

2020

## “When I let go of what I am, I become what I might be.” Lao Tzu

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### Recommended Citation

Bing-You, Robert (2020) "“When I let go of what I am, I become what I might be.” Lao Tzu," *Journal of Maine Medical Center*. Vol. 2 : Iss. 2 , Article 1.

Available at: <https://knowledgeconnection.mainehealth.org/jmmc/vol2/iss2/1> <https://doi.org/10.46804/2641-2225.1065>

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## FROM THE EDITOR

# "When I let go of what I am, I become what I might be." Lao Tzu

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**B**e content with what you have; rejoice in the way things are. When you realize there is nothing lacking, the whole world belongs to you." – Lao Tzu

I have been a student of Taoism for many years. It is during challenging times like these that I often reflect on the teachings of Lao Tzu, the Chinese philosopher credited with founding Taoism. When I wrote this column last fall, I could not have imagined the tumultuous predicament that COVID-19 would create for all our professional and personal lives. As a global society, we are witnessing the best and the worst of people. Our clinical colleagues on the front lines are the heroes shouldering an incredible burden. And fear runs rampant when questions have no solid answers. To ease the weight of it all, well-being advocates suggest that we develop a daily habit of actively practicing a moment of reflective gratitude. Here are at least 5 things I am grateful for during these times:

1. Maine Medical Center remains strong in so many ways, and its senior leadership continues to support our academic mission. No doubt, the financial hurdles ahead will be significant. I am grateful that Maine Medical Center is committed to sustaining our existing educational programs and staff, including the newer programs that are still growing.
2. Urgency is often a factor in facilitating change, and there is nothing like a crisis to speed up changes that may have languished for years! Although online education is not new, I am grateful to see the accelerations and innovations happening in medical education. I believe medical education will be transformed permanently, with more real benefits than losses. I predict that telehealth will become a core curricular element for our learners and practicing clinicians.
3. I am grateful that we have not lost our focus on learners and their educational needs. They, too, have stepped up to challenges, often reaffirming

their commitment to a profession that puts them, at times, in harm's way. I am hopeful that the crisis will require additional emphasis on graduating our learners when we deem them competent. Is four years really necessary for medical school?



4. Maine is undoubtedly a wonderful place to be professionally and personally. I am grateful to be part of a fantastic team in my department, and of a wonderful community of medical educators throughout the state. Our rurality likely helped us avoid an overwhelming healthcare crisis. And if I lived in a city, I would not have the opportunity to hone my skills in bucking, splitting, and stacking wood!
5. I am an American with Chinese roots, and I am grateful that I have not experienced significant racial discrimination or harm during my life. That said, some of our current national leaders appear to have no qualms about inciting racism and hatred. Possibly for the first time, I think about my safety and my family's safety in public places. We must meet this racially prejudiced behavior head-on as a community, both locally and nationally, if we are to emerge stronger after this crisis is over.

"If you do not change direction, you may end up where you are heading." – Lao Tzu

I remain positive and optimistic that we are heading in the right direction. We will need to make active, thoughtful, and good directional choices individually and collectively. While we will stumble along the

way for sure, I believe that we will revolutionize medical care and education and build a stronger community.

In January, I look forward to sharing more news about the exciting opportunity with Joint

Accreditation (<https://www.jointaccreditation.org/>) and our growing focus on team-based and interprofessional education. The *Journal of Maine Medical Center* continues to serve you as fellow educators and clinicians, and to inspire our academic mission.