



REQUIRED EXPERIENCE FOR HEALTHY CAREERS

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2009 HBA Honorable Mentor

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Thank you. I am truly honored by this recognition.

Special thanks to HBA's leadership team – Susan, Laurie, Ceci and Barbara – and to Elizabeth for that generous introduction.

And thanks, too, to those who nominated me for this honor, especially Louise Mehrotra, Donna David and Christine Cote, my colleagues from Johnson & Johnson, who are here with Kendall O'Brien, Stella Strazdas, Karen Licitra, Arisa Cunningham and the whole crew.

You can rest assured that I have learned more from them than they will ever know.

And to my friends from Novartis – Meryl, Reshema, Kristin, Ellen – and to the HBA Woman of the Year, Deborah Dunshire: You are a great leader, colleague, and friend and so deserving of this recognition.

And, of course, to my family. My wife, Patricia; my son, who's actually studying for his finals; my sisters Jane Anne and Therese – who flew in from Kansas City and California – and are here today with my nieces, Laura and Alexandra; and my father, Al Gorsky, who unfortunately couldn't be here today. And to my mother Loretta, who is no longer with us, but I'm sure she's here in spirit.

I wasn't sure exactly what I was going to say today, so I sought some advice from the HBA, from some of my friends and, of course, my wife.

The HBA asked me to reflect a little bit on mentoring and the mentors in my life. Some of my friends suggested I talk about mentoring in today's healthcare industry. And, of course, my wife's advice was be real and be short. So I'm going to try and follow their counsel in my comments today.

I believe – and believe deeply – in the power and importance of mentoring, because I've benefited from mentoring throughout my life.

My parents and my five siblings were my first and among the best mentors anyone could wish for. They told me the things that really mattered and delivered many “tough love” messages (as they say) the greatest lessons in life are often learned at home.

Back in Fremont, Michigan, there were teachers like Ann Werner, who taught me not only how to diagram a sentence, but also how to encourage and inspire at the same time. I still remember getting back papers and, even with a good grade, there would be plenty of red so the next one would be even better.

And Paul Blake, a coach and teacher who not only coached me on the field, but also taught me how to appreciate Faulkner and Emerson. I still remember him putting his arm around me after losing a game – where I was responsible for the loss – and saying: "Alex, if you're going to play this game you need to get some tough skin."

There were officers and soldiers I served with in the military who taught me the value of diversity, service and teamwork. People who are extremely committed to their mission and their country.

I have been influenced, shaped and molded by these people and mentors in my life, including many, many colleagues at both Johnson & Johnson and Novartis.

It would be difficult to talk about mentoring and developing future leaders without acknowledging the profound change that's occurring in our world and in healthcare and what this means for mentoring.

Who, just eight months ago, could have predicted that the Dow would have lost a third of its value? That the price of gas would have gone from \$2 per gallon to over \$4 and back to \$2? That a first-term Senator from Illinois would be elected our first African- American President and that GM and Chrysler would be considering or in bankruptcy?

Today, we are witnessing some of the most dramatic and substantive change our industry has ever experienced.

- Universal access to healthcare is being discussed in terms of “when” and “how,” but not “if” anymore.
- Policymakers and healthcare providers routinely question the necessity for new drugs or medical devices and are scrutinizing the value of medical innovations like never before.
- And the current paradigm in healthcare – with its focus on the treatment and maintenance of chronic disease – is now seen as completely unsustainable by both governments and healthcare systems.

We can speculate about the degree of change that will eventually take root in healthcare, but one thing is perfectly clear: Unprecedented change is underway, it will be long-lasting and the implications for our industry are extraordinary.

I won't pretend to have all the answers of what this means for our industry. But I'm passionate about healthcare. We've done so much for the health and well being of millions of people and I sincerely believe we can do the same in the future.

But let's not kid ourselves. Success in the coming era of healthcare will require us to consider transforming our business models – especially in R&D and commercial – if we are going to be able to deliver what patients, healthcare systems and payors deem valuable in the years ahead.

We live in interesting times, don't we?

Given all that is going on in the industry, perhaps it's the right time to rethink what mentoring in healthcare should look like in the future. Perhaps that conversation needs to begin with a discussion about the future state of healthcare and about what skills and experiences are likely to be valued in the years ahead.

This will require us to offer advice based less on our own career experiences and more on what the brave new world of healthcare will value.

The tried and true career path that worked for so many of us – getting experience in sales, then marketing, then general management – will surely be less relevant in a world that will place a premium on things like: competencies in evidence-based medicine and health economics; experience managing virtual, highly matrixed organizations on a global basis; and public policy.

If mentoring is going to remain relevant in the future, we simply must steer the mentoring experience and the mentoring conversation squarely into embracing the uncertainty in front of us, even as that change is still taking shape.

Instead of mentoring someone in the “usual path,” why not pull them into discussions about building account teams focused on evidence-based medicine or new commercial models or new challenges like comparative effectiveness?

It won't take much to match good minds with challenging subject matter that our industry needs to address.

As we face into this somewhat intimidating new era, we will count on the HBA to facilitate the discussion about the future of mentoring and to continue driving the agenda on women's issues and diversity in the workplace.

Thanks to initiatives like J&J's Women's Leadership initiative and similar programs in other companies, we've made great strides on women's issues and diversity in corporate America. But there is so much more to do. Not to be politically correct. Not because advancing women, or having diverse teams, are nice things to do. But because building a competent, diverse and inclusive workforce is a business critical issue and it's the right thing to do.

For me, diversity matters because it delivers diversity of thought, of perspectives and of experiences that enrich us, challenge our paradigms and, ultimately, produce better decisions and, many times, better results. And in the coming era of healthcare, diversity will be needed more than ever.

As I look out across this room, I see a room filled with people who are mentors. So what can we do to drive mentoring forward together?

Three suggestions:

- First, simply return the favor. By that I mean if you've had special people in your lives who have gone out of their way for you, please return the favor, especially for members of the next generation of leaders. If that requires simply taking a minute out of your day to coach, listen or encourage someone, by all means, please take that minute. You may not remember it, but they will.
- Second, please consider how we begin to change the conversation with those we mentor so we can prepare them for the future of healthcare. And let's support HBA in this regard. As the HBA creates forums and events on this subject matter, please take time to participate.
- And third, please keep in mind the higher value of healthcare, which may be hard to appreciate during these turbulent times.

In healthcare, we have the potential to impact the health and well being of millions of people.

If you believe in the promise and potential of healthcare, as I do, please pass it along to those you mentor, because our great industry will continue to be of great importance in the future.

We indeed can do good and do well!

Thank you for listening and thank you for this honor.

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