



Episode 9: How to Be an Attending

[0:00] Dr. Lindsey Negrete introduces the episode and *Dr. Chris Beaulieu*.

[1:30] **Transitioning from fellowship to new attending – the first few months.**

1. The key difference is that as an attending, you are the final signer on the reports. This new responsibility can be very stressful.
2. Everyone has misses. Mistakes are part of the practice. What's important is to learn from them and do better.
3. Trust your knowledge and intuition. You've seen many exams. Pay attention to your gut feeling if something doesn't feel right.
4. Communicate your findings in the report.
5. You're never alone. Don't be afraid to turn to a colleague for help, if possible. Thankfully, most cases do not have life or death urgency.

[7:00] **Tips for asking others for help.**

1. It helps to be understanding that the other person may be very busy as well.
2. People may be appreciative and even flattered that you came to them for help.
3. If they're busy, you can also give it time yourself and some insight may come. Sometimes it's best to let the study simmer.
4. While the study is simmering, you can take the time to do a literature search. Often times the study does not need to be signed off within seconds.

5. It's better to get things right the first time, than to go back and edit.

[9:30] **Recommending studies for your imaging findings.**

1. This is a tricky balance that can be attending specific.
2. Over time, hopefully attendings will be less of an "over-caller"
3. Rely on your past experience and think about the different observations and how it will really affect the patient.
4. It's important to be thorough, but don't go overboard. "Call it tight, but call it right."
5. Don't hesitate to talk to the referring clinicians about unsure exams. That's the best way to get to know people and to build trust among your colleagues.

[12:00] **Tips and tricks for new attendings reading out.**

1. First, understand what the trainees are actually seeing. Are they seeing what I'm seeing?
2. What might be obvious for you, might be missed by a trainee due to lack of experience.
3. It helps to ask them what exactly they are seeing with the mouse pointer. It's a leap of faith to assume they are seeing what you're seeing.
4. At the end of the case, summarize the case and key impression points.
5. Things can get busy, and this can get difficult, but at the end of the day, the impressions are the most important part of our work.

[15:00] **What about the trainee who disagrees with you?**

1. The reality is that not every trainee will agree with your diagnoses.
2. This can be very uncomfortable. While what you say goes, it's important to listen to the trainee because they may be seeing something you're not.
3. At the end of the day, sometimes it's important to be firm and go with the best decision for the situation.
4. Not all personalities will be a perfect match. Rely on your expertise.
5. If it becomes very challenging, a neutral third party can be helpful.

[16:45] **What about the trainee who is struggling?**

1. Chances are, other people may have noticed as well, so the pressure is not all on you.
2. Come together as a community to devise a strategy.
3. Sometimes remediation may be necessary because they are so behind compared to their peers.

[17:45] Giving feedback to trainees.

1. Feedback is helpful so they can learn.
2. Feedback doesn't have to be negative. Positive reinforcement and guidance can be included in feedback as well!
3. A culture of feedback is important.
4. Feedback can be tricky if it is busy.
5. Build in a scheduled time to provide feedback to the trainee. For example, the third Thursday on a four-week rotation, so it's not done on their way out of the door, when they have no room to improve.
6. Start out by asking the trainee for their own insight. "How do you think you're doing?" "Do you feel like you're learning a lot on this rotation?"
7. The book "Put Happiness to Work: 7 Strategies to Elevate Engagement for Optimal Performance" by Eric Karpkinski talks about sending regular appreciation. For example, Lindsey likes to highlight positive work done by trainees during case conferences.

[21:00] Tackling the alphabet soup of societies and meetings.

1. The large number of meetings can be challenging and expensive.
2. The big ones are RSNA, ARRS, and ISMRM. However, because they're larger societies, it can be harder to get ahead. It might be better to grow in smaller societies for sponsorships and presentations.
3. Become strategic about how many societies you belong to. The fees can add up. Use other people in your department for guidance.

[23:30] Let's talk promotions.

1. Performance reports help guide a promotion.

2. Keep track of what you're doing. Keep your CV up to date. An administrative assistant can help with this.
3. Every institution is different in terms of the steps to take.
4. Social media is growing in recognition to help boost a CV, but a first author peer-reviewed scientific manuscript still carry a lot of weight.
5. Clinical reviews and case reports still carry value, but not as much as a scientific paper. Some institutions may not even pay attention to case reports.
6. A YouTube educational video with a high number of views can be comparable to a lecture given at a CME course. There's no black and white answer.
7. When stating your goals and ambitions in front of the committee, one strategy can be to list goals that are almost completed to maximize the chance of ensuring success. Be concrete, and don't overreach. Often times, things might not go as efficiently as you'd like.
8. As a junior faculty, there's definitely a 5 year "ramp-up" period to get involved with projects and collaborate, so don't overthink the first few years as an attending. It's going to take a few years to get going.

[28:30] **Top advice to summarize.**

1. Be confident in your knowledge. You've underwent a tremendous amount of training.
2. Realize that no one is perfect. Mistakes are inevitable. Hopefully, they will be minor, but always try to improve on them.
3. Be patient with yourself. It takes a few years to get into the groove of things.
4. Use your colleagues. Don't ever feel like you're on your own.
5. Keep track of what you do. Keep that CV up to date.
6. Be selective of what you take on. Don't be afraid to say no if you're not passionate about it.

[30:45] **Short and long term goals as a junior attendings.**

1. Start being involved in a particular society.
2. Continue learning. Embrace topics that you don't know much about. These can be the best learning opportunities.

THANK YOU! For questions, comments, concerns....letsreadout@gmail.com