



Image Zhen-hu Unsplash

Hello everyone,

It's been a busy month, even with wimping out of Halloween this year. I know, I know, not very Canadian of me. But honestly the decorations in our neighborhood were so intense that my Canadian Living homemade spider-from-a-tuna-can circa 1991 really wasn't acceptable!



And this!



Almost 30 years have elapsed between the cute and the "other" Halloween picture. As we can see, a lot can change in 30 years.

Last month **Dr Steve Robson**, President of the Australian College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists published a brave and powerful piece about his suicide attempt. [HERE](#)

"If I had not been interrupted, I would have died 30 years ago. Luckily for me, that didn't happen. Now I find myself a College President. If you feel now the way I did 30 years ago, seek help and support as soon as you can. Speak out. Who knows where you might end up."



"Today, I am not ashamed of how I felt or what I did 30 years ago.

I am ashamed and disappointed in myself that I have not used my position to advocate more strongly for colleagues in difficult emotional circumstances. I am ashamed that I was embarrassed and ashamed."

Dr Steve Robson

**Dr Kate Tree** replied to his article in the comments section. [HERE](#)  
She interned with Dr Robson and had also kept silent since then.

"We cared about you, Steve.

We were unskilled, untrained, perhaps totally unhelpful, but we cared and we tried to help."

**"We cared and we tried to help."**

How can we collectively, as a profession and as a society, promote cultural change to help doctors in distress, doctors with depression or burnout or mental health challenges? Silence is not the solution.

Dr Kate Tree

If this has raised issues for you, please know that help is always available.

**Call PFSP 1-877-767-4637**





As an IMG from the UK, I can get a bit wistful for the English countryside in autumn.

"Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness .." and all that.

But here's the U of Alberta looking pretty good, even compared to Cambridge.





As I expected, the **International Conference on Physician Health** was great. [HERE](#)  
But something rather unexpected happened...

**I FELL IN LOVE!** Passionately and for ever.  
And not just once.

When you are in love you have the urge to tell everyone! So here are my love letters to the 5 men & women who stole my heart in Toronto.



cris dinoto unsplash

**Dear Dr Suchman, L.L. #1**

You opened the conference and my mind with your brilliant discussion about how organizations act not as machines but as conversations. And the power of making small changes; being another grain of sand added to the sand pile.

But it was when you took out your guitar and sang Kumbaya that you truly captured my heart!

As the CMA wrote, it was "a mocking nod to the dismissal of physician wellness being **"a bunch of people sitting around singing Kumbaya"**.

We are kindred spirits, as I include my clown in my own wellbeing talks!

Thank you and much love, **Sue**

**Dear Dr Myers,**

**L.L. #2**

*Thank you for your compassionate presence and expertise chairing the workshop "When Physicians die by Suicide".  
I want to share your words with everyone.*

***Stigma kills doctors.***

***They go from wellness to sickness to death.***

*Thank you for sharing [www.physiciansconnected.org](http://www.physiciansconnected.org) [HERE](#)  
With my love and gratitude, **Sue***

*PS. You won't remember, but we spoke on the phone many years ago when I was unwell.  
I have never forgotten your kindness.*

Dear Prof. Debbie Cohen,

L.L. #3

FYI, I am seriously coming to stay with you in Wales with your dogs, pigs, sheep, goats and beautiful view. ASAP.  
Spring would be good for me, just saying.

Thank you for your brilliant, no nonsense, down to earth contribution about over diagnosing/pathologizing normal anxiety during medical school. Loved your provocative defense of resident well being, but not as a core competency to be graded.

Don't really want to share you but [HERE's](#) an interview.

I don't care that I was a Standing O of one after your talk.  
It's an Edmonton thing. And a me thing.  
Come to the Edmonton Fringe sometime and you'll see!



You are a true inspiration to me.

With my deepest respect and love, Sue

Dear Dr Jillian Horton,

L.L. #4

I'm so glad you forgave me for calling you a "very evil woman" during your Graphic Medicine workshop!

You understood your power. Could see that you opened up all kinds of previously unimaginable possibilities. Even for someone who can't draw!

Then I found "Ask Dr Horton" on CMAJ blogs where med students ask you questions anonymously with no fear of judgement. What a gift. [LINKS](#)

THANK  
YOU

Much love, Sue

PS Watch this space!



Rudderless [HERE](#)

Procrastinator [HERE](#)

Lone Wolf [HERE](#)

Burning Out [HERE](#)



Finally, **Love Letter #5**

**Dearest Dr Gigi Osler, CMA President**

You are the embodiment of strength,  
grace under pressure, intelligence,  
common sense and stamina.

But I love you most of all for your fierce compassion..

An audience member asked a question,  
made a personal revelation and was cut off by another presenter.  
Not only did you find that man, talk with him and offer support  
and resources, you also took the stage to publicly state  
that this is not what the CMA stands for.

And Twitter buddy you sure give the best hugs!

Love and hugs, **Sue**



Come to the Canadian Conference on Physician Health,  
St John's, Newfoundland.

**October 3-5, 2019**

Who knows, you might just fall in love!



## Current Medical Culture



- Rule #1: Counter aggression with more aggression
- Rule #2: Be sure not to bleed; it attracts sharks
- Rule #3: If someone is bleeding, get out of the water
- Rule #4: Everyone is a shark until proven otherwise

CMA slide Twitter

## A Kinder Future



Meditative otter video [HERE](#)

Rafting is a natural otter behavior.

They raft to stay together while resting or during inclement weather as a way to protect themselves, as there's safety in numbers.

More from Vancouver Aquarium [HERE](#)

The female otter is called a bitch.

At the FeminEM meeting they suggested building your own raft of "female otters" for support.

Full disclosure - they actually said "Build your raft of Bad A.. B.....s!"

Who would be on your raft?

And who wants to go to the FeminEM meeting next year?

# A Few Random Good Things!



We can change.  
People say we can't, but we do when  
the stakes or the pain is high  
enough. And when we do, life can  
change.

It offers more of itself when we  
agree to give up our busyness.

Almost Everything, Anne Lamott

Thank you so much for reading,  
All good things, Sue

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PS. Remember it's  
**Stir Up Sunday Nov 25**  
You're welcome!

