



Current Problems in Diagnostic Radiology

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Planning Wellness in 2019



With 2019 underway, I invite you to fully embrace your “wiring” as a human being and the universal needs that go with it. While we humans cannot be “rebooted” or “defragmented” like a computer, we can make a conscious effort to know what helps us re-energize. Such reflection can lead to an even deeper, richer, and more satisfying 2019. This may include a new conference—perhaps one you’ve been eyeing for some time, or a refreshing one that’s been completely off your radar. Away from the demands of everyday life, such experiences can pay large dividends for you and your family, as well as your patients, colleagues, and practice. This past fall I discovered 2 amazing conferences; consider these and others below to help bring out the best version of you in the new year.

Good news: both of the conferences I attended this fall are already paying big dividends. Given my passion for leadership and mindfulness, I was more than curious about the fifth Annual Mindful Leadership Summit in D.C.¹ I was so curious about the offerings that I attended both the pre- and postconference days in addition to the main event. I only wish I’d attend in years prior. At the preconference day, I happily soaked up 6 hours of resilience research and wisdom from Mayo researcher Amit Sood, M.D.^{2,3} Since then I’ve added 1–2 minutes of gratitude in the morning before getting out of bed. Like others, I’ve found this simple exercise grounds me and can help bring an energizing calm to the morning. However, a word of caution: sometimes it feels so good you may not want to get out of bed! If this is the case, consider Mel Robbins’ “5 second rule” to “rocket” yourself from beneath the covers and into your day.⁴ Additional highlights of the Mindful Leadership offerings included Tara Brach, PhD, on cultivating compassion, Judson Brewer MD/PhD on the neuroscience of mindfulness, and Bill George, PhD on becoming a mindful leader. Experiencing and reflecting on these speakers with fellow participants—from MDs and educators to coaches and administrators who hailed from all over the USA—was totally enlivening and encouraging.

For the postconference day, I joined 20 other participants for a Tai Chi and Qigong workshop with creativity guru Michael Gelb.^{5,6} I was hoping to find a few take-home exercises; I got that, and much more. I’ve added a minute or so of Tai Chi (floating hands) to my morning routine for a calm and energizing lift.^{6,7} For sure it takes time to consistently integrate such new habits; even with the best of intentions, it has not been a perfect string of success every day, but it’s definitely moving in that direction. Having a toolbox of strategies to energize my morning has in itself been well worth the time and effort of attending this conference. I’ve also found these simple exercises can be a restoring afternoon break from a demanding PACS workload.

The second new conference I attended this fall was the World Business Forum in November in N.Y.C. The line-up of world-class speakers from beginning to end was just too irresistible to pass up. Seth Godin led off the first day and hit a grand-slam home run with

his energy, pacing, humor, and message of the primacy of meaning in marketing. Dan Goleman of *Emotional Intelligence* fame, Nobel-prize winning Dan Kahneman (*Thinking Fast and Slow*), and Jeff Immelt (former CEO of GE) delivered in ways big and small. Sara Lewis (*The Rise: Creativity, the Gift of Failure, and the Search for Mastery*) shared fascinating stories and, as an unexpected bonus, demonstrated how to navigate a very annoying alarm going off sporadically throughout her talk. Key takeaway: stay completely calm, ask, “Is it me?” and proceed with grace, grit, and enviable equanimity. Arianna Huffington, who closed the conference, strode to center stage and essentially did not move for 45 minutes, captivating the audience with her voice, stories, and passion. I left inspired not only by the content, but also by the quality, passion, and skill of the speakers. As radiologists, we are constantly communicating at national and international conferences, in teaching conferences with residents, fellows, and clinicians. Hopefully, as ACR 3.0 recommends, we are increasingly communicating with patients and the public as well. Learning from such master communicators can only help our cause.

Perhaps in 2019 you’ll want to stretch yourself to attend a conference based on the work of pediatric oncologist Rachel Naomi Remen, MD, author of the best-selling books, *Kitchen Table Wisdom and My Grandfather’s Blessings*. Wright State University offers of these conferences several each year.⁸ Then you can bring Remen’s “Healing Arts” workshop to your institution for the benefit of care-givers at all levels. If nothing else, give yourself a gift and read her books for a heart-connecting experience with your best professional and personal self.^{9,10}

Or maybe you’d like to pursue a self-care theme. Are you curious about the burgeoning field of Interpersonal Neurobiology? Head to the Annual Interpersonal Neurobiology Conference in April 2019 in LA and hear from Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD—author of the classic, *Full Catastrophe Living, and Mindfulness for Beginners*—who helped bring mindfulness to the medical world.¹¹ Perhaps a yoga/mindfulness retreat with the likes of Deepak Chopra, MD, or many others, is your choice to restore your energy and passion. If you’ve got a smoldering case of burnout, the best treatment might be a Dike Drummond, MD (a.k.a. TheHappyMD) conference, or one from the University of Rochester’s Ron Epstein, MD.^{12,13} Epstein’s book, *Attending: Medicine, Mindfulness, and Humanity* is a wonderful introduction to the work he does in helping physicians restore their energy and vitality.¹⁴

Are your intellect and curiosity stimulated by the promise and perils of AI, deep learning, or big data? There are a growing number of conferences that include, or feature these topics. But beware: following your curiosity can stimulate life-altering creativity and innovation. Just ask Oscar-winning producer Brian Grazer. His book on this topic, *A Curious Mind*, was a *New York Times* bestseller and is a very inspiring and thought-provoking read.¹⁵

Just maybe it's been too long since you've taken a tropical or ski conf. with your family? Or perhaps you've never taken the plunge. These can be great for learning, CMEs, bonding, and memories. It just might be your year to learn to ski, or teach your kids or grandkids. If you choose one of these, what could you do to make it extra special? Perhaps heighten the anticipation by getting your family involved in the planning. Let the memories and stories you create nourish everyone for years to come.

Please do consider a new conference in 2019...one that piques your curiosity and revitalizes your soul. Know this can pay big dividends for you and others. While AI is coming, we are not machines that can be “rebooted,” “defragmented,” or upgraded with the flick of a switch. So go ahead—start making the plans today for a renewing experience in 2019. Give yourself permission to take great care of yourself. Share the wealth as well—encourage a colleague or 2, and their families, to join you and yours. By doing so, you'll help assure you'll have abundant energy for those you'll impact in 2019—as an MD, parent, colleague, and human being. Don't delay—do it today!

Conflicts of Interest

None.

Sources of Support

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Supplementary materials

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