

# Postcards from Professional Paradise



## Your Passport to Professional Paradise

### *Hind Site is 20/20*

Quite often, things I learn from in my personal life apply to my professional life. Here's a quick story with some lessons learned.



After you have cancer, your doctors order "routine" testing to make sure you are doing alright. Unfortunately, it's not enough to be feeling good and looking good (without unwanted lumps or bumps) and they insist on poking and prodding over and over. Last time I went for a checkup, I was told I needed to get a routine MRI. The MRI is the one

where you have to lie in the tube for what seems like an eternity and hear long banging noises. **POW!** In spite of asking for (and receiving) an appointment in the "open" MRI, I was still complaining to my family about having to have the test.

Thank goodness for family members that pay attention when I'm talking, because when I started the whining, they told me I could try to *SHIFT* my POW to a WOW! Talk about having to take your own medicine. I did just that, went through the 5 steps, and put the whole idea of the test on the back burner. It was weeks away and I had other fish to fry. I was back in Paradise!

Let me digress and give you some important background. Now more than ever, I don't like medical tests, I don't like what they imply (that I might have cancer again), and I don't like the inconvenience of preparing (believe me, there's always yucky preparation).

I hadn't given it another thought until the week of the test. On Monday, I started to get a little nervous. I kept telling myself that there was "nothing to worry about", but the uncomfortable feeling was still there. I didn't sleep much the night before. I tossed and turned and relived some of the treatment I had last year. The morning of the test I was a mess. Now maybe this is "normal", but that wasn't making me feel any better. To make a long story short, I did the prep (don't worry, no gory details of that), had the test and it was really no big deal at all. The technicians were delightful, the test was uneventful and I was just fine.

Afterwards I ended up sitting in my car reading emails on my Blackberry© and I found myself laughing out loud. A friend of mine, Lisa (not her real name), who has had a very tough year fighting breast cancer knew I was going for the test. Here was the email from her that I read right after the test. *"I actually like the pinging and clanging of the tube and have never minded or feared the test. Your results will no doubt be clear. Good for your docs for securing you the reassurance that you are well."*

I wrote the book on *SHIFTing* my POWs to WOWs and I wasn't even taking my own advice. I had the big a-ha moment sitting in the car and here are the lessons I'd like to share with you today.

When you are hit with a POW at work (you can name any POW - the lessons apply to most everything)...

1. Stop and breathe: In the days leading up to the test, I could feel myself getting really anxious and simply saying "Stop" and taking a breath would have slowed down the Fly Away Thinking™ (see page 60 & 61 in the book for more on that) that I was experiencing.
2. Harness the harmful knee jerk reactions: I should have complained less and listened more. I think deep down that wanted to be right about not wanting the test, not necessarily happy about getting positive results and I made things worse for myself!
3. Find new options: Ask for advice from those who have been through the *POW* before. They will have great suggestions and different perspectives. Seeking out my friend's perspective before the MRI would have created a Viewpoint*SHIFT* for me. Hearing my husband's suggestion, "Shut your eyes and don't open them," would have helped with the claustrophobia.
4. And the biggest lesson that we all need to hear over and over is "Stop worrying about stuff before it happens" - it's a big waste of anxiety.

You'll be happy to know that the test results were perfect. Talk about "borrowing trouble", I was the poster child for a week or so. I'm back on the right poster - the one for Professional (and Personal) Paradise. Are you?

Have a great month!

Signing off from Professional Paradise-

Vicki

Vicki Hess, RN, MS, [Certified Speaking Professional](#)  
[www.VickiHess.com](http://www.VickiHess.com)

Tel: 410-560-7212

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