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So many times, in healthcare the answer is I don't know, the doctor ordered it, or we have always done it that way. Even as a child I was bothered by these answers.

My grandparents and father have gone through the aging process experiencing multiple surgeries and hospital stays, long-term care and rehab facilities into hospice, and making end of life decisions. I am in healthcare to make sure patients and family are heard. There is such a destructive stigma to accept whatever the doctor says, or does not say, and not question it. Families have so many questions and they should be afforded the time they need to process and understand what they have been told.

On the day I was faced with the decision to remove life support from my father, I remember feeling so overwhelmed. I had worked in healthcare for over 5 years at that point and knew clinically we could do nothing more for him. What I did know was that it was the hardest decision to make. He left no advanced directives and always refused to talk about what he wanted to happen. Being forced to make this ultimate decision on my own was hard enough. What I did not expect was the torturous 9 hours it would take for him to pass, and the doubt and fear that would overcome me. Whenever he would cough or wheeze, I doubted whether I had made the right decision. The night can be unforgiving. If it wasn't for my Dad's nurse, John, reassuring me I was making the right decision, I think the guilt would have consumed me even more than it already did.

Healthcare is not easy. It's not black and white. It's messy with too many paths to navigate all at the same time. Healthcare is also a war; won and lost in the battles you fight every day. We need great leaders and soldiers to wage this battle of compassion, care and communication every day. Not just people to show up, but people who have a passion against the injustice of sickness. I am proud to be part of developing great caregivers to enter this battlefield. Why is not the question for me; it is...why not!

