

## Doctor's Corner

### APPROVAL RATINGS

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We seek approval from others. Consciously or subconsciously, we seek total, unqualified approval.

We express approval of others, often less generously than what we expect for ourselves. We tend to be more generous with disapproval with a sharp eye for other people's failings.

Presidential candidates and Presidents get approval ratings and pollsters keep score. Less publicly, you and I get approval ratings each day. Some ratings we notice, many we do not. They come from people we know or think we know. They arise from the innumerable encounters that make up our personal, social, and professional lives.

A coworker or a friend may say "You did the right thing "or think to himself "That was poorly done."

Patients rate their caregivers by talking after sessions. They may share their ratings with others or even with their therapists. I suspect many patients are more cautious with negatives for fear of some formal retribution.

Feel, if you can, the pain of people we call disabled. They have to live with their impairment and they still hope for approval from us, their families or friends and their caregivers. Acknowledge their valor, their endurance, and tell them.

Children, and the child in all of us, seek approval. Disapproval, or the torture of just approval withheld. But even the child in us can grow up and look at ratings as one tool to learn how we affect others and as a chance to make amends.

Disapproval by others need not be a life sentence condemning us to worthlessness nor does approval give us a guarantee of a lifetime credit of worthiness.