

# COMMON SENSE



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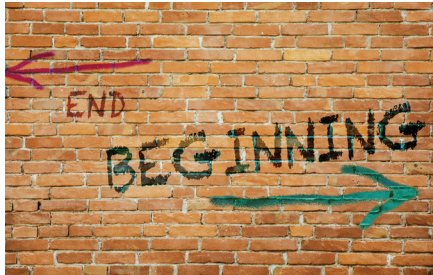
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# COMMONSENSE

## Featured Articles

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### President’s Message: So It Begins



In his first President’s Message, Dr. Robert Frolichstein introduces himself and how he came to lead AAEM. And while he does have thoughts on what he feels the Academy should focus on during his term, he admits that it is not just about him and what he wants to do. It is about what AAEM should do and about what you, as members, believe we should do. But don’t wait for him to call you, you need to reach out.

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### Editor’s Message: Patient Safety: A Crazy Suggestion



In this issue’s Editor’s Message, Dr. Leap discusses the evolution of patient care in the emergency room (from a bed, or chair in the hallway, of the emergency room, to the emergency room waiting room, and out to the parking lots beyond) and wonders how we got here and what can be done to fix it. He determines the only fair thing to do is staff the places with enough human physicians with the training, experience, dedication, and passion to do the job right.

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### AAEM24: Thank You for Attending the 2024 AAEM Scientific Assembly



The 30th Annual AAEM Scientific Assembly was held in Austin, Texas from April 27-May 1, 2024. Celebrating 30 years of excellence, this event lived up to the hype of being one of the most anticipated academic conferences of the year. If you missed us this year, we’ll see you next year in Miami for AAEM25!

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### Live a Good Story



It started with every parent’s worst nightmare—the phone call. When Dr. Chris Neuman picked up that phone call he learned that the plane his 22-year-old son Josh was on was missing somewhere in Iceland. While waiting for a connecting flight to get to Iceland, he received another call. They had found the plane—but no survivors. Everyone has a different approach to tragedy, loss, and grief and the editors of *Common Sense* thank Dr. Neuman for sharing his story.

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### Two New Position Statements Approved by the AAEM Board of Directors

The AAEM Board of Directors recently approved two new position statements. Head over to page 27 to learn about the AAEM Joint Young Physician Section and Women in Emergency Medicine Section Position Statement on Scheduling Recommendations During Pregnancy, the Postpartum Period, and Parental Leave. Once you read that one, flip over to page 30 to read the AAEM Rural Medicine Interest Group’s Statement on Emergency Patient Access to Specialty Consultation in the Rural and Critical Access Emergency Department. (And by “flip over” the editors mean “thoroughly read all articles in between” on your way.)

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### Emergency Ultrasound Section: Artificial Intelligence and POCUS: The Pros and Cons



Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as the current hot topic, not just in emergency medicine, but across the world. Are there ways that physicians can incorporate AI into their practice that will benefit the practice of emergency medicine? And if there are benefits, are there drawbacks and risks to doing so? Drs. Sethi and Theophanous explore the pros and cons of AI in POCUS.

# Live a Good Story

Chris Neuman, MD FAAEM

It all started with the “The Phone Call.” Every parent’s nightmare. This particular afternoon, it came about 1:30pm, from one of Josh’s LA friends. Josh was currently in Iceland, shooting content for a clothing company. After the first five seconds of silence, I already knew. The sightseeing Cessna that Josh was on, was missing. No SOS signal, no distress signal, no flight plan, and no idea where it was. It hits you like the classic subarachnoid hemorrhage description—like a thunderbolt.



Being an EM physician, and my wife an inpatient pharmacist, we immediately go into damage control mode, getting down to business. We called the American Embassy in Iceland, got our flights for the next day, got our Covid tests (it was in the middle of Covid), notified family and friends, and got all of February shifts covered (thank you Universal Physician Services and Princeton/Bluefield WV Hospital for that).

The American Embassy stated that they had no idea where the plane was. **No idea.** I looked at Find My Friends and it would only give me “last known location,” a circle of around 50 to 100 miles. The police started a search consisting of 1000 volunteers, the coast guard, police, and Danish helicopters. Sleep did not come easy that night

We get on the plane that morning, flying through JFK to Reykjavik, and while waiting for our connection, we get a phone call stating that they found the plane, 150 feet under water—and no survivors. The police said that they never would have found the plane without my snapshot of Find

my Friends. They weren’t even searching within 50 miles of the accident. In retrospect, I realize that it was God, pointing us in the right direction with the fleeting screenshot of where the plane was.

“I happened to be looking at Find My Friends again, and it showed an exact location for one of Josh’s devices, right in the middle of Lake Pingvallavatn...I looked at my phone the next morning, and the location was gone.”

I now finally understand how people “fall out,” because I felt like life was just sucked out of my body and I no longer had control, right in the middle of the airport lounge. The absolute worst thing that could ever happen, did happen.



and I woke up around 2:00am to call Verizon to see if they could help with pinging his phone. Unfortunately, they could not. But then I happened to be looking at Find My Friends again, and it showed an exact location for one of Josh’s devices, right in the middle of Lake Pingvallavatn. I took a snapshot, sent it to the Embassy and went back to a very restless sleep until the morning. I looked at my phone the next morning, and the location was gone.

To add insult to injury, they couldn’t find the bodies for two more days (they weren’t in the plane) and couldn’t retrieve the bodies for four more days after that due to weather. After the recovery, we spent another week in Iceland waiting for the autopsy, release of his body, a service over Zoom for family, cremation, and a huge amount of bureaucratic paperwork to bring him home with us. All in all, two weeks in Iceland just to bring our son home.

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It is funny to us, how everyone has a different approach to tragedy. The advice we received about grieving was **all over the place**. From, “he’s in a better place,” to “do you have any other children?” and my favorite, “you know, 70 percent of marriages don’t survive the death of a child.” Huh? Well, Kristin and I looked at each other and promised that it would not be us. We realized that we will grieve differently and we gave each other permission (and our other son) to say anything we feel, no matter how ugly, morbid, or disgusting it was, without any judgement.

My wife tried to go back to work that next month, but felt she could not do her job safely. So she took the next three months off. Me? Well I went back to work full time the next month. Like many males, and probably EM physicians, I am very good at compartmentalizing, and felt OK even while working. The first few weeks back were strange. People were afraid to talk to me, and it was literally the elephant in the room. Everyone who works with me, knows how much I like to talk about my children and how proud I am of them. That didn’t change. A trauma surgeon that I know, did one of the nicest things she could for me. She didn’t say anything, she just gave me a great big hug.

We started counseling the next month, but honestly, didn’t get a whole lot out of it. Both my wife and I are intellectual enough to know what we need to do. And there are only so many times you can be told “it’s OK to feel what you are feeling,” to validate your emotions. Now, two years out, people ask us how we are making it through all of this. Simply stated, it is our faith in God and our ability to communicate honestly with each other. No other way around it.

We do feel that God has been with us from the beginning. From the Find My Friends location at 2:00am that later disappeared, to the recovery of the bodies before the lake froze over the next day (they didn’t even bother

“I especially grieve not seeing what he would have done for the world if he lived a full life. It would have been epic.”

to retrieve the plane until two months later when the lake thawed out) to the overwhelming feeling of His presence during the weeks we were in Iceland, and even to the people that He has brought

into our lives since this tragedy. God has been with us. In fact, my personal relationship with God has gotten even stronger. I talk honestly to Him all the time. Even in the middle of this tragedy, I never questioned Him. I knew that He would make something great come from this.

And that brings us to the foundation.

It was on day three, before they discovered the bodies, that my wife and I looked at each other, and almost at the same time, stated that this would not be the end of Josh’s story. For the next chapter in Josh’s story, we started the Josh Neuman Foundation. The Foundation’s main goal is to continue Josh’s legacy of helping those without access to clean water, food, and shelter. To understand this, you need to understand a little about Josh.

Josh was bit of a social media celebrity. He was a professional downhill longboarder and had 1.2 million followers on his YouTube channel. He used this to chronicle his adrenaline junkie side, skydiving, cliff jumping, hiking, and longboarding. He was the subject of commercials for GoPro,

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Brook's Brothers, MotorTrend, Prada, and still has an LG commercial showing in Times Square in NYC.

Despite this, he was very compassionate. He felt very blessed and wanted to leave the world a better place. He used his social platform to encourage others to "live a good story." He was very open about his mental health struggles. He designed a sweatshirt line, and used all of the proceeds to build a water well in Uganda. He had been on mission trips with his family. He donated his time to numerous charities. He even spent his 22nd birthday, serving at a food pantry in LA. Just prior to his accident, he was designing a new sweatshirt line to benefit mental health and suicidal prevention initiatives. And the list goes on.

His death made national news. We received too numerous to count texts and emails from people all over the world, whom Josh has touched. Forty people came to know Christ at his memorial service.

My speech at his memorial service was about how fathers can only hope to inspire their children. But this was the opposite. Josh inspired me. He took the best qualities from Kristin and me, and put them together to become better than both of us. He inspired people from all generations. I've been told by friends that he was a unicorn.

And all of this, at only 22 years old.

Grief.

I don't even know where to start. It has been over two years since Josh died, and we don't feel it has gotten any better. Different—yes, better—no. We have been through all of the "stages" of grief. Sometimes all in one day. People who haven't walked in these shoes will never understand. We feel that God has opened our eyes (we call it "neuvision," the name of Josh's company) to others that suffer. We see things differently now. I have more compassion for those that suffer, but less for those don't.

People feel that grief is a condition that needs to be fixed, to be gotten through. But it is not. I read a book by the preacher Levi Lusko, "Through the eyes of a Lyon." It is about his five-year-old daughter who died from an asthma attack. He described grief, not as something you fix or get through, but something that you just get stronger at carrying. I understand. It never goes away. I do not grieve because Josh is in heaven, but because he is not with us. I grieve the future adventures we will never go on. I grieve not seeing him get married, not holding little Josh grandchildren, not hearing his voice, not getting annoyed at his stupid sense of humor. I especially grieve not seeing what he would have done for the world if he lived a full life. It would have been **epic**.

Sometimes I welcome the grief. Because without the grief, I won't feel the love. It is a small price to pay to be close to my son, to feel his presence, to cherish the memories. There may be days that I don't cry, but there are just as many that I do. Even two years out. I wake up every morning, and just feel something is missing, something is not right, a physical hole in my gut and a pain in my heart. It never goes away.

Is this the way I have to live the rest of my life? Occasional laughter with happiness thrown in between, but no true joy, no true peace, no true contentment. I have no idea. Well, God obviously has a plan for us. Is it the foundation? Is it continuing as an EM physician? Is it serving others? I don't know, but I surrender, and will let God take me where he wants. I am a broken person, and God uses broken people.

I have been told that the happy talkative Dr. Neuman at work has become an "angry" Dr. Neuman. That may be so, but it is a righteous anger. I am more compassionate for patients, but less so for the business of medicine. I am tired of too many people making decisions for their own benefit, not the patient's. The old Dr. Neuman is not coming back.

So where does that leave me? I am winding down my career, but always see myself working. In what capacity? No idea. Like most of you, I love taking care of patients, but hate the business of medicine. I worry about what medicine will look like when my wife and I become older and actually need physicians. I worry about retirement. I worry about how I will be leaving this world to my other son. I want to live by Josh's five core values:

1. Do something because you are passionate about it.
2. A number will never make you happy.
3. If you don't fail, you aren't pushing yourself hard enough.
4. If you're doing what you love, don't worry about what others think. Because those who mind, don't matter, and those that matter, don't mind.
5. Life begins where your comfort zone ends.

Please go to theJNF.org or scan the code below to read more about the Josh Neuman Foundation and to read about Josh. We are continuing Josh's legacy of helping those without access to clean water, food, and shelter, and leaving this world in better shape than we found it.

Most importantly, as Josh would say, "**live a good story.**" ●



[joshneumanfoundation.org/](http://joshneumanfoundation.org/)