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Emyr Gravell

Credit crunch

Like Susan Boyle, the unlikely phenomenal success of *Britain's Got Talent*, I've just dreamed a dream. Unfortunately, mine was not so heartwarming and seemed to be based on another reality TV show which often involves humiliating one of the contestants in front of a nationwide audience.

I'm standing, bleary eyed, in the surgery car park at some unearthly hour. My stomach is churning as somehow I know I'm waiting for the fearsome Sir Alan Sugar to arrive. His two trusty lieutenants are already there, staring at us in stony silence. One is Mike, grey haired and studious-looking in his neat glasses, the other is Janet who looks more fierce and appears to have some sort of ridiculous horsehair wig. There are only two of us left in the competition. My rival is an ordinary middle-aged man in large glasses. He sports a grey beard and wears a green gilet. He looks more like an accountant or insurance salesman than a contestant in a high profile TV contest. He seems friendly and down to earth but before we can get to know each other better Sir Alan himself sweeps in to the car park.

'Good morning', he barks. 'Good morning, Sir Alan', we reply, shuffling like nervous schoolchildren. 'As you know this is the job interview from hell. Now that there's only two of you left, my next task is going to be even more difficult so that I can decide who is going to have my Licence. I want you to find some credits that I've hidden. I'm not going to tell what they look like or what they're worth exactly and to make the task more difficult I've concealed them so that they merge in to the background of your day-to-day work. There are 250 of them all together; when you think you've found them all, you will have to take them to show a group of patients I've specially selected to judge your performance. You will have to pitch the credits to these patients and based on their reports I will then decide who has won the overall task. Good luck. We'll meet back in 5 years and at that point one of you will be fired.'

As he drives off I realise I'm late for surgery and that I need to put some trousers on before seeing my first

patient. Things become more blurred as the next few years pass in the dream. Sometimes things seem to go well with my patients, sometimes not so well. Dame Janet occasionally materialises in the background, brow furrowed as she writes in her black notebook; usually at those times when things have not gone quite so well. Then, suddenly, I'm back in the boardroom with Sir Alan.

'Harold, tell me why I should give you the Licence,' he barks at my rival. 'Well, Sir Alan', he starts confidently 'Throughout these tasks I've maintained my professional performance. I've applied knowledge and experience to my practice, kept clear, legible records, and carried out regular audits of my activities. You can see that my goals have been Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bounded. As you've also just seen, the patients liked my pitch and agreed that I'm your best candidate.'

Sir Alan turns to me, 'What about you, Emyr?'. Just as in those dreams when you desperately need to run away but your legs refuse, my tongue seems paralysed. I mumble lamely about doing my best, but not always being able to please patients every time. As I speak, more and more pain seems to be etched across his face and he interrupts me impatiently.

'OK, I've heard enough from both of you and I've made my mind up. Emyr you're ...'

But before I hear his decision his voice fades away and my son's voice fades in asking for his pocket money. I wake with a start, relieved that it's all been a horrible dream. However, as I get up to answer him a hefty document falls from my lap onto the floor and I glance down at its title; *RCGP Guide to the Revalidation of General Practitioners Version 1.0*.¹

Oh dear, perhaps it wasn't a dream after all.

REFERENCE

1. Royal College of General Practitioners. *RCGP guide to the revalidation of General Practitioners, version 1.0*. London: RCGP, 2009.
http://www.rcgp.org.uk/PDF/PDS_Guide_to_Rev_alidation_for_GPs_April_2009_V1.0.pdf (accessed 13 May 2009).

DOI: 10.3399/bjgp09X453396