

## *The Patient Experience Post*

Healthcare's Resource for  
Service Excellence  
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RESILIENT

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## Lessons From the Field: Be Resilient, Not Resentful

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Let's be honest - 2020 has been rough. Between the pandemic, the election, the civil unrest, the wildfires, and the weather, it's hard to find the "good news." There have certainly been a lot of headlines about the heroes in healthcare and, without question, I am grateful to all those who put their lives on the line every day. I do wonder how they feel, though. Is gratitude enough to keep you all going? Since I know a lot of people in healthcare, I decided to ask them. Here are some of the things I heard:

"One of my friends nominated me for a JetBlue hero award and I won. I thought the JetBlue contest was awesome to begin with and I really appreciated all my friends and colleagues who provided input. When I won, I was super excited. That was four months ago. Now I'm beginning to wonder if I'll ever get to use the trip. That's kind of sad."

"You have to be a risk-taker to work in healthcare. I didn't get into this for a thank you - I did it because people need help and that's what I like to do. I think people need help now more than ever, and not just because of the virus."

"It's hard for me to get excited about all the healthcare hero stuff when you see people arguing in the grocery store about wearing masks. I would feel more appreciated if people protected their own health better."

"I'm just so tired, it's hard not to be scared. It's not the hours - those haven't been too bad - it's the worry. I know I have to keep going, but I feel like my tank is empty, you know?"

"I have to walk past the refrigerator trucks that are full of dead bodies every day to get to work. Can you imagine what that's like? It makes you think about what's really important, that's for sure."

"Healthcare hero? More like lambs to the slaughter..."

Two things struck me about most of the people I talked to. First was their willingness to keep going, despite the stress, the anxiety, and all the other emotions. Second was their ability to find something positive in their experiences. They are resilient - some of them naturally so, others have been introduced to skills that have helped them build their resilience. I was surprised to hear a family member say that I taught him resilience. When I asked him what he meant, he said, "You always find one thing - one thing you're proud of, one thing that makes you happy, one thing to do that gives you a sense of accomplishment, one thing you learned, one thing to look forward to, one thing you can do to take care of yourself. You don't do all those things at once, you just do one. It's so simple, even I can do it!"

So, in this season of gratitude, if you aren't feeling the love and appreciation, it might be time to build your resilience. Just do one thing.



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Nurse, author, and consultant Kristin Baird, "Healthcare's Customer Service Guru," is the author of *Raising the Bar on Service Excellence: The Health Care Leader's Guide to Putting Passion into Practice* (Golden Lamp Press, 2008), *Reclaiming the Passion: Stories that Celebrate the Essence of Nursing* (Golden Lamp Press, 2004), and *Customer Service In Healthcare: A Grassroots Approach to Creating a Culture of Service Excellence* (Jossey Bass, 2000). The Baird Group provides consulting, mystery shopping, and training services for improving the patient experience. To learn more, please visit <http://baird-group.com> or call 920-563-4684.