



Catholic Health System  
Mercy Hospital of Buffalo  
*Medical excellence with a tradition of caring.*

**TO:** Mercy Hospital Associates  
**FROM:** Kathleen Guarino, V.P. Nursing/CNO  
**SUBJECT:** *Notes from Nursing*

The last time I communicated with staff it was only sent to Patient Care Service Associates. That was definitely an oversight. I am correcting that omission today as I address all members of the Mercy Hospital staff. Every employee of Mercy Hospital is an important member of our care delivery system. Each of us performs work that collectively becomes the patient experience. We are a team dedicated to the care, safety, and comfort of our patients and families. So today I write to all of the Mercy family of healthcare associates who work to that end every day.

This is a continuation of our exploration of “pearls” from the book, Lessons From the Mouse, written by Dennis Snow.

#### Lesson #1

##### Never Let Backstage Come Onstage

This lesson is really very easy to visualize. The concepts shared are simple yet vitally important to any organization and the people within that organization to consider as they strive to provide extraordinary service to their customers.

In Disney speak, “backstage” is all those places never to be seen by the customer. The place where Mickey sits headless eating lunch with an obviously cranky Cinderella. It’s where truck deliveries arrive and trash awaits removal. It’s where all functions necessary to the operation of this vast park occur, hidden out of sight and sound of the public.

On the other hand, “onstage” is where the magic is created for guests. The shows, the rides, the streets and all the areas where guests congregate in wonder and awe at all they see and experience. What would happen if suddenly a door opened to give us a look at “backstage” Disney World? Would we ever be able to capture the magic again?

Now I know what you’re thinking you practical, totally grounded associates of Mercy Hospital.” This is not Disney World and we don’t practice magic here.” Of course it’s not and no we don’t. Or do we?

**What expectations do our patients and families have of us? Certainly our collective knowledge and skill borne out and tested over years of experience is high on the list. That goes without saying. But what else is equally or sometimes even more important to them? I submit its understanding. They expect an awareness of their uniqueness and humanity that guides our every action and interaction with them.**

**Those interactions with patients and families need to say that they are the center and focus of everything we do. They need to trust that we hear and recognize their needs, fears, and anxieties. They want to be confident in the knowledge that they are the most important work we perform every day. It's all the things we do that tell the patient we care. The smile we present them with, the words of encouragement, the touch of a hand. The words, "Is there anything else you need? I have time." This is our magic. This is how we make a difference.**

**So I ask you to keep your personal concerns, co-worker disputes, daily frustrations and impatience "backstage". Confine those moments and emotions to a place out of sight and earshot of our patients and families. When you come to work be stage ready. Its what your patient expect.**

**Thank you for all the discussions at every level of our organization on this chapter. I've sent out Lesson #2 "What Time is the Three O'Clock Parade" Is Not a Stupid Question. Enjoy and we'll talk about this one soon.**