Twitter Thread by Kimberly D. Manning, MD



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@gradydoctor

1/

This car pulled up to a 4 way stop just after me the other morning. On my left. As I pulled out, they did, too.

We nearly collided.

After a brief pause, I continued. Moments later, the driver swooped alongside me, extended an arm over the passenger seat, & flipped me off.

2/
Then, they sped off. But got stuck at the red light just ahead.

2 lanes. An empty street. On an early morning.

And this person in a car now beside me who, after not having the right of way, decided to greet me with a middle finger.

Mmm hmmm.

3/
Did I mention that this was on December 26? And that I'd worked not only on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day--but 12 consecutive days before?

And where I come from? Flipping folks off is not compatible with life.

Or at least compatible with not having it threatened.

4/
Anywho.

I stop at the light and allow my eyes to drift to my bird-shooting comrade. And then, after a few moments, they looked over toward me.

Mmm hmmm.

I felt my lips curling. My eyes narrowing. My hand reaching for the window button.

And then I stopped.

5/
I thought about this instance where someone made me very mad when I was an intern. A really intimidating person who was tasked with performing a complicated straight cath on my unstably housed patient who had urinary retention.

Yup.

Here's how it went down:

6/
My patient, who wasn't circumcised, had a bad case of phimosis and couldn't retract his foreskin. He also had trouble urinating. He was miserable.

Me: "Hi. I was hoping you could come assist me with catheterizing this patient."
Them: "Did you try?"
Me: "I almost did ..."

7/
Them: "And?"
Me: "I was concerned I'd hurt him. There's a lot of inflammation. So I was hoping you could look."

silence

Them: "Well. You need to try."
Me: *blinking*

I went to my attending. Who went to the bedside, saw the patient, and agreed that it was too complex.

8/
Me: "Hey. I spoke to my attending and we think it's best if you give it shot since you have more experience."
Them: *hangs up*

On me.

I shrugged and went about my business on that ED shift.

Moments later, I see the person huff by with cath supplies. They were NOT happy.

9/
After like 20 minutes, I am standing in front of a computer checking labs. Suddenly, out of the corner of my eye, I see something coming toward me.

It was them.

Them: "I got your magical, impossible catheter in. You happy?"

Which, yeah, was rude. But whatever, right?

10/
But then they did something else. With an outstretched hand, they held out a hazard bag with two murky urine samples inside. And then put it so close to my face that it nearly bounced off of my nose

And, just like that driver, they sped away.

Yup.

11/
Also, like that driver, there was a speed breaker. They needed to take the sample to send it to the lab in the vacuum chute.

The urine sample. You know, the one that they'd held close to my face and nearly smacked me with in the middle of the emergency department.

Mmm hmm

12/
And you know? I recall this split second where I felt my blood boil but still had impulse control.

Kind of like when that person flipped me off after I'd been working my ass off serving patients in a full-to-capacity safety net hospital in the middle of a pandemic.

13/
I was tired. And in need of some diastole. And just not in the mood for anyone to be mean to me, man.

And this? This was a tipping point.

I was what the Grady elders call "38 HOT." As in, so mad that whoever is in your path better watch out.

38 HOT does not end well.

14/
And so. After that split second, I let 38 HOT, tired, and mad kick me into gear.

I am not proud of it.

I marched over to that lab chute, stepped into the face of that urine-wielding person, and commenced to offer a full dress down complete with copious F-bombs.

15/
It was so bad that someone had to pull me back. Like, I felt my fist curling into a ball and this recklessness coming over me.

Me: "I will kick your ass right here in this emergency department."

Yes. That is what I said.

And that person looked afraid. Very afraid.

16/
My attending somehow calmed it all down. And then pulled me aside.

What I remember was that my attending was supportive. I didn't get admonished or punished or anything.

I mean--because URINE. In my FACE.

But they did make it a teachable moment that I never forgot.

17/
Att: "Listen. That wasn't cool. Like at all."
Me: *still 38 HOT*
Att: "But you know? All you can control is you. So before you act, just ask yourself a simple question."

They paused for effect and I looked up.

Me: "What?"

18/
Attdg: "What good can come from this?"
Me: *staring* "You mean from me fighting? Or cussing someone out?"

laughing

Attdg: "I mean any of it."
Me: *squinting*
Attdg: "It's kind of like. . .you drinking the poison and expecting them to die, you know?"

Hmmm.

19/
That person was written up. I finished my shift. And all of it faded into the lore of residency.

But.

I held that advice close to my chest and use it regularly.

"What good can come from this?"

and

"It's kind of like you drinking the poison and expecting them to die."

20/
And so.

When the middle finger-marauder met my glance, I ran that through my head. And you know what happened next?

I waved. And mouthed and exaggerated, "Merry Christmas."

Which disarmed the hell out them. And even brought out an embarrassed chuckle.

Yup.

21/
And so.

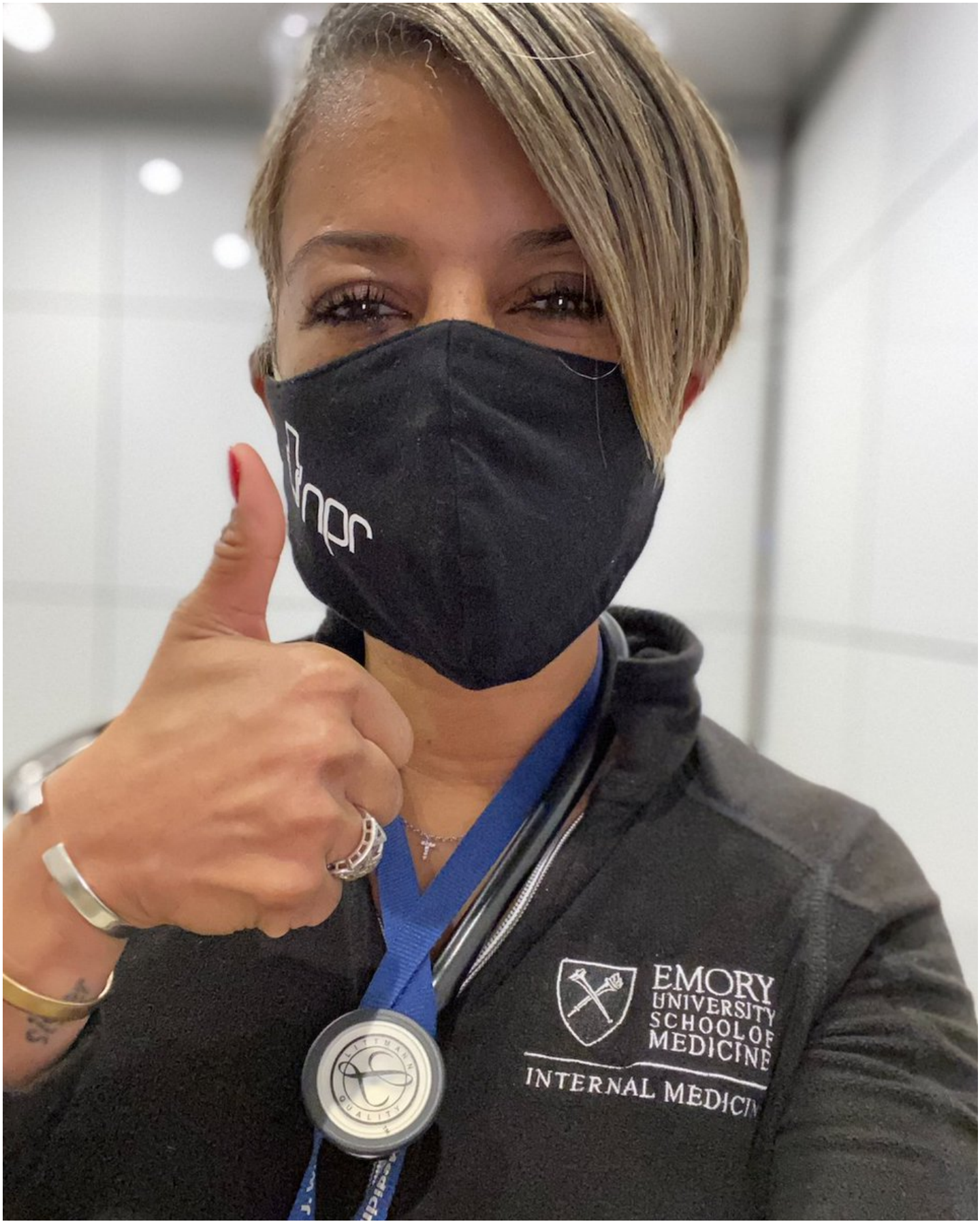
I'm not sure who needs this today. But I thought I'd share.

We are all tired right now. And on edge. Some people are not being nice.

But.

Today, I'm going to do my best to control the one thing I am lucky enough to be able to control: ME.

#thatsall #choosekind


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