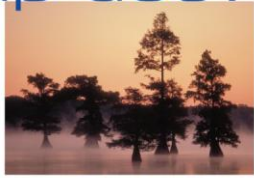

what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

Wow – even a short week feels like a full workweek. We were able to enjoy a day off to vote, but we came back to work with that much more in the inbox that needed attention. We have another short week next week to observe Veterans Day. I hope you saw the list the names of OJJ veterans and reservists who have given their time to serve our country. Please try to find a moment to let your colleagues know you appreciate them. My personal thanks to OJJ staff who have served.

The primary has come and gone and we were looking forward to life with no negative ads on TV every five seconds. But no - the runoff still looms ahead and we have to put up with another 32 days of negative advertising. I guess politicians' mothers never taught them that if you don't have something nice to say about someone don't say anything at all. Guess they all learned the opposite from that famous Louisiana play and movie *Steel Magnolias*: "if you don't have something nice to say about someone, come sit right here by me."

Something happened this week that just rocked my world, and I have to talk about it. It was quite shocking to me learn that the current President of ACA had resigned from his role as President, had resigned as President of the Association of State Corrections Administrators, and resigned as the agency head of the Mississippi Department of Corrections. Even more shocking was why he resigned suddenly. You see, he resigned suddenly because he was being indicted on 49 counts of various illegal activities directly related to his job as head of Mississippi Corrections.

I am going through all of the stages of grief. First denial, then sadness, followed by anger, and then the cycle of grief starts all over again. I read the indictment online, and I know that there are two sides to every story. I will leave the decision of guilty or not guilty to the courts. Leadership is a privilege that is earned. This privilege comes with a responsibility to provide ethical leadership. Now his actions have put not only himself in jeopardy, but his family, staff, state, and the field of corrections will be seen in a negative way.

How did this failure happen? I wish I could answer that. I can't. I know we are all human and we are subject to making poor decisions. Beyond that, I can't explain it. I am praying for all involved who will be hurt by this - his family, his staff, the state of Mississippi, and the members of good professional organizations that he led. In the meantime, I will try to focus on getting rid of that sick feeling I have in my gut, and move on. And I pray each day that we in the field of corrections have a moral compass to help us know what is right and what is wrong. Just like we tell the youth in our care, it is all about making good choices.

Okay. Good luck to all Louisiana universities playing football this weekend. Now, that's out of the way. LSU has a big game this weekend when the Tide rolls in. I think there is as much tension and emotion about the Bama game as with traditional rival Ole Miss. I hope all fervent LSU fans will be hollering "Geaux, Tigers" loud enough to help send that guy and his team back to Tuscaloosa crimson-faced. +0

I'll close now with my wish for you all, in every office and facility, to enjoy a wonderful fall weekend and Veterans Day, with my sincere thanks as always, for all you do, every day, to meet the mission.

Sincerely, "Doc" *Dr. Mary Livers*

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