

SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS—MAY 2016

Let's Talk



Tammy Koenecke

RN, BSN, MASL
Spiritual Care

Coordinator ♦ Reedsburg
Area Medical Center

Tammy's mission is to promote spiritual awareness in patients, families and staff, thereby facilitating healing in the presence of illness and the absence of cure from birth to end of life.

For assistance, further information or to schedule an appointment, please call:

Tammy Koenecke
@ 608-768-6249



2000 North Dewey Avenue, Reedsburg • www.ramchealth.com

My fingers stall over the keys as I try to formulate this reflection. It has been on my mind ever since I overheard a comment made during a recent tour of the Biltmore Estate in Asheville, NC. A group of children age 8 or 9 years old were touring slightly ahead of me and my aunt and I overheard the guide's comment.

They were looking out at a veranda where several chairs were arranged in sets of 2 with a table between them. She asked the group what they thought the people did in those big chairs. It was their answers that prompted this reflection.

Many of the students responded. They thought perhaps people read books, or painted or watched the birds, or perhaps they slept or played games. After their answers stopped coming the tour guide suggested that they also had conversations in these big inviting chairs! She went on to explain that people actually sat with a glass of lemonade or cup of tea and talked to one another. She then told them this activity was called *having a conversation*. This was a scary thought to me that we might come to a time when conversation becomes a lost art.

Think about the conversations you have had in the last week. How many of them would qualify as a conversation? How many of them involved sitting down next to

someone, perhaps having lemonade or tea, and talking about life? Were you aware of the person's tone of voice as they shared their story? Did you recognize their body language as they spoke? Did the words you heard match the tone of voice and the body language? Good communication requires all three. A rich conversation appreciates all three!

Those of you who know me personally know that I am not very fond of technology. Recently, I thought I heard disappointment in the voice on the other end of the phone when I had called to let them know about a change in plans. I began a texting session (that is the way of the world, right?) which produced a great deal of anxiety. I was not able to tell if the response to my apology for needing to make the change was in jest or was serious. I quickly responded with a voicemail and a text indicating that I had sent a voicemail in an effort to encourage a return call. I wanted to hear their tone of voice. At least then I would have 2 of the 3 components of a conversation. No response. I began reading into the lack of response. Clearly, I had upset this person even more than I originally thought? I didn't know what to do. I had a knot in my stomach. I did not sleep well.

A text response came mid-morning the following day. The evening had become busy, the morning had

CONTINUED FROM PG. 1

gotten off to a crazy pace and a resolution to my misinterpretation followed. What a poor mode of communication! It is impossible to have a conversation using technology. We need to hear the emotion in the person's voice at a minimum. It is helpful to see their body language, too. We need to connect our human energy.

There is so much anxiety, so much disappointment, so much distraction, and so much misinterpretation when messages are sent through devices and it affects us personally. We conjure up all kinds of images. We read way more into the words being sent than were intended. We spend a lot of time apologizing for what has been written and if our words are misinterpreted without knowledge of the pain they have caused we damage our relationships.

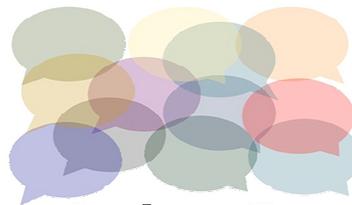
How will we know when someone is in need of a listening ear if all we read is, "I'm fine" oblivious to the tears

dropping onto the keyboard or screen or the waver in their voice?

We must be aware of the importance of talking with each other with listening ears and watchful eyes to alert us to potential spiritual distress or despair.

There is great power in our words especially when there are actions to match. God's word is brought to life through our actions, as well. We read in Proverbs 12:25, "Worry wears a person down; an encouraging word cheers a person up". So pull up a chair and suggest, let's talk.

May God's Peace Be With You,
Tammy Koenecke, RN, BSN, MASL
Spiritual Care Coordinator, RAMC



let's talk

*May our Lord
Jesus Christ and
God our Father,
who loved us and
in his special
favor gave us
everlasting
comfort and good
hope, comfort your
hearts and give
you strength in
every good thing
you do and say.
2 Thessalonians
2:16-17*

Spouse/Partner Loss Support Group

This is a five week interactive support group that seeks to provide a safe and confidential environment in which those grieving the loss of a spouse or partner can share their thoughts and feelings freely.

**Tuesdays, April 26 and May 3, 10, 17, 24 2016
5:30pm—7:30pm**

This program will meet in the Conference Room at Reedsburg Area Medical Center.

Hosted by Michael Amberg, Spiritual Counselor, Home Health United Hospice and Tammy Koenecke, RN, BSN, MASL, RAMC Spiritual Care Coordinator.

Call Tammy with questions, 768-6249.



2000 North Dewey Avenue, Reedsburg • www.ramchealth.com