

FM REVIEW 2014 4 COMMENTS

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: The putative topic of this essay is how to deal with anger management as a physician and colleague; and how to teach anger management to students. However, I found the essay very unfocused. One reviewer liked it and one reviewer saw the kernel of an important idea buried here. Because physicians rarely write about their anger toward colleagues or patients, and even less often about how they go about teaching this topic to learners, I would like to give the author a chance to extensively revise. Another option would be to make this a reject and resubmit, it does need a lot of work.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: This essay tackles an important and much-neglected subject, how to deal with anger and frustration toward colleagues and patients; and how to teach these lessons to learners. However, in order to thoughtfully and deeply consider each of these topics, the essay requires extensive revision. Please pay particular attention to the comments of reviewer 2, as these will be quite helpful in restructuring the essay. Below are summary points of some changes that should be made in submitting a revision.

- 1) The opening mini-story about resident A is powerful. It is disappointing when it is not revisited. Please close the loop here. Did you discuss this incident with the resident, and if so, how? What were the lessons taught?**
- 2) Similarly, resident A had the good fortune to be present when you confronted your radiology colleague in a professional manner. She asks you, "How did you stay so calm?" The reader wants to know the answer too, so let us know.**
- 3) Don't spend so much space on the medical details of the flashback - I think you may be justifying why your request was appropriate, but that is not the purpose of the essay. The main point in this case is that the radiology residents behaved in a disrespectful and unprofessional manner. Please figure out a way to highlight this and let the rest go.**
- 4) Similarly, you want to highlight that although you specifically asked the radiology resident to talk to your patient and explain her situation, he did so in a cursory and unhelpful manner. Bring this forward more succinctly, and also indicate how or whether you planned to address this issue with him (or with your own resident) as well.**
- 5) In your final paragraphs, please return to the original excellent questions you raised in the introductory paragraph. Give readers some insights about how you manage these situations, both as a clinician and as an educator. These concluding paragraphs need to summarize your own learning and insights in a way that is easily accessible to the reader.**
- 6) Think about a different title - I'm not sure what the phrase "friend and foe" really means, while "professionalism and anger" sounds very abstract and theoretical. The title is what will draw in the reader. Try to come up with something more compelling.**

7) Try for a more narrative style - as if you were reflecting on this question of working with emotions with a trusted colleague over a cup of coffee. Sometimes you capture that well, and then at other times you sound more like a clinic preceptor.

Regarding your summative thoughts, I think you can go further than just "remaining calm" or "not getting angry." The more interesting question is when you notice anger arising, what do you do with it? Do you stuff it because it is unprofessional? Do you decide it is justifiable because the other person is a "jerk"? Do you try to learn something from it? Is it telling you action needs to be taken? If so, what might be the goals of that action? How might you go about taking that action in a way that is courteous and professional, yet also meets your goal? When you calm yourself by taking a breath (a valuable strategy that could be highlighted in the essay), to what end? How do you proceed after the breath and how does it help? Are there other strategies you use, such as perspective taking or seeking common ground? Perhaps this kind of discussion is similar to the one you had with resident A, and these points can be folded into your concluding thoughts in a narrative rather than a purely didactic way.