



# The Power of Patient Stories: Learning Moments in Medicine

*Paul F. Griner*

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## **The Power of Patient Stories: Learning Moments in Medicine** Paul F. Griner

These reflections from the career of a prominent physician help students and the public better understand patient care through insights gained from his stories. Medical knowledge and technology are advancing faster than we can learn to apply them wisely. The pace of change threatens the humanistic aspects of patient care. The arts of listening, observing and examining, and the values of professionalism, ethics, and humor are threatened; both patient and physician are dissatisfied. It is time to restore balance in the care of patients by reinforcing the importance of these skills—and this groundbreaking book does just that. By sharing remarkable patient stories accumulated over almost six decades, Dr. Paul Griner shows how the somewhat elusive concepts intrinsic to “the art” of medicine can be better understood and applied in the day to day care of patients. Provocative questions at the end of each story challenge the reader to avoid a premature response, reflect more deeply on the question and learn how much of medicine is not black and white. Included are such compelling questions as: How do you respond to a parent who insists that her twenty-two year old daughter not be told she has leukemia?, What do you say to the mother of a nineteen year –old son who begs to let him die so that he can be relieved of the agonizing complications of his aplastic anemia?, How do you advise the pregnant wife of a medical resident who wishes to defer treatment for Hodgkin’s Disease, for months, until after the baby is born?, How do you account for a patient whose leukemia disappears without treatment?, How do you respond to the death of a patient from an intern’s careless act? These and almost fifty other stories provide a rich learning experience for both patients and health care professionals alike. A clarion call to balance humanism and technology for the benefits of a system that is breaking apart, Dr. Griner’s collection of stories is a revelation. Exploring the variety of patient problems to delineate points of learning and personal growth, *The Power of Patient Stories, Learning Moments in Medicine* is a must read for patients and health professions students.

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