The Depth of a “Thank you”

As I was in the waiting room waiting for my next appointment, I overheard an MA (Lisa) giving a patient their follow-up information. When the Lisa had completed giving the patient the information, the patient gratefully said “Thank You”. The MA responded “No Problem!” I saw the the patient had a confused look on their face as if to wonder “is there a problem?”

After the patient had left I walked over to Lisa and asked if I may I share an observation with her. She said “yes”.

So I started... “Lisa, you gave great follow up information to the patient as he was leaving, information I know that was valuable and needed for his recovery. When he thanked you, I observed your comment was “no problem”. She looked at me puzzled and we dove into a conversation about that response; no problem. The conversation ended great but it felt me wondering.

What message does a response like “No problem” send?

After that, I found myself eating at Chic-fil-a with my family. When the server Amanda brought our food to the table I looked at her and said “Thank You!” In response, Amanda said “my pleasure!” Before she left, I stopped her and asked, “Amanda, can you help me understand why you said “My pleasure?”

Now, in all honesty, I expected this young lady to say “because they told us to”. But she didn’t. Amanda looked at me and said “I know you probably have worked all day and now you are with your family wanting to spend time with them eating a good meal. We are thankful you chose us and it is my pleasure to serve you.”

It was at that moment I knew my server Amanda understood the depth of my “Thank You” and in response, she wanted me to know it was her pleasure to serve me. As health professionals, it is so important for us to understand the depth of a thank you. Most of the people we serve come to us because of some health concern. Some of them are fearful or uncertain of their next steps, and when they thank us, it is coming from the heart.

I invite us all to remember to use that moment and interaction to response with the same depth of recognition.