

Tip of the Month



Just a Phlebotomist

You've heard it before. "She's *just* a phlebotomist." If you haven't heard it, you've certainly felt it. Isn't it a good thing you don't need others to make you feel important? Aren't you glad your job satisfaction comes from within? Deep down you know the work you do is absolutely critical so that the patient can be properly treated, medicated, diagnosed, and managed. You don't have the time or the emotional energy to spend grieving about how others position you in their view of the world. That's something you'll never be able to control. Whining is for wimps. You just go silently about your work, dutifully, obediently, diligently, and with great respect for yourself and your contribution to the well being of every patient you draw.

You may be *just* a phlebotomist, but you know that the blood specimen you just drew will provide more information about the patient's condition than any other procedure he has today. Nevermind that you can't start an IV, suture a wound, diagnose a heart murmur, or adjust a ventilator. What you can do is precisely place surgical steel into the center of a vein you can't see, withdraw a blood specimen that contains an encyclopedia of information about the patient's health status without altering one word of it, properly distribute it to a rainbow of tube types and sizes, and leave the patient feeling very little pain and a great deal of gratitude that it was you and nobody else. It's what you do: incredible work with little recognition, dozens of times every day. You're *just* a phlebotomist, a skilled practitioner of the most underestimated procedure in healthcare. That's all. Nothing more, nothing less.

If you are *just* a phlebotomist, then a rose is *just* a flower, the Grand Canyon is *just* a ravine, Earth is *just* a planet, and love is *just* an emotion. All *just* things, but things none of us really want to do without. If you are *just* a phlebotomist, then those who perform lab tests are *just* techs, those who give medications are *just* nurses, those who diagnose patients are *just* physicians, and those who run hospitals are *just* CEOs. All these professionals are *just* people, but people none of us want to do without when we're sick.

Being "*just* a phlebotomist" is a matter of perspective. It simply means you perform the art of blood collection so masterfully for the benefit of everyone involved without needing to be looked at as anything else. When a blood draw is a completely unremarkable and forgettable experience for your patient, then you know you have arrived.

You are *just* a phlebotomist who happens to be... *just* incredible.