

### **3.16 Post-Script**

Congratulations! You have successfully completed a journey into the world of the medical practitioner. You now have a better understanding of the thought process required to solve the medical investigations so important and meaningful to your patients' well-being. This same process of asking "why" and looking deeper can work in your daily life as a student and well beyond as you strive to make good life decisions.

You also appreciate now that, regardless of your future occupation, solving significant problems of all types often requires collaboration and teamwork. Complex issues benefit from the input of people with a diversity of training, experience, and insight. In almost any career you will work with others to find the successful solutions to the challenges you face. Individuals you trust can prove essential for even personal problems you may face in the years ahead. Many successful people actually create their own personal "Board of Directors" to call on for advice when they make important decisions. We wish you a successful journey as you solve the challenges and investigations in your life. No life completely avoids stress and difficulty, but we hope some of the lessons you have learned in this introduction to medical investigation make you better able to make sound decisions. Thanks for allowing us into your life.

### **3.17 About the Authors:**

In his youth Dr. Russ Hill imagined himself playing professional baseball, encouraged by a successful high school baseball career. But higher levels of competition failed to ratify that expectation, so he had to pursue his backup plan. In college he trained for teaching, but upon graduation no jobs were open. Instead he found an opportunity in pharmaceutical sales. While doing that work he met a Podiatrist who was an alumnus of Dr. Hill's own high school. The doctor challenged him to further his science education and then apply to Podiatry school. He did and at the end of a career in health care he retired, still feeling the need for challenges in his life.

In pursuit of another challenge, Dr. Hill followed his daughter into the teaching profession, a profession he originally had pursued over twenty years earlier. Over the past decade and a half he has challenged his students to bump up their own aspirations, just as the Podiatrist had done for him. He still teaches middle school Science and STEM.

The current trend in education has put a focus on career readiness, and yet we have not seen a textbook that introduces students to medically-oriented careers. This one tries to do just that by providing insights into how doctors analyze problems and conduct

medical investigations. Whether students end up with a medically oriented career or not, the analytical skills required of physicians have applications in almost all careers we expect to see opening up in the future. Besides, It never hurts to have some basic medical knowledge tucked away when collaborating with a physician to maintain your own good health.

**Dr. Richard Griffith** never imagined a career in medicine when he was your age. Instead electronics fascinated him at a time when America was very excited about going into outer space. He took math and physics in a small town high school from a former mining engineer who encouraged him to ask why, and challenge the simple answers to questions. In college he studied physics, but eventually recognized that his passion lay in solving everyday problems and not so much finding new sub-atomic particles. He went to graduate school in electrical engineering and got interested in medical applications for engineering tools. He got career guidance from an older engineer who had attended medical school and eventually became a researcher at the National Institutes of Health. Based on his advice, Griffith completed a doctorate in electrical engineering and then applied to medical school, frankly not expecting to get accepted since biology and chemistry were not a significant part of his prior studies. To his surprise they let him in and he managed to transition into this very different mode of thinking and learning.

His electrical engineering background got him involved in research in neurosurgery even before he finished medical school, but he decided that he needed a clinical specialty for a successful career, so he selected a residency in anesthesiology. That specialty seemed to best suit his array of interests. He since has done private practice, worked as a medical director in a major medical device company, and finally finished his career in academic medicine teaching medical students and resident physicians. Now retired in Vermont, he has been working to involve industrial designers more fully in the cause of Patient Safety, because mistakes in health care have become an alarmingly common occurrence despite the best intentions of health care professionals. It appears that industrial designers have some unique skills that may prove especially valuable in the future of safer medical care.

**Russ Hill and Richard Griffith** are First Cousins who grew up on opposite sides of this country, Griffith in Virginia and Hill in California. Griffith's Mother was the Sister of Hill's Father. Griffith was thirteen and Hill was eleven when they first met. Griffith's family had driven west for his Father to attend a summer workshop in economics and to visit their distant Hill relatives. They made that 6,000 miles round trip in the middle of summer with no radio or air conditioner in their car. Times were tough back then. The two cousins did not see one other in person again until seventeen years later when Hill's family visited the Griffith family in Virginia. In the ensuing years they have communicated by email as their friendship grew. They have gotten together a few times

in New York, Montana, and Vermont, where Griffith now lives. In spite of the geographical barrier, they successfully collaborated by many e-mails for over a year in order to write this book.

**Raella Hill** married Russ more than 45 years ago, first meeting him in high school. She worked in hospitals before taking several years off to raise her two children. She then studied art and immersed herself in ceramics, photography, painting, and printmaking. Her final career job was as office manager for architectural photographers. Her interests now include her four grandchildren, printmaking, and yoga.