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Examine a doctor as you wait

YOU can learn about a doctor by his waiting room, according to a medical referral specialist.

Jane Gross, national vice-president of the American Digestive Disease Society in New York City, says even the kind of magazines a doctor provides can tell a lot about his attitude towards his patients.

"If he has just gathered together a bunch of old magazines with labels peeled off, he obviously doesn't care much about how his patients spend the time while waiting to see him," she says.

Ms. Gross offered these tips to help people gain an insight into what makes their doctor tick:

(1) Note how clean and well painted he keeps his premises. A doctor's office and waiting room should always look sparkling for obvious hygiene reasons.

(2) Observe whether the doctor comes out of his office to the waiting room between patients, and if he chats with them. This reflects how he views you — as a fellow human being, or just as a medical problem.

(3) Notice how long patients wait for the doctor. Some waiting is often necessary, but some doctors consistently overbook to ensure they always have plenty of patients.

(4) Pay attention when the receptionist takes phone calls. If she doesn't put them through to the doctor, it could be because he has chosen not to talk to his patients.

(5) Talk to one or two of the patients in the waiting room. You can learn how the doctor appears to others and may give you a new perspective of him.

(6) Note the credentials on the wall. If your doctor is a nationally-known expert on a particular medical subject, he could be away from his practice as much as 40 percent of the time. This may mean he has less time for his patients, and you may have more difficulty getting an appointment.

Battling bank manager takes on the employers who fired him on his 'deathbed'

By RICHARD MORTLOCK

A BANK manager believes his employers saved his life by firing him as he lay close to death on a hospital bed.

And now 40-year-old Paul Tomko, who was told he had only a one in four chance of living after being injured in a car accident, has opened his own bank — in direct competition with the one that dismissed him.

"It seems unbelievable that they fired me while I was in the hospital, but some businesses aren't too bright about handling people," said the banker from Westminster, Calif.

"But it turned out to be the best thing they could have done to me. It just made me determined to fight back."

Tomko's ironic story began in August, 1977, when he was involved in a car accident near San Diego. Although he only received a slight whiplash, he was fighting for his life a week later after developing freak complications that caused a blockage in his spinal cord.

"The doctors told me they would have to operate immediately, but said I had only a one in four chance of living," he said.

"And even if I survived, they said I would be paralyzed from the neck down."

"And then, as if that wasn't bad enough, the doctor said I would die within 24 hours after the operation if it wasn't a success."

"Only an hour earlier I was at home relaxing in my living room. My neck had begun to hurt, just a nagging dull pain that I thought was a result of the whiplash. But the pain got worse and worse."

Tomko survived the eventual operation, in which a piece of bone was chipped off his spine to relieve pressure from the blockage. But the surgery left him partially paralyzed.

"The doctors still didn't know if I would live and they didn't know if I would ever walk again. But I

was in there with a fighting chance," he said.

It was then that his employers came to the hospital to tell him that if he recovered he wouldn't have a job as manager of their Westminster branch.

"When they found I was in intensive care they didn't tell me, but met my wife in the visitor's room and told her," he said.

"Apparently they had heard I wanted to start my own bank in Westminster and didn't like the idea."

"But I don't think they realized how ill I was."

"Before they came, I was in there fighting. I knew I'd make it and God would pull me through."

"But when they fired me there was no two ways about it — I had to live to show them."

"I have been in banking 20 years and it has always been my dream to have my own bank. Suddenly I realized if I lived I would have my chance."

Beating the doctors' odds, Tomko was walking around the block with the aid of a cane in four months and at the end of 1978 he threw away his back brace.

And all the time he was recuperating he was building his dream.

"Starting a bank requires an unbelievable amount of red tape, but as I had nothing else to do for a year I made a good start," he said.

"I put together a top board of directors, secured my business ties and organized the federal deposit necessary to insure the operation."

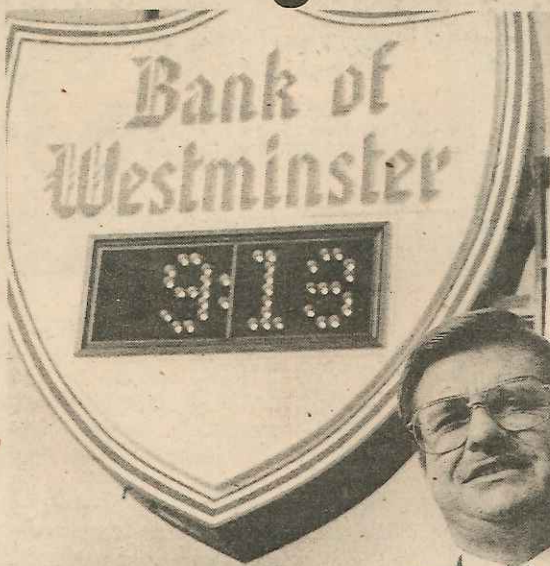
And on November 19 the doors of his Bank of Westminster opened for business.

"There's no spite in it, but I'm in competition with my old bank," he said.

"And business is good. After three months in business we topped \$2 million in deposits and have more than 15,000 accounts."

"In my time in banking I've helped a lot of people who are now millionaires and there is a lot of satisfaction in that."

"But now I'm president of my own bank and my goal is my first million dollars."



Paul Tomko proudly shows off the bank he opened after being fired when he lay close to death.



Tomko with one of his new employees. He says some bank executives aren't clever when it comes to dealing with people.

STARSCOPE

Your guide to the week ahead



By Laurie Brady

Aries: March 21 to April 19

YOU have financial clout on the 6th and 7th. If you need a loan, negotiate then. You've an urge to bask in warmer climates over the weekend but a shadow is cast on your plans on the 9th. A dazzling career opportunity presents itself on the 10th and 11th.

Leo: July 23 to August 22

YOUR home is a happy oasis for drop-in friends on the 6th and 7th. Gambles are tempting over the weekend but don't give in to the urge as you could have some losses by being overly optimistic. You work hard on the 10th, 11th, and 12th and get praise.

Sagittarius: November 23 to December 21

GLAMOROUS doings seem frivolous to you on the 6th and 7th when you turn reflective (intuition is strong). Expect intrepid urge for freedom to cause friction with those in authority. Financial luck comes your way on the 10th, 11th, and 12th. Latter day brings upset in the home.

Taurus: April 20 to May 20

YOU have more serenity with your mate on the 6th and 7th though a minor upset on latter day shouldn't threaten emotional balance. Face facts on the 9th and make a budget. Legal and travel affairs move in your favor now. Take boss or parent out to dinner.

Virgo: August 23 to September 23

YOU'RE full of enterprising ideas on the 6th and 7th and find fun in short trips and studying new procedures. Go slow on domestic dilemmas over the weekend and use caution in signing leases. Your romantic dreams materialize on the 10th, 11th, and 12th.

Capricorn: December 22 to January 20

LISTEN to advice from supportive pals on the 6th and 7th. Social days are likely but don't overdo. You do some serious stock taking over the weekend and tend to brood. Cycle high on the 10th, 11th, and 12th. You bounce back more determined and forceful and put plans into effect.

Gemini: May 21 to June 21

JOB opportunities on the 6th and 7th and work goes well. Cycle low over the weekend. You are short-tempered on the 8th and misunderstandings crop up on the 9th. Your intuitive finesse helps you financially on the 10th, 11th, and 12th. Celebrate in evening.

Libra: September 24 to October 23

THE 6th and 7th bring unexpected financial pleasures and windfalls. An impulsive trip may result in accidents or arguments over the weekend. You feel a get-organized impulse at home and accomplish much on the 10th, 11th, and 12th. Be careful with health on 12th.

Aquarius: January 21 to February 19

CAREER moves get results on the 6th and 7th. Friends are touchy over the weekend. Don't provoke quarrels on the 8th. Inner calmness helps overcome some problems on the 10th, 11th, and 12th. Use this time for introspection. You'll feel more gregarious on the evening of the latter day.

Cancer: June 22 to July 22

ROMANCE and exciting new adventures on the 6th and 7th. Channel your restless energy into work projects over the weekend as tedious chores bring challenges. Protect health. Cycle low on the 10th, 11th, and 12th. Ride out troublesome days by letting mate lead.

Scorpio: October 24 to November 22

BE alert for opportunities and attend to personal needs. Money muddles surface on the weekend. Imagination is sharpened on the 10th, 11th, and 12th and a nice dividend or good news arrives in the mail. Children and loved ones are expensive and slightly devious.

Pisces: February 20 to March 20

PROBLEMS on the 6th and 7th. Legal, travel and educational matters are favored. Parents, boss or those in authority cause problems over the weekend. Old friends offer all kinds of good will and you accept invitations on the 10th, 11th, and 12th. A pleasant surprise in store on latter day

Age doesn't affect memory, sleep or sex

A PERSON'S memory and enjoyment of sleep and sex need not deteriorate with age, according to Stanford University psychiatrists.

They say that poor sleep is frequently caused by breathing difficulties, which can be corrected. And memory loss is often linked to high blood pressure, which can be helped by drugs.

As for sexual activity, Dr. Herant Katchadourian said: "The best way to preserve sexual vigor is sex itself. It's like saving money — you've got to start early in life."

Dr. Katchadourian was one of three psychiatrists who studied the myths of aging.