
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

Last week I teased you with a note that this week we would talk about perfection. So here it goes. Perfection is not a quality that necessarily means “without flaw.” It is a process, with the goal being growing and learning.

We have had a number of challenges over recent months at all three of our secure care facilities. Let’s be honest about that – we have not been perfect. I’m sure you all know that issues surfaced that required leadership changes, and changes again. We found out that all was not as calm and quiet as it seemed on the surface. We learned that some folks were not living up to their responsibilities, and the consequences were serious. We have had to remind staff recently to make sure that everyone knows what is expected of them. All of these things are done with one goal in mind – meeting our mission. So, we should focus on the goal – progress, not perfection. We will continue to strive for perfection, and as we strive for perfection, we get better.

But, everybody needs to hold firm to the truth, and the truth is, we have made a lot of progress. We can aim for perfection and that should be our goal – but the reality is that when you’re dealing with human beings with free will and judgment involved, we will not always reach the pinnacle of perfection. An acquaintance once told me that her work in the big-time theatre industry requires near-perfection, but the reality is “hey, that’s live theatre, things happen. We have to learn from the mistakes and do better next performance.”

We can’t allow our spirits to be disheartened by some of the difficulties that we experienced. What we are doing is a huge sea change. Sometimes we go three steps forward and one step back...three steps forward and one step back...three steps forward and one step back. It’s still progress.

The nature of our business is reform, and we ARE reforming. Again, we need to focus on progress, not perfection. Yes, we’ve had our issues, but they do not erase all that we have done or the direction that we are going. We will always see progress as long as we focus on the goal. When we experience a failure we have to remember the nature of what we CAN do. We can plan all day long, but human failure sometimes happens. Any time we are dealing with human beings, that’s the chance we take. We can do everything we can to prevent failure, but when that happens, we have to have a contingency plan in place. That’s live theatre, folks.

Shifting gears, I am just back from the ACA winter conference in Phoenix. I enjoyed the conference, and the city, but I’m glad to be back in Louisiana, where we have green things year-round, even in what we charmingly refer to as winter. So, I’ll close, with my thanks to each and every member of the OJJ cast, on whichever stage you perform, for all you do every day and everywhere, to meet the mission. Wishing you all a perfect weekend.

Sincerely, “Doc” *Dr. Mary Livers*

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