Being grateful

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As I write this it is Thanksgiving. That seems right somehow, given all that we have to be thankful for over the holidays. I want to begin this term’s President’s Messages by focusing on the positive. As I reflect on this, I realize I have much to be grateful for. I have been a family physician for more than 20 years, and it has been a privileged life. I have been asked to talk to the Calgary Family Medicine Interest Group tonight about my life as a family physician. Good timing again.

I know that some of you across Canada are frustrated, overworked, even burned out. Some are cynical about health care, government, patient expectations, and hospitals. When I chose family medicine, I wasn’t looking for a lifestyle. I was looking for a life. I wasn’t looking for an easy ride—I love challenges and hard work. Sometimes the challenges are overwhelming, but despite the troubling times, it is an amazing ride. During my Presidency I want to celebrate the amazing growth in our discipline, the changes in how we deliver care, and our responsiveness to the demands of the system. I have gratitude for all of these and other professional blessings, and I hope you will join me in celebrating our many successes.

Choosing family medicine

What will I say to the medical students tonight? What would capture their passion and help them to see that I will join me in celebrating our many successes.

Choosing gratitude

Researchers are now studying gratitude. There are measurable benefits to being thankful, to stepping back and recognizing or rediscovering awe in what we do and the value we bring. The College helps us define what family doctors do in this country, setting education standards for accreditation, setting and administering exams, acting as a voice to our many partners, and creating a gathering place for family physicians to work on a multitude of issues. Great work gets done every day. We meet, we work together, we respond, evolve, inspire, enhance, and advocate for family doctors across Canada. I am grateful for this above all. Family doctors do an amazing job of providing care, with proven effectiveness and at great savings to the system. This is a great time of year to remember that we make a difference. Wasn’t that the reason we all started this journey? I bet that when I sit down with the medical students tonight they will be looking to find that place in medicine where they can make their difference.

We do have a great life as family doctors, and we are lucky to be a part of this essential element of health care in Canada. It is a good time of year to be thankful.

References