

# dear residents

The Follow Through

March 29, 2026

Dear Residents,

My windsurfing instructor once told me that the board will move in the direction of my gaze. Where I look, I go. She explained that the rest of the body follows the eyes, that my weight and lean would naturally align the sail to the wind.

Interestingly, the only ski lesson I ever took carried the same message: look where you want to go.

Seth Godin, in a recent [blog](#), reflects on *follow-through* in tennis and golf. It's tempting to think that once the racket or club strikes the ball, the rest no longer matters because the ball is already gone, its trajectory fixed. And yet, the follow-through remains essential. Not because it changes the outcome, but because it reflects the quality of the contact that came before it. A good follow-through is evidence of a well-executed moment.

Nassim Taleb, in [Fooled by Randomness](#), reminds us how easily we mistake luck for skill and outcomes for causation. We construct stories after the fact, convincing ourselves that what followed must have been caused by what we did. The follow-through, in sport, can seduce us this way. It looks purposeful, even causal, when in reality it is simply the echo of good contact.

In medicine, this illusion is everywhere. We don't have the luxury of losing contact with our decisions once they are made. Our work continues beyond the initial "strike." The follow-through matters, not as a ritual, but as a responsibility.

What happened to the sodium?

What did the chest X-ray show?

But we must also guard against being fooled by randomness. Did the patient improve because of our intervention, or would they have improved anyway? Did a complication arise from something we did, or was it the natural trajectory of illness? The sequence of events can be misleading, and we are particularly vulnerable to taking credit, or blame, where it may not fully belong.

Method matters. Careful, thoughtful initial decisions are essential, but they are only the beginning. Follow-through is how we test our thinking against reality. It is how we remain accountable. And it is how we cultivate the humility to recognize when outcomes do not neatly validate our intentions.

There will always be adjustments. That is the nature of clinical medicine. But we should be wary of allowing our follow-up to become a kind of cleanup: an accumulation of deferred thinking or missed opportunities.

Look where you want to go. Commit to the moment of contact. Make your best decision. Follow through relentlessly. And remember that outcomes can flatter or deceive.

Best wishes,  
Dino Kazi