

**Wait...**  
**Say That**  
**Again.**

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A conversation

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## **A Note for You**

I just wanted to say this first... thank you.

For how you showed up.

For the energy you brought into the room.

For being present, curious... and willing.

That's not something you can take for granted.

*“The quality of your life is determined by the quality of your conversations.”*

And the truth is, people like you... are the ones who make those conversations different.

More real. More open. More meaningful.

That's where things start to move.

And sometimes... that's all it takes.

## **Wait... Say That Again.**

Late afternoon.

That in-between moment where the hospital doesn't slow down, it just gets heavier.

Phones still ringing.

Steps a little faster.

Voices a little shorter.

Jane paused for a second outside the door. Then knocked.

“Come in.”

Doctor White didn't look up immediately.

Scrolling. Clicking. Another patient.

“Jane, right?”

“We've got a few minutes.”

“That's perfect.”

He leaned back, finally looking at her.

“We're getting pressure from pharmacy. Too many therapies, same story.”

A small tap of the pen on the desk.

“So, what is this about?”

Jane didn't reach for her slides.

She just let the moment sit.

Then:

“Where are you seeing things not holding, with your current sequencing?”

He looked at her.

“What do you mean by ‘not holding’?”

“After first or second biologic. Where does it start to slip?”

A breath.

“Well, after anti-TNF, we do lose some patients.”

He glanced back at the screen, then away.

“They don’t really stabilize.”

Jane nodded. Didn’t interrupt.

“And when that happens?”

He hesitated for a second.

“Symptoms stay. Inflammation doesn’t fully clear.”

A small shrug.

“We switch.”

Another beat.

“And then... we switch again.”

He gave a short exhale.

“But it’s not real control.”

Jane leaned forward slightly.

“So you’re moving across options, without really changing what’s driving it?”

That landed.

He looked at her again.

“Yes.”

Quieter now.

“That’s the problem.”

A few seconds passed.

Noise from the corridor drifted in. A trolley rolling by.

He crossed his arms.

“But we’re already working on IL-23.”

A slight tilt of the head.

“So what’s actually different?”

Jane didn’t rush.

She stayed close to what he had said.

“If the inflammation is still being driven upstream...”

“...what happens if you go closer to where IL-23 is actually coming from?”

A brief pause.

“From the CD64+ cells.”

Doctor White leaned back.

Eyes up for a second.

“That’s interesting.”

Silence.

Then:

“If you’re hitting it at the source...”

“...that could explain why some patients don’t settle.”

Jane nodded, almost imperceptibly.

“Would that match what you’re seeing?”

“The ones who never really get to deep remission?”

He gave a small nod.

“Yes, it could.”

Then, almost reflexively:

“But we’re tight.”

A glance toward the door.

“Formulary. Pathway. Budget.”

Jane didn’t challenge it.

“Within that pathway...”

“...where do things get hardest to decide?”

A beat.

“After anti-TNF? Or later?”

“After anti-TNF.”

Immediate.

“That’s where it gets messy.”

“Too many choices.”

“And not enough clarity.”

Jane let that hang.

Then narrowed.

“If you stayed just there...”

“Patients who don’t stabilize post anti-TNF...”

“...would it help to look at that group on its own?”

A small pause.

“Without touching everything else.”

Doctor White’s shoulders dropped slightly.

“Yes.”

A short nod.

“That’s different.”

“That we can look at.”

Jane held eye contact.

“Would it make sense to bring that into a focused discussion, with pharmacy?”

“...just on that segment?”

He didn’t hesitate this time.

“Yes.”

A pause.

“Let’s do that.”

The conversation didn't feel big.

No turning point you could point to.  
No moment you could replay.

Just... a slight shift.

A different question.  
A clearer thought.

And direction.

Some conversations don't close.

They don't need to.

They just change where things go next.

And sometimes... that's enough.

**Stefano Trupia**

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