

## SPEAKING NOTES

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It is an honour to be here and a real privilege. As I look out, I see a generational opportunity we have to change health care. And I'm so excited that the people we have in this room bring great energy and personify the type of collaboration that's needed to do exactly that.

*(President does introductions).*

As you see, many in this room have been through our fair share of battles and have scars, and I'm no different. I would like to tell you about – but not show you – a few of mine.

As many of you know, I'm an avid cyclist and that's my preferred method of commuting. One morning I was particularly looking forward to a nice commute to work. And it was a bit foggy outside. My wife said it would best if I took the car and left the bicycle behind. But I had been on this path so many times that I knew it like the back of my hand. So onto the bike I got, put on my trusted helmet. And as I was whizzing by I hit a curb that had been there all the time. Flying over the handlebars I thought to myself "this isn't good." And because of that particular accident I always carry with me a scar on my right chin.

It reminds me of two things. First, we should always listen to our partners and spouses. The second is that no matter how sure we are of the path we are going down, no matter how certain, it's important to listen to those around us who have our best interests at heart. And to make sure, although we may feel certain that we know the way, that we stop and recalibrate at every step.

The next scar I would like to share with you is on my left occiput. We were invited a few years ago to visit friends who have a cabin in the Laurentians. Now, all of our other friends who have gone there have gotten very, very sick. We found ourselves in the area so we accepted the invitation. We thought the reason everyone else got sick was because they didn't drink the right water. They were not healthy enough. Perhaps they had been drinking smoothies instead of vaccines.

So thinking ourselves to be better than everyone else, we went and had a wonderful time. The first day we swam in the lake, we played on the second day, and on the third day as we were getting ready to go I started to feel a little queasy. By that night, I felt like I had a tornado in my stomach. The last thing I remember is getting up and going to the washroom. The next thing I can remember, I was waking up some indeterminate time later with a wet throbbing on the back of my head and a large deficit when I tried to touch it that was repaired about 12 hours later thanks to the Quebec medical system.

Whenever I get a haircut and I see the look of consternation in my stylist's eyes as she goes over that gnarly bump, I think to myself, it is so important to learn from the lessons of others. As

we are pulling our ship into harbour and we see a few other wrecks, maybe it's best to turn the vessel around.

The last scar I'd like to tell you about is my left elbow. Almost exactly a year ago today, at the Annual General Meeting, I felt some pain in my left elbow. It hurt but I did not think much of it – probably just an overuse injury the likes of which I've seen many times before in my office as we all have. Over the subsequent weeks, the pain and swelling went down, but all of a sudden I couldn't move my elbow.

Doctor became patient. As I went through the medical system. My journey involved x-rays, ultrasound, MRI and CT it became apparent that I had osteoarthritis. Thankfully, through the care of a wonderful medical team, I am now almost able to fully extend my arms. According to the experts it is now functional.

The lesson that I learned from this is-- why a man of my age would develop severe arthritis in his non-dominant hand, his non-dominant elbow-- – sometimes sh\*t happens! And when it does, it is important that we have people around to help us. For me, I was lucky. I had a wonderful orthopedic surgeon, an expert rheumatologist, and a strong primary care giver. That diversity of opinion and diversity of advice helped me in the course of a year to get me to the point where I can be on the podium, gesticulating to you now.

That brings me back to what we talked about at the beginning, that it's about teamwork. It's about diversity. It's about working together. And I recognize that we haven't always been good at this. As a white male born in Canada to loving and supportive parents, I recognize the advantages I had the others haven't, I realize the need we have to give voice to those who are not as fortunate.

As an organization, we can all be proud that Doctors of BC is the first province in Canada to go down this road, to hire a consultant, to look at itself, to engage its members, to try and understand the challenges of diversity among us. And to try and find out how it is that we can better support our members, how we can better support diversity, how we can promote inclusion. And to create a space where people feel they belong, to give voice to the new ideas, to new solutions that our health care system needs.

In doing so, I hope that we will model the kind of conduct that society expects of us. We have certainly seen some worrisome changes, with tribalism and divisive politics, people using identity and extremism for personal gain, people using sexism, racism, overt hate toward people who are seen or labelled as "The Other".

Instead, let's celebrate our differences, let's focus on what we have in common. We are skilled, dedicated health care professionals who are working hard to provide the best care possible. There will be differences of opinion. But we can discuss them with civility and with respect.

Practice is changing and the old lines that we have drawn to create identities no longer hold. When we think about GPs and Specialists, when we look at our Emergency Rooms and our Operating Rooms and our case rooms, we see doctors working shoulder to shoulder whether they be Royal College certified or members of the College of Family Physicians. They are working to the same end.

When we talk about rural and urban, we have doctors who work in one center during the week, another on the weekend, who perform locums, who change locations during their careers. So

maybe it's better to focus on under-serviced and even more under-serviced areas. Maybe it's time to start focussing on facility-based and community-based.

Maybe what we can get doing is to get past these identity politics, break down some of these barriers that we have set up. Or we may unknowingly be creating division within our own profession.

So what I would like to see today is a show of hands. I would like to see people join with me today as we focus on the commonalities that we have as doctors, our focus on patient care, that we will move beyond identity politics and "othering" and we will be open to difficult conversations and tough debate because we all have that common goal.

So join with me and raise your hands that tonight we start to move beyond identity politics and we come together as a profession because that's what society needs from us.

And that is how we are going to best accomplish our goals. Because at the end of the day it's about relationships with each other. As we have seen in Nanaimo and North Vancouver, issues of technology aren't really issues of technology – they are issues of change management. Change management is just another way of saying relationships and communication.

And so as we have people here from the Ministry and from Health Authorities, I look to you to continue the relationships we have, build up the communications that we have. As we go through the change process, as we create disruption, we can do it together and we can do it in a positive way.

But tonight let us focus on being comfortable with each other, to building and strengthening our relationships. To celebrate the opportunity we have to improve the lives of millions of people. To that end, I encourage you to mingle extensively, eat reasonably, drink responsibly, and then dance like no one's watching.

Thank you.