

Visualizing Population Health from a Personal Perspective

written by DaltonRuer | December 19, 2017



Great People

One of the lessons in life that I've found to be very true was that you should surround yourself with great people. Gotta say I'm so amazingly blessed to have been able to learn from some of the greatest in the past few years. Bare with me as I mention just a few and point out why.

Vision – If you've spent 10 minutes thinking about Population Health then you are probably aware of Dr. David Nash. But why? Because people don't follow plans – they follow vision and Dr. Nash has a vision that he shares so passionately and with such clarity that nearly anyone you talk to in the field is going to bring his name up.

Dreams – On a daily basis my life can go in a thousand directions. The one cohesive thing about our healthcare team within Qlik is our leader Brad Copeland. Brad is the Vice President of the Qlik Healthcare team. Don't tell him I said so but the practical knowledge and leadership he offers our team is secondary in my opinion to what I value him most for ... his ability to "dream." "How will blockchain revolutionize healthcare?" I expect questions like that from other dorks, nerds, geeks ... you know people like me. A sales VP though? Are you kidding me that's not what I expected. But in my 2.5 years with Qlik Brad has never ceased to amaze me with the things he dreams about. I love dreaming and without Brad the daily chaos of "sales" might be a trap for me. He constantly fuels my fire to imagine actually making a gigantic impact on the healthcare system.

Cruise Director – Growing up I loved the show [The Love Boat](#). You may not have a deep enough appreciation for the term "love" when I use it to express my feelings for that show. "Hey I'm [Janae Sharp](#) and I'm going to be your Cruise Director for this population health voyage." That's what goes through my head when it comes to my learning regarding population health. Because like Julie on The Love Boat, Janae is kind of the social media cruise director for the movement. Twitter book club conversations? Hot topic conversations weekly? Connecting people in the industry who have common visions/dreams? Yep you know Janae's on it. There is an image for you ... a global population health cruise and we have our very own cruise director and her name is Janae Sharp.

Encourager – [I recently posted a tweet in which I half jokingly indicated that the transition to population health wasn't easy](#). I tagged a population health evangelist [Asha Gaines](#) who was seeing the premier of Star Wars with me and said we were there hoping the force would be with us. I say "half jokingly" because it really isn't an easy transition. The current healthcare system is a giant machine physically

and mentally. It would be easy for those in the movement to burnout quickly as a result of having to beat their heads against so many walls at times. It **would be**, fortunately the movement has [Nick Adkins](#). Nick started a “gifting” movement focused on gifting pink socks to others. Simple way to bring attention to the movement and simply encourage others by saying “you matter.”

You Matter

I have to admit the phrase “you matter” is not original it is something I picked up from watching a video that Bomy Yun who is a Nurse Practitioner at [Neighborcare Health](#) shared with me. You may need to reread their name if you think you read “**neighborhood**” because it’s just “**neighbor**.” Because the heart touching message that their video conveys about their work isn’t about how they have smaller needs that hurt less, or that their physicians have ESP and can better diagnose patients in the community. Their message to the community is “I see you and YOU MATTER.”

They hire people who live in the community. Why? Because people in the community actually “feel” that specific areas unique “social determinants of health.” The biggest being “the need to know that they aren’t disposable as so much of society conveys and that they matter.”

I imagine that within their organization they have someone who has a strong vision, someone who is a grand dreamer, someone who directs and socializes the work within the community and someone who encourages the others within their team.

The One Thing

What is the one thing that all of these folks have in common?

The fact that “I hate them.”

I mean I love them ... but I also hate them. Because you can't possibly be around these kind of people without being moved to action. I'm 53 years old for crying out loud. I'm set in my ways. I'm comfortable with my existing patterns. I don't have room in my life for a new calling. Thus ... I resent these people challenging me to rise up and DO SOMETHING.

I think in many respects there are tons of grand things in the world that we love to talk, dream or wonder about ... all the while knowing we can't personally have any impact. Once you start seeing others having massive impact on the world and realize that the only thing that enables them to be such catalysts is their desire to do so ... you are then challenged personally. I'm smiling as I type this ... I resent these people challenging me to rise up and actually use my gifts, talents and experience to make a difference.

Clearly as you can tell from this series of posts something has been churning in me for a long time. Well it finally boiled over when I attended the [Population Health Academy at Thomas Jefferson University](#) October 23-27. After having spent the last 7 years preparing my home for retirement in 9 years I returned home from this life changing week and told my wife I felt like we desperately needed to move.

I braced myself for what I assumed would be either a physical slap upside the head (the affectionate type) or a verbal slap upside the head. What I got instead was one word. "Why?"

I'm Moving

The "why" in this case was a new deep seeded belief that despite our best intentions to focus on our finances and home for retirement we were in an unhealthy community. No sidewalks. No social activity. People who wanted to be secluded. So my response was "I really think we need to focus on our health more and need to be surrounded by others who think the same way so that we are encouraged to be more social

and more active.”

Her response this time was 3 words “I agree 100%.”

[Tweet “there are things that are “socially contagious” and we are surrounding ourselves with other like minded individuals.”]

Within 1 week we had put a contract on a new home in an active adult community and today my friends I’m closing on that new house. We are beginning a life **today** that represents what I now believe 100% in my heart (and now my wallet) that there are things that are “socially contagious” and we are surrounding ourselves with other like minded individuals. The Social Determinants of Health that will dominant our lives are going to be: Activity, socialization and accountability.

Tell – Show – Tell

I started this series of posts back in July talking about population health concepts as a way to help broaden the base of people thinking about Social Determinants of Health and as a focal point to challenge me to learn more in order to share.

This post is a steep transition to very practical and very personal things. How in the world could I possibly wrap the whole series together 5 months later in a cohesive way that demonstrates the proper Tell – Show – Tell model that I learned was important on my 3rd day of employment with Qlik sitting in a [Demo 2 Win course](#)?

It bothered me. Understand the OCD nature in me when I share the fact that I “needed” a clean finish. I couldn’t simply write the above and until Saturday I didn’t have that finish and was really getting concerned.

Fortunately the community I move in to today had a holiday cocktail party on Saturday. Hundreds of people mingling around a giant clubhouse. Most had lived in the community for years

and have built strong bonds. Within about an hour I met a man named Tom Flaim who was also closing on his home today, and we talked for nearly 2 hours.

Tom isn't in healthcare and has probably never heard the phrase Social Determinants of Health. But here is where Tom fits into the story and provides me my "final tell" to tie all of this together for you.

Tom visited the Dominican Republic years ago on a missions trip and was struck by lack of clean water for its population. As a "coffee bean" driven to make an impact, Tom started [Water At Work](#). An organization that now supplies a tremendous amount of clean water for the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Tom took the challenge he saw "personally" and used his engineering talents to get that started.

But wait there's more. Water at Work doesn't just provide water. They do it by employing local talent, using the right technology and achieving their goal of sustainability. The story got even better for me when I read their website from front to back. Check this line out.

"Stories abound about the health and social benefits that have accompanied our water plants ..."

Are you kidding me ... there it was in black and white for me. I started this process trying to help and relate Social Determinants of Health to you back on July 24'th. Having no idea at the time where the "story" would go but I knew then I needed to just dive in. Throughout the process of sharing I became determined to dig in and learn more. Was literally moved inside to physically move. And 3 days before publishing my final piece of the series I meet another "coffee bean" who's organization discovered that their efforts in water were meeting both the health and social components of an entire country.

It is Personal

Yes [Population Health is Global](#) and can be effectively driven in the [Community](#) but my friends don't miss this ... Population Health isn't just a theoretical concept being worked on by others it is very personal.

[Tweet "Population Health isn't just a theoretical concept being worked on by others it is very personal."]

Very, very, very, very, very personal. In fact the most important person in the entire movement is the one reading this right now. The next most important person in the entire movement is the next person you come in contact with.