

July 30, 2005

Dear Marshall,

It has been a little while since we have had one of our chats, and there are a few things I want to share with you. I remember once when you introduced a talk with a quote (through Ronald Reagan) from Henry VIII, as he introduced himself to each of his wives: "Don't worry, I won't keep you long." And I wrote these comments down. That way, I won't wander off and tell one of those jokes you often told me you enjoyed. I do remember occasions when Paul and I could get you giggling; I confess we did it on purpose, because you did have a tendency to get a little serious from time to time.

I am sharing all of this in absolute confidence that you are within earshot. I further am confident I know where you are, and it occurs to me that the best way to reach you is to speak directly. I also have a few documents on which I have been working, but I will e-mail them to you. From your vantage point, I am certain that you have access to cyberspace, so I'll put them in a random access file and you can look them up at your leisure. No need to respond, unless you consider it a critical matter.

As you know, there are a quite a number of wonderful people here today, including your beautiful wife and family, plus many of your colleagues, students and friends. They know a lot about you, but not necessarily everything, so I will share a couple of things. They all know about your magnificent, 50 + year career as a pediatric ophthalmologist. They know of your faith, your courage and commitment, your integrity and intelligence, and your diligence and discipline. Most know about how much you have contributed to the betterment of humanity through your caring for children, your unwavering commitment to education, and your insatiable desire to inquire about what you were doing and how to make it better. You worked within existing organizations, and created new ones to share and expand your vision. And there are some so-called modern concepts I am convinced you invented. One is multitasking: you had the capacity to teach strabismus surgery to a beginning resident surgeon, answer the questions of inquiring fellows looking on, plan the next large scale improvement in how eye care should be provided to children, and still overhear a *sotto voce* conversation in the corner of an operating room. And of course you would challenge the fallacies of that conversation in the most genteel possible manner.

Another is this whole business of genetic engineering. I remember when you shared with me your belief that God had given you a particular gene that coded for training pediatric ophthalmologists in fellowship; that gene was well expressed and has proven to be transmissible. As you know, there is plenty of discourse about how genetic engineering may better mankind; long before the current discourse, you had already commenced your own implementation. Of course, you graced your family with your magnificent code directly. But what has only belatedly come to me is that you also changed the structure of your friends and students. Maybe you did this with some sort of invisible messenger code; of this I am not certain. I do know that you made many of us better with your wisdom, wit and constant challenge; what is now clear is that these changes are permanent and are being replicated. Our code is different, and better, because we have been blessed with your friendship. I take it as a personal responsibility to pass it on, to do as you did, and to pay it forward. Since your code is within so many of us, we commit to cherish and honor it. If we somehow have failed to understand, and do not pay it forward, I am confident that you will take it up with us in some mysterious way.

I remember the first time we undertook a scientific project together. I am going to share it because it says much about you. It was the first paper I

ever had published, and you were the co-author. I worked hard to make it “perfect,” so as not to embarrass your time. When you returned it to me, it had been exhaustively rewritten, down to the proper—by your standards—punctuation. I took solace in the fact that you had not taken me to task for the concepts, and happily retyped it with every one of your edits. (What I did not understand at the time, and now do, is that the second most fundamental human need is to edit someone else’s manuscript. I also believe that we came to agreement through the years that the first and most fundamental human need is chocolate.) This experience demonstrated core lessons from you, learned again and again: be thoroughly prepared, learn all the time, and execute flawlessly. I think we have the concepts down now, but these are executable challenges that never let up on us.

I suspect that in some way you also will be helping to guide our future efforts to take good care of children. You have bequeathed so much to us; and in some way, I am confident you will continue to guide our hands, our hearts and our minds. I suspect you may be too busy to give specific guidance. God may be relying on you to assist with the children in heaven. That will be good.

Not to get too personal about this, but I thought I should let you know the book is coming right along. There is so much of you in it, and that will

be obvious to readers who know you. I will be annoying a bunch of other people now with these things. And I will report back to you on how it turned out. As in this and many other things, I am confident that many people will be reporting in to you. I'll be merely one among them.

I know that you know how much you have been and continue to be loved. That will not change. We commit to you that the legacy you have implanted within us will live and grow. Your role as one of the greatest in the greatest of generations is now well and truly done. We will stay awhile to look after things and to care for one another. Go gently and without cares to your destiny; be with God.

Your friend forever in good faith,

George

Eulogist: George Beauchamp, M.D.