

My three daughters were good students and Division I gymnasts who graduated at the top of their class. They all attended professional colleges and succeeded. I was able to support their postgraduate education. It was my goal to let them graduate debt-free and not crushed under the burden of massive student debt. Their job was to go to school, period! My wife and I instilled in them the importance of being proud of their work, whether it was in the trades or at a professional level. There is dignity in work, and anyone who works for a living should be respected.

My eldest, Jackie, is an APN and her husband is the aforementioned pediatric cardiologist. They live nearby, allowing us to spend time with our two grandchildren. My middle daughter, Jessica, also known as Major Sathissarat in the US Air Force, is a dentist and mother of three more grandchildren. She is stationed in Japan. My youngest, Justine, is a CPA. Her biggest passion is long-distance running, and she dreams to run a marathon in every state – six down and 44 to go. She also lives in Chicago



Dr. Jaworowicz's daughters Jessica, Justine, and Jackie at Justine's wedding in 2017.

with her husband and two adorable grandchildren.

Overall, I've had good health. I have hypertension, undergone two ablations for atrial fibrillation, and have sleep apnea.

Pretty typical for a 66-year-old chubby American. I've been able to access the health care system without limitation or having to sacrifice food for medication. Far too many in America aren't so fortunate.

Lastly, I've had the fortune of practicing medicine for 37 years. It is truly a privilege to have been a doctor. Medicine has changed a lot in that time, mostly for the better. My current colleagues do not believe that I practiced without the technology that we take for granted in 2022. I'm finishing my career in an academic setting after 37 years in private practice. I'll try to pass on some pieces of history and some of my knowledge and experience to the future generations of my specialty. Mostly, I want to pass on how truly blessed we are to be physicians.

Looking back at my career as an anesthesiologist, I am filled with gratitude. I am grateful to my parents, my friends, my anesthesia colleagues, and, above all, my wise and loving wife. I am grateful to those who sacrificed on my behalf and made this journey possible. I'm grateful to have three wonderful daughters, three caring sons-in-law, and seven grandchildren. I'm grateful to have good health as I reach the end of my professional career.

So, yes, the pieces can come together. A career in anesthesiology can lead to a life of fulfillment and gratitude. ■

A Chance to Save the World ... Through Gratitude

Richard P. Dutton, MD, MBA, FASA

"He looks like he's having fun – he ought to be grateful!"

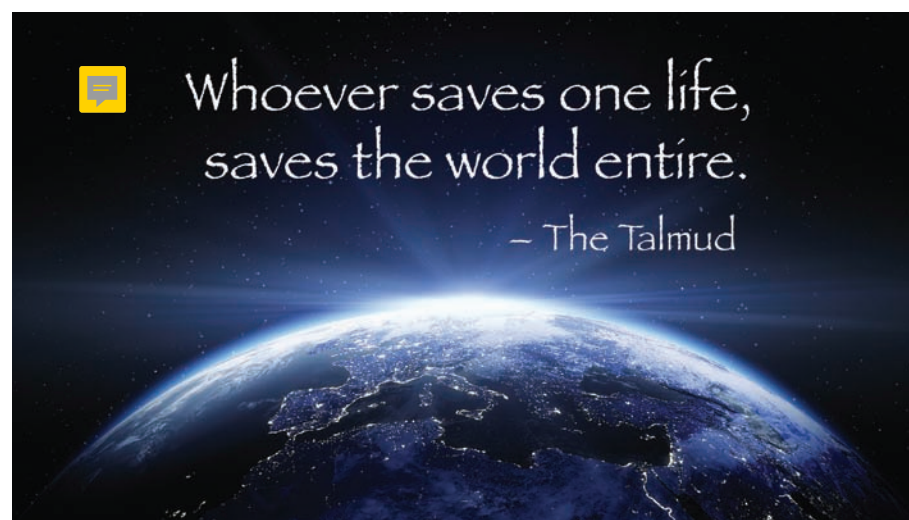
Imagine that's what the editors were thinking when they invited this submission, perhaps based on my uniquely varied professional career or after noting my usual state of enthusiasm. After giving it some thought, I agree with them: I am having fun. And I am grateful.

Anesthesiology is a uniquely satisfying profession. Unlimited job opportunities, geographic mobility, generous compensation, cutting-edge science, intelligent colleagues, good work-life balance.

And in the worst moments, I am most grateful.

Last week's case was a good example: A surprise add-on at the start of a busy day. An exploratory laparotomy for a 72-year-old woman admitted to the ICU overnight and thought to have dead bowel following a recent transcatheter aortic valve replacement.

Grumbles from my OR and anesthesia teams (and maybe a few from myself), but I was grateful for the late-starting CRNA who volunteered to set up the room while his buddy got the patient. We're all stressed every day, but good anesthesia teams look out for each other more than most clinicians, for which I am grateful. I



was also grateful to have a student CRNA who could help with the transport. She'd worked in that ICU in the past and knew the pumps and monitors forwards and backwards.

When she reached the OR, the patient was a mess! Not yet intubated, but about to breath her last. Lines in (grateful!) and three pressors running, with an irregular heartrate of 120, blood pressure of 80, and pH of 6.90. No flinching from the team, though. A quick move to the OR table and a rapid rapid-sequence induction with an easy intubation. It's easy to take technical skills for granted, but I'm grateful!

Our student got the lines sorted out and the infusions inventoried. Surgery started. Bolus bicarbonate and calcium. Trauma blood on the way. Touch and go hemodynamics. "Get me a TEE probe!" Miraculously, it appeared. Good techs, too! I'm grateful for that, and grateful that I know just enough to get the probe in and pointed at the heart. Overfull and not contracting. Less norepinephrine, more epinephrine, and a slow, gradual, pull back from the brink of death.

I've had a fantastic career in military medicine, academics, public service, and now I am in the best private practice in the country. I've enjoyed every opportunity I've been given to learn research and ad-



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ministrative skills, to start the Anesthesia Quality Institute, to serve as ASA's first Chief Quality Officer, and to teach a generation of students, residents, and anesthesiologists. I've lived in different parts of the country and enjoyed them all, and I've had the chance to travel to meetings all over the world. I have a fantastic wife and family who have supported me every step of the way, and I'm grateful for all these benefits.

But most of all, as I rediscovered last week, I am grateful for the chance to reach out and care for a dying patient with my own hands, to make a difference when no one else can. In a world where it can be hard for anyone to know what value they add, for anesthesiologists it is all too obvious. From the Talmud, by way of "Schindler's List": "Whoever saves one life, saves the world entire."

For this opportunity, I am grateful! ■

Disclosure: Dr. Dutton holds stock in US Anesthesia Partners.