

---

## #pinksocks changing the world with gifting



**Nick Adkins**

\*\*\*\*\*@\*\*\*gmail.com

Founder #pinksocks Advisory  
Board doc.ai - Cloudbreak Health  
Palo Alto, CA Advisory Board  
Columbus, Ohio  
Portland, Oregon

[LinkedIn](#) [Twitter](#)

---

*HealthManagement.org talks with #pinksocks founder [Nick Adkins](#) about the fascinating movement that started in healthcare and is spreading like wildfire in all industries- activating people to connect by sharing each other's stories with compassion and empathy to work together.*

**#pinksocks** is a community united in changing the world from the ground up, with heart speak, hugs, and gifting. The heart of this unique group of people is all about working together to activate solutions to help move us forward and out of the mess that healthcare has found itself in. Politics, bureaucracies, and legacy systems have unfortunately done the polar opposite of what each of us as humans want.....which is to be connected!

The pinksocks tribe is a group of doers and makers. They are creating and effecting change throughout each of their organisations and communities. The tribe is a collection of people from all walks of life and from every point on the healthcare delivery chain. We have said that it's ok to lighten up and have fun and see each other as team mates working together toward a shared and common goal vs the old paradigm of isolationism. The archaic days of silos and domains and kingdoms and fiefdoms – those days are over.

### **Can you see pinksocks 10 years into the future?**

I don't know. It surprises me that it's still going. I don't know where I see it. People don't want it to stop. Demand keeps going going going. It's bigger than me. I should probably find some way that we can keep up with the demand. I spend a lot of my time shepherding the pinksocks hashtag behind the scenes, making sure that people don't use it to sell anything, that they make it about being a celebration of each other, not a celebration of themselves. Demand is totally outstripped the supply for sure. There are people that give away pinksocks, buttons, badges, all in the spirit of gifting. And I tell people if pinksocks is not your thing, find something that is your thing. Maybe it's a fun hat. Maybe it's a funky tie. Whatever helps you connect. Find that thing for you and do it.

### **What are your key areas of interest?**

I like telemedicine, AI, blockchain, and virtual reality.

### **What are the major challenges in your field?**

The biggest challenge is resistance to change. People saying no. Legacy thinking of oh we've always done it this way. I think that's rapidly eroding. Technology has now reached a point where you can't deny it. It's so easy. We all have smartphones in our pocket, we're communicating so easily using our phones.

In real life it's very hard for doctors and systems to ignore this and say I am going to fax you this. You know I don't have a fax machine. You don't have a fax machine. Nobody has a fax machine except the legacy doctors and systems. It's hard to have any level of customer satisfaction when you say I am going to force you to use this old antiquated technology of a fax machine when in our real lives we talk to our friends and family using this. That's wrong. That's why I say I want to go to a hospital that's partnered with Apple because they've definitely figured out how to do this.

The biggest hurdle is resistance to change. Med schools like the [Dell Med School in Austin Texas](#), and [Washington State Med School in Spokane](#), they're teaching their students now using the latest technology. They don't even have textbooks. They're training on iPads. They're doing things in virtual reality and augmented reality. They're training doctors to use current and cutting edge technology.

**What is your top management tip?**

Hire people that are smarter than you and stay out of their way.

**What would you single out as a career highlight?**

I wouldn't say this is part of my career but the highlight for me with pinksocks has been that I got to meet an astronaut. I've got to meet several by now but the first one is still my favourite. His name is [Captain John McBride](#). He was the pilot on two missions on the space shuttle Atlantis. He flew the Hubble telescope up to space. Definitely go visit him at the [Kennedy Space Center](#) in Florida!

I remember when he got his pinksocks, he posted the socks on his profile and he tweeted out, wearing his pinksocks with his [NASA](#) uniform, ***"if you ever wondered what colour socks we wear in space, well we wear pinksocks"*** and I was like whaaat?! One day I got an email from him saying hey Nick have you seen a rocket launch and I said no sir and he said do you want to see one? I said yes and he said can you come in this Tuesday? I flew in from Portland to Florida.

I got to meet [Elon Musk](#). It was the first successful landing at sea. I got to go to Capt. McBride's house. I got to hang out an astronaut's house. Today, he considers me a friend. I consider him a friend. We text each other. Wow. It's nothing like I've ever done besides watching two beautiful babies, my kids, being born a long time ago. There's nothing in my life that is more cool than meeting Capt. McBride. Nothing I have ever done work-wise that would come even close. These kinds of relationships have nothing to do with money. I can't buy them. Just like **the connections you make with your pinksocks. You can't buy those**. Power of connection. Never runs out. **Always free**.

**If you had not chosen this career path you would you have become....?**

If I had not pivoted my life in 2010 I would have stayed where I was- focusing on business and money. I was a type A kind of guy just managing by the numbers, everything in a spreadsheet. I would have missed a lot of humanity, a lot of connection, a lot of empathy had I not stepped out of my head and moved into my heart. I have pretty much become a hippie over the last eight years. Being a hippie doesn't pay quite as well as a healthcare executive but I found that I am more joyous without the money then with it. Somehow magically getting by.

**What are your personal interests outside of work?**

I like to play the guitar. I have a dog. I try to take her everywhere I go. She's a Norwich terrier, she's really a teddy bear. She loves to go for rides in a basket on my pink furry bike that I call the "pink Cadillac". I joke around with my kids and I say, do you know those old men who carry their little dogs everywhere they go? Well, I am that old man! Playing the guitar, hanging out with my dog, enjoying the beauty of nature here in the Pacific Northwest, these are the things that keep me grounded and bring me joy.

**What is your favourite quote?**

Love more. Fear less.

Published on : Wed, 23 Jan 2019