

Physician- deceive thyself



Physicians used to take the Hippocratic Oath, swearing that we would never intentionally harm life, which was given to us by a higher power. When politics demanded, we switched to the Oath of Maimonides, which stated we can take life for politically expedient reasons, as long as our hearts were good and we cared about the “big picture” (insert eyeroll).

I fully expected that most of my peers in Medicine would come out against the Heartbeat Bill. Of course they would and I am pleased they were willing to put their names in print to be public in this witness. However, we live our professional lives as chameleons, hypocrites or schizophrenics, whichever term fits, delivering our medical news to the audience slanted in whatever way the patient recipient hopes for.

When our own grown children announce their pregnancy news at 4 weeks from last menstrual period with a First Response stick, we jubilantly cry and state – “you’re going to have a baby!” We start planning our grandparent names.

When our Royal fascination announces another Kate or Meghan addition at 6-8 weeks, we start guessing gender and names for this baby.

When our patient who has lost 6 pregnancies to miscarriage finally conceives and carries to 8 weeks with a fetal heartbeat and a human-like body with movement, we announce via ultrasound that she indeed, has a baby and has a 90% chance of a “take-home baby.” We rejoice with her.

When our older patient with 3 other children has a surprise pregnancy 10 years after her last, we offer testing for this “baby” and when and only when it shows no abnormalities, we announce she will be having an actual baby.

To the woman who carried her Down Syndrome child to term, rather than terminate it as 92% of Americans do, we call her “brave and loving,” forgetting that months earlier, we offered her termination and actually wondered why she didn’t seem to understand the potential difficulties of the life she now has. We now celebrate and hug her child at her annual exam and call him “precious.”



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When our IVF couple loses triplets at 23 weeks, we get up in the middle of the night to come in for this delivery, charge for our services and tell people we had a "sad loss" last night and describe the sadness of "losing three babies." We cry with her, we sit and comfort her after the delivery and we point out the anatomy of her beautiful, lifeless two boys and one girl. We go home moved and tearful for the loss of these lives. Our hearts break because we know she does not have the biological clock time left or financial resources left to try again. We grieve with her.

When we ourselves are pregnant (yes you, female physicians), we scan ourselves weekly to document the life of our child to a ridiculous level because we are fascinated at this process and believe fully in the greater power of the human fetus and we are amazed how it comes out successfully most times. Medical Science has helped us to see the continuum from a zygote to a crowning, full-haired creature that we guide safely to its mother's arms. We know this is life. We understand it and we have made our livelihood protecting it.

Why do we let politics stop us from accepting this beautiful gift from God?

Is it a life or is it a "clump of cells?"

We threw away much of the knowledge of Hippocrates.

We are attempting to throw away all of the logic of Socrates, Plato and many others by stating that something is "good" ONLY if it is "desired."

Matter cannot change its character because of feelings attributed to it. A table is a table, even if we do not prefer the style. We go into Room 1 and congratulate a woman for being "empowered" and ending the life of her 8 week fetus. We sanitize our hands (ironic) and give our condolences to the grieving mother who lost her 8 week baby in Room 2. Same matter, different emotions.

So, to my physician colleagues and to the legislators who are swayed by lots of physician names on a list, are we chameleons, hypocrites or schizophrenic?

I believe we are deceiving ourselves and probably need a remedial course in logic.

Unpopular yet sincere

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