

Pearls From the 2020 WDS Forum

By Kathleen Hectorne, MD

This year the WDS Forum's Sunday session "30 Pearls in 30 Minutes" was overflowing with valuable, fun, inspiring advice from our panelists and enthusiastic audience members who shared tips on how to make our lives more fulfilling and joyful. We learned so much from each other and we wanted to share our 'pearls' with you as well. As you can see, we couldn't stop at 30!

Dr. Wendi Wohltmann

- Fertility Awareness: Physicians have a higher infertility risk compared to the general population; seek help early, start trying earlier, and consider freezing your eggs.
- Don't try to keep up with the Joneses (or the Kardashians); "Be thankful for what you have; you'll end up having more." – Oprah Winfrey
- Volunteering brings joy.
- Gratitude: Be thankful for what you have.

Dr. Deborah McFarlane

- Fill baked pie crusts for quick, easy meals e.g. quiches, fruit pies.
- For excisions around the areola consider a crescentic shape for a better cosmetic outcome. During healing, wear firmly fitting bra.
- Wisdom: Think of other people who are less fortunate.

Dr. Mara Weinstein Velez

- Calendars: Get an organization wall.
- Use a skin hook when suturing to decrease tissue damage.
- Happiness: Cross out all the things that you don't love to do.

Dr. Joyce Teng

- Follow your heart; what you love to do matters.
- Be strategic, have backup plans; it's ok to follow your heart but take your brain with you.
- Be persistent; constant dripping of water wears away the stone.

Dr. Michelle Tarbox

- "Every child is an artist; the problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up." – Pablo Picasso
- Through improv training, you learn to build on and encourage others by stating "yes and".
- "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." - Theodore Roosevelt
- Assume that people are doing their best; assume people's intentions are positive.
- Happiness is 'self-generated'. You will be exactly as happy as you decide to be.
- Stay curious: "Dermasphere Podcast" - The Dermatology Podcast
- If the rest does not apply, let it go.

Dr. Bethanee Schlosser

- Know when you are at your best, be deliberate about how you use time.
- Eat that Frog: Perform the hardest/least attractive task first.

- Action is the antidote to anxiety; dread is always worse than doing.
- Have a guilty pleasure and indulge in it.

Dr. Elizabeth McBurney

- Practice ways to say no:
 - “Thank you for asking me, but unfortunately, I have other commitments so I won’t be able to help you with that. “
 - “I will pass.”
 - Say no without apologizing; don’t beat around the bush - just say it; the less said the better; don’t delay.
- Make your bed each morning - Martha Innes (Dr. McBurney's mother).
- Professional fingernail polish etiquette can extend beyond neutral colors. You can pick any color you like and get designs while keeping nails at a reasonable length. However, avoid pointy nail shapes, letting nails become excessively chipped, or having inappropriate nail art.

Dr. Barbara Mathes

- Smile a lot; be kind.
- Make mistakes.
- Listen.
- Accept criticism the same way you accept compliments.
- Learn to know what you don’t know.
- Be confident, but don’t be too confident.
- Take vacations.
- Get a young internist.
- Dance, sing, and laugh, heartily and often.
- Antiperspirant for toe issues. (Dove, Secret)
- Pay less attention to your computers and more attention to your patients.

Dr. Erin Gilbert

- Follow your instincts; more often than not you are right when you sense a "red flag" coming up with a patient.
- Be thorough with your documentation. Include any phone calls you may have had with the patient, or secure emails so that either you or another provider can be fully up to speed when the chart is opened at the subsequent visit.
- Believe it or not, consent forms should be filled out at every office visit to make sure the patient is up to speed on planned procedures, and to best protect you.
- Ask questions about your patient's job, family life, planned vacations and document them. Everyone likes to feel like they are more than just a number or a skin condition.

Drs. Kathleen Hectorne and Rochelle Torgerson

- Embrace the unknown. Move past the fear of change. (Comfort Zone -> Opportunity Zone)
- Resolve to let something remain unresolved.
- Without a plan, years will pass. They may be good, but they could have been great.
- Break down larger projects/tasks into smaller more manageable sections as illustrated in the book on writing “Bird by Bird”.

Audience Pearls: Work

- Don't always wait to be recognized for consideration of a position. Let people know you are interested and take action.
- Contacts card with iPhone; make your iPhone ID your business card.
- Chronic itch patients: Duoderm to skin erosion over lesions; active flex bandage (available on Amazon).
- Say to patient that if inject area (prurigo) they can't touch; Educate about dopamine "reward" system of itching/scratching/picking.
- For nail biopsies (fingers/toes), call them the next day.
- Give yourself 5 seconds before walking into the room to focus on the patient and the task at hand.
- Value of stickers for getting pediatric patients to stay motivated, cooperative and involved.
- Buzzy Bee.
- Give detailed pre-op/post-op sheets.
- Keep list of accomplishments.

Audience Pearls: Family / Home

- Share what you are grateful for with your family and children.
- Teach your children the love of reading (young pts); NY Times articles for teenagers (potted plant parents).
- Try to separate work from family life.
- Brene Brown Ted Talk about communication and parenting pearls.
- Encourage children to resolve sibling conflicts themselves.
- Resolving a Conflict: Parent and child both write 3 paragraphs about a situation 1) how you see the situation 2) how the other person sees the situation 3) your thoughts about a solution and what you think are the other person's views for a solution.
- Don't forget about the importance of date nights.

Audience Pearls: Life

- Self-defense: Go under the ribcage.
- Regarding procrastination: Sometimes it may actually boost creativity as you are thinking about the topic while you are procrastinating.
- Study on Failure: Looked at groups who had a high failure rate (NIH applicants, Venture Capital groups, ect.) to see who succeeded; ones who were persistent, learned what could have gone better and changed TACTICS after failure were most successful.
- Smiling: Always give a natural smile by imagining a person you love taking picture.
- Put everything away.
- Freeze eggs: Vulnerability shows strength.
- Tag emails with unusual names so you can find: ex using character names (Xanadu, Kylo Ren)
- Happiness jar: Starting January 1st, write down good things that happened on a slip of paper and place them in the jar. Review at the end of the year and during the year to help bring joy.
- Seek advice from those who have come before you.
- Be with nature.
- Book recommendation: "Crucial Conversations" - Dealing with difficult topics/conversations.
- Make a bucket list.