

Selling Yourself

Using Humility, Positivity to Build Your Career



Frederick L. Greene, MD, FACS

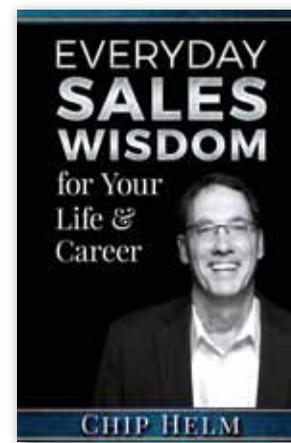
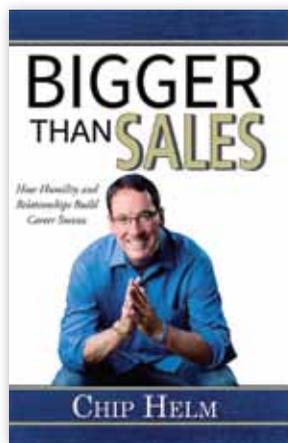
Charlotte, N.C.

As surgeons, we have spent our lives in multiple learning opportunities—beginning with kindergarten where principles were probably the most influential, through every level of our education, including medical school and our postgraduate surgical training. It is evident to many that the greatest lessons have been realized after going into our practices, whether these were in the private sector or academic spheres. These learning opportunities come from a variety of directions: patients, peers, students and nonmedical colleagues. Many times the most influential and lasting effects come from those colleagues who represent important technical areas that are juxtaposed to our work as surgeons. These representatives from the technology and instrument companies provide us with the means and tools that have allowed us to practice our surgical craft. Although most of these interactions occur in the operating room, office setting or exhibit halls at our professional society meetings, rarely are these teaching

moments codified in written form. It is this experience that I am delighted to report.

Recently, Chip Helm, my friend and colleague from the medical technology world, sent me two small monographs that contained those important life lessons that he has gleaned while working for a leading company over a number of years. Although the genre of these publications reflects a successful career in medical sales, the messages so clearly delineated are very appropriate for every profession and at every level of a physician's education. The words and important messages included in "Everyday Sales: Wisdom for Your Life & Career" and "Bigger Than Sales: How Humility and Relationships Build Career Success" should be required reading for medical students and physicians in training as their own professional careers are being honed.

Helm parlays his wisdom regarding how communication skills in a sales career transcend every profession, especially our own as we interact with our patients and colleagues. We are told how,



We must always remain humble, even as we reach the most heightened positions of our profession; we need to maintain a positive attitude; and we need to cultivate strong work relationships through trust, respect, empathy, integrity, accountability and competence.

from our earliest professional experiences, we need to create our own "branding" and reputation by identifying our core values of honesty and integrity; we must always remain humble, even as we reach the most heightened positions of our profession; we need to maintain a positive attitude; and we need to cultivate strong work relationships through trust, respect, empathy, integrity, accountability and competence.

These are the same principles that my dad shared with me, as I grew up with a man who was devoted to selling to the public and who taught me the value of personal interaction, whether in a retail store environment or in a patient-physician relationship. The lessons that I learned working in a retail jewelry store during my formative years have stayed with me throughout my career. This is probably the reason why Helm's writings have resonated with me.

In the 20-plus years that I have editorialized for *General Surgery News*, I have opined on a book on just one prior occasion. Now it is time to give a shout-out once again regarding writings that, in my view, would otherwise go unnoticed. I highly recommend that you get copies of

Helm's two monographs (www.chiphelm.com). I assure you that you will be amply rewarded. If you are lucky, you might also have the opportunity to meet Chip as you meander through the exhibit area at a future surgical meeting. You will recognize him; he's the guy with a big smile, a warm handshake and the persona of a man who has made a career of selling himself in all the right ways.

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