



five small things that make a big difference

by Joan Fox

We make choices throughout our day that make huge differences for our patients. Here are five seemingly small things that make a big difference in patient experiences.

“No matter what position you have in the organization, you can always choose to have positive influence. Attitude is a choice. Negativity is easy—that’s why so many choose it.”

Embrace that the patient is not in the way of your job—but the purpose of it. In the extreme busy-ness of the work day, it is easy to focus on tasks that need to be completed, calls that must be returned and situations that require documentation. The patient awaiting a question to be answered, a discussion of a procedure, or an answer about their bill can at times feel like a hindrance to our jobs.

This is a normal reaction in a fast paced work place. Remind yourself daily that if patients didn’t call or visit, there would be no questions that needed to be answered, no procedures to be discussed and no bills to be explained—and therefore no need for our jobs.

Leave your personal issues behind. This is easier to say than to do but imperative for a healthy work culture. Give your co-workers a break and come to work focused on your work. This is not saying that your challenges are not real or significant. However, the time for dealing with those issues is at home, with friends, with family and with the time to discuss your challenges in a meaningful way.

Control your frustration even though the situation may be frustrating. Every once in a while, I literally bite my tongue. I imagine we’ve all had that experience when you’d love to say what you REALLY think, but it wouldn’t change the outcome. Ask yourself: Am I merely venting or does my response change the outcome? If it doesn’t change the outcome, if you are only adding to the angst of the situation, it may be best to bite your tongue.

Project a positive attitude. I’ve thought and thought about this topic and have come to the conclusion that being positive is tough. I’m not talking about being a Pollyanna, dancing around and throwing smiley faces everywhere. I’m talking about seeing the positive side in a situation that others reject immediately as negative simply because they don’t like it. No matter what position you have in the organization, you can always choose to have positive influence. Attitude is a choice. Negativity is easy—that’s why so many choose it.

Choose to not be affected by the negative attitudes of others. Similar yet not identical to point number four, this is crucial. Who you spend time with is who you become. Negativity is contagious. There is an old saying that one rotten apple will spoil the barrel. Oh so true. The flesh of the rotten apple touches the apples around it and spreads the bacteria that cause continuous rotting. I’ve chosen this graphic and rather gross example on purpose. People who surround themselves with negative people become rottenly negative.

