



A Sacred Encounter: The Best Medicine

As I worked my evening shift, the chaplain leaving gave me a follow up referral to facilitate a Facetime meeting with one of the patients on his floor. I normally work the Maternal/Child units so I was not familiar with this patient or his family. I was a little behind schedule and called to see if the family was still available to visit. I discovered that the Facetime call was to include our patient, who is the grandfather, and his grandson, who was at Chuckie Cheese for his birthday party.

I wasn't sure how the patient would be at this time in the evening, but when I walked into the room he was sitting up in bed, wide eyed and alert, finishing his dinner with the aide helping him. He greeted me with a big hello and smile. When I asked him if he would like to see his family on Facetime, he quickly replied "let's do it!" as clear as a bell.

When his daughter answered the call, the face of the sweetest little boy lit the screen and the response of his grandfather was absolutely priceless. The little boy, with such great joy called out "Papa" with such excitement. It was clear by the interaction that these two had quite the bond. His grandfather wished him a "Happy Birthday" and was clear and lucid as he talked to his grandson and daughter.

As they ended the short visit, his daughter, with tears in her eyes, thanked me and said she was shocked to see her father looking so well. I surely caught him at this best moment.

Not being familiar with this patient was such a benefit as I had no idea what a challenge his care has been for the staff. He has been suffering from dementia and anxiety, so much so, that it has required much of the staff's attention. Watching him interact with his family reminded me of how important our patients' families are to a patient's well-being and healing process. Grandchildren have such power to bring out the best in even a grandpa with dementia at its toughest. It's so important to stay connected and remember that in healing, the love of family can be the best medicine.

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