everyday that summer at 6:00 a.m. doing drills by myself. I was determined to start, and I was going to put in the work to make that happen. That’s when I finally realized my dad wasn’t saying that I should wish really, really hard and the wish fairy would come make it happen. He was saying that if I wanted it bad enough, I would put in the work, the effort, and the sacrifice to make it happen. I got off my nail. I had become so driven that I told my mother not to buy me a high school graduation ring – we couldn’t afford one anyway – I was going to earn an All-State ring for soccer. I went on to be All-District twice, All-Conference twice, and All-State my senior year.

I don’t tell this story to say, “Look at me and look at what I did”. I tell this story to make one point. What are you willing to give up for the thing you want most? There is no middle ground. There is only give and take. If I give my goal 2 hours per week and my friends 20 hours, then at the end of one year I will have great relationship with my friends, but less than 3 weeks of work put toward my goal. I’m not saying that this is bad,

but what I am saying is that you will have to decide how bad you want it. When the nail becomes unbearable, you will move.

If I had to go back and talk to myself 20 years ago, I would say, “Relax, because life is not nearly as hard as we make it.”

Please do not misunderstand; I realize that people go through real struggle and very real pain, but struggle and pain is the crucible that refines us. When and how we choose to get off our nail will show others our character and that is what will define us.

If I were to give you a small piece of advice on this topic, I would tell you to evaluate your goal. If the goal is worth achieving, then so is the struggle and so is the sacrifice. At the point the goal no longer matters, then neither will the struggle.

For example, how motivated do you think the Russians were to get to the moon after the Americans had already been there? In the 1960’s the space race was at its height. Russia and the U.S. were racing to see who could get to the moon first. In 1969, the Americans put the first man on the moon. When did the Russians walk on the moon? No idea? That’s because the Russians still haven’t walked on the moon. The goal no longer mattered, so neither did overcoming the obstacles to achieve it. When the nail matters, moving off of the nail will matter. How much you move, how fast you move, and how far you move will be determined by how much you are willing to sacrifice.



As You Embark

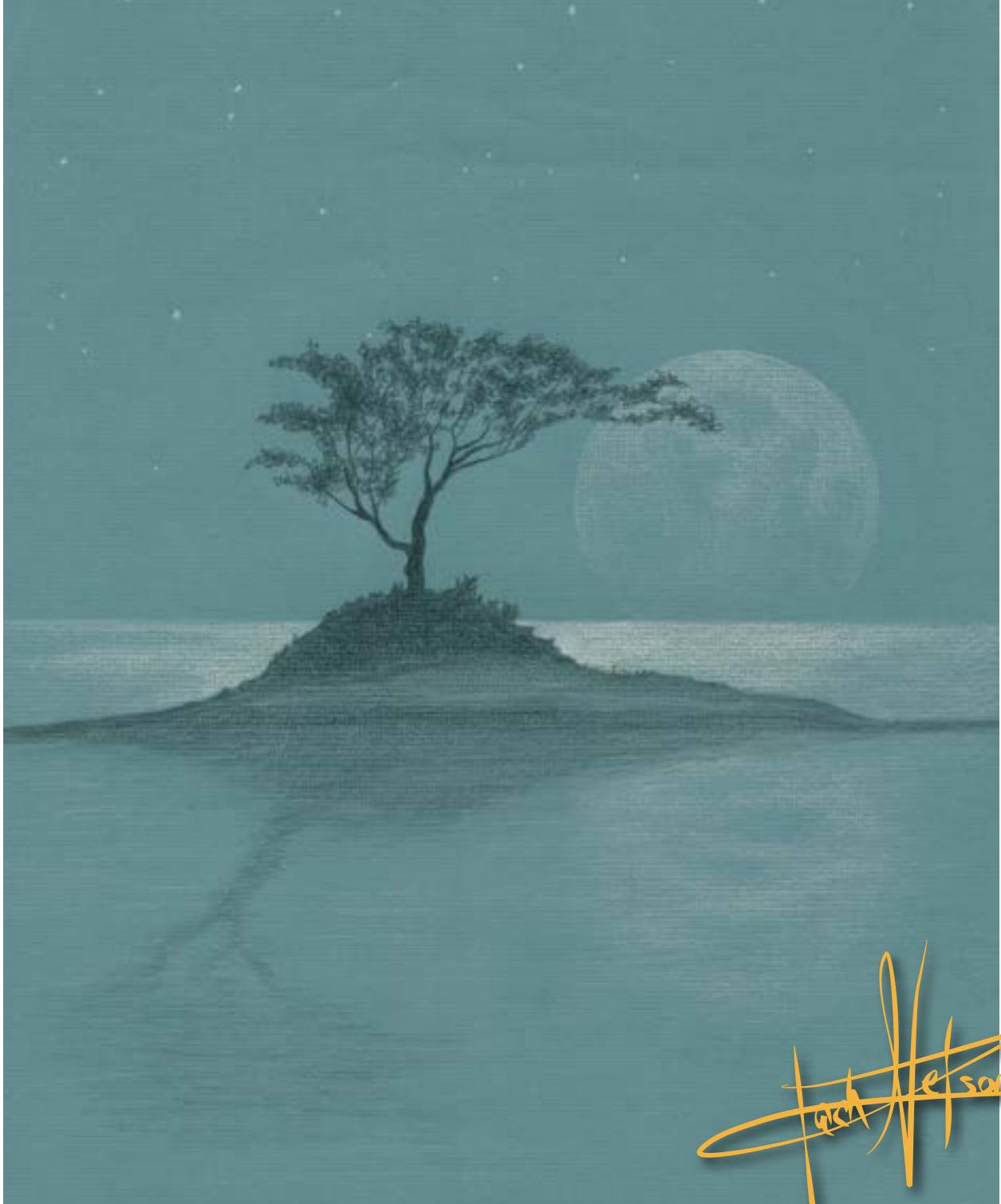
By Frank Miranda, D.D.S., M.Ed., M.B.A.

May you be true in your search for wisdom
And wise wherein you seek
May you be strong in your every choice
But give welcome to the weak
May your ship conquer all the oceans
As you search the gentle stream
Let reality guide your every act
But never fail to dream

May you be proud of all that you do
But let humility be your star
May you have the means to go where you choose
And the sense to know where you are
May you cross life's desert with filled canteen
And share with those who thirst
And if you be last in someone's thoughts
Do that which makes you first

May you share your talents willingly
For all the days you live
And take of the gifts life has for you
But remember first to give
If you let these words be the way
To guide all you say and do
The star of wealth and happiness
Will forever shine on you



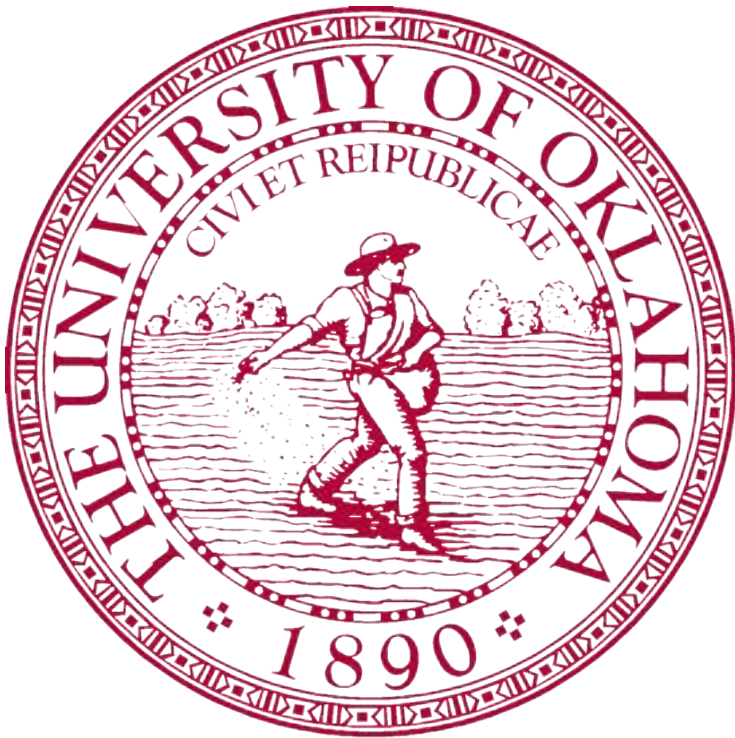


Rach Nelson

Original work by Rach Nelson

“ And you were just like the moon, so lonely,
so full of imperfections, but just like the
moon, you shined in times of darkness. ”

- Unknown



Send in your stories or let us know how they impacted your
life in your professional program!
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