

Lessons From Our Learners

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Feature Editor

Editor's Note: Submissions to this column may be in the form of papers, essays, poetry, or other similar forms. Editorial assistance will be provided to develop early concepts or drafts. If you have a potential submission or idea, or if you would like reactions to a document in progress, contact the series editor directly: William D. Grant, EdD, SUNY Upstate Medical University, Department of Family Medicine, 475 Irving Avenue, Suite 200, Syracuse, NY 13210. 315-464-6997. Fax: 315-464-6982. grantw@upstate.edu.

A Grand Seduction Indeed

Eric Cadesky, MD CM, CCFP

Was it over another glass of wine or during the boat ride across a sparkling lake? While I'm not sure exactly when it occurred to me, this much is clear: I am suddenly quite popular. People laugh more at my jokes, request that I be seated first, and listen with infinite patience to even my most mundane stories. Although I would like to believe that my Semitic features or past travels have invoked such interest, the truth is: my name is Eric, and I am a graduating family physician.

From Vancouver to Val d'Or, Canadians are in dire need of family doctors. Recent estimates

peg the national shortage at 3,000; between 4 to 5 million Canadians (about 15% of the population) still do not have a family physician. Given the significant health benefits that family medicine provides to people, families, and communities, it is no surprise that the demand for new *omnipractiens* is high. Communities strive to attract us and our licensed abilities to shorten waiting lists, transform walk-in vagabonds to well-covered roster dwellers, and perineally apparate at 2 o'clock in the morning when a woman delivers her baby.

Thus, the seduction continues.

But, what are the effects of all of this attention and flattery? After living the impecunious existences of medical school supplicant, medical student scut monkey, and resident work horse, the spotlight of

seemingly unconditional love can feel very warm. But temptations can also impair one's judgment, imbuing a harmful *hubris* in place of the vigor for lifelong learning. That is when I am most in need of effective antidotes such as a long night on call or a difficult patient encounter; these remind me that I am still a family doctor in the making—there is much more personal and professional growth ahead.

And, as I politely decline another invitation for an afternoon of golf, I hope that my suitors understand this as well.

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