



The Soul of a Doctor: Harvard Medical Students Face Life and Death

By Susan Pories, Sachin H. Jain, Gordon Harper

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By the time most of us meet our doctors, they've been in practice for a number of years. Often they seem aloof, uncaring, and hurried. Of course, they're not all like that, and most didn't start out that way.

Here are voices of third-year students just as they begin to take on clinical responsibilities. Their words focus on the odd transition students face when they must deal with real people in real time and in real crises and when they must learn to put aside their emotions to make quick, accurate, and sensitive decisions. Their decisions aren't always right, and the consequences can be life-altering—for all involved. Moving, disturbing, and candid, their true stories show us a side of the profession that few ever see, or could even imagine. They show, often painfully, how medical students grow up, right at the bedside.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

As Groopman states in his foreword, "each interaction between a doctor and a patient is a story." The moving stories of 44 doctors-in-training collected by two M.D.s (Pories and Harper) and one medical student (Jain), all at Harvard, are accounts written by medical students. Their tales convey lessons both emotional and medical, from learning how to communicate and empathize with those afflicted by illness to ways to ease suffering and loss. In one heartrending incident, David Y. Hwang describes a marine's rage followed by tears on hearing that his wife was going to die, while the wife herself remains in calm denial. Rajesh G. Shah explores how he learned from his first patient to overcome his judgmental attitude about those so beset by anxiety they cannot function without medication. In a particularly self-revelatory (and anonymous) piece, a student describes the endless hazing experience at the hands of interns and residents and the student's need to constantly manage a sense of insecurity. These are thoughtful and illuminating accounts of beginning physicians under stress, growing and changing as they progress through their chosen field. (*June 2*)

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From School Library Journal

Adult/High School—This collection of essays written by medical students going from the classroom to their first experiences with live patients gives personal views of the issues doctors face. From communicating diagnoses to patients to balancing medical protocol with patient needs, medical students have a unique perspective. They see established procedures with new eyes and question everything. Each essay conveys a pivotal moment or experience for its author. One individual learning to take medical histories watched a video of himself interacting with patients and realized that he never looked up and was brusque to the point of rudeness. Teens exploring medical careers will find much to think about here.—*Charlotte Bradshaw, San Mateo County Library, CA*

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From [Booklist](#)

Medical schooling's decades-long focus on the science rather than the art of doctoring seems to be shifting. Doctors and their teachers are again recognizing that there is more to patient care than pages of numbers and medical images. The change isn't proceeding rapidly, though; indeed, one of the med-student contributors to this book notes being told, "The patient's history is totally worthless." The good news is that medical schools are beginning to adjust. In Harvard's patient-doctor course, students are required not only to work on the wards but also to write essays about their experiences. The results may be as surprising to them as it is sadly predictable to many patients. After viewing himself in a videotaped interview with a patient, one young man estimated that it had taken him only months to go from being "Mr. Empathy" to being "Dr. Jerk." One can almost hear the idea bulbs ignite as these students wrestle with issues of communication, empathy, and easing suffering and loss. *Donna Chavez*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Manuel Jett:

The book *The Soul of a Doctor: Harvard Medical Students Face Life and Death* gives you the sense of being enjoy for your spare time. You can use to make your capable considerably more increase. Book can to become your best friend when you getting pressure or having big problem together with your subject. If you can make reading through a book *The Soul of a Doctor: Harvard Medical Students Face Life and Death* to get your habit, you can get a lot more advantages, like add your capable, increase your knowledge about a number of or all subjects. It is possible to know everything if you like start and read a guide *The Soul of a Doctor: Harvard Medical Students Face Life and Death*. Kinds of book are a lot of. It means that, science e-book or encyclopedia or other individuals. So , how do you think about this guide?

Phyllis Kelly:

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Michelle Porter:

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