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The Power in Learning from Others

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The Power of Learning from Others

During my first week of one of my clinical rotations, I encountered an angry, frustrated patient that was planning on firing his doctor. He was the first patient of the day that I had gone in to see before my Attending, and he was upset that he had waited almost 1.5 hours to be seen. This wasn't the first time this has ever happened to him. Apparently, this was a regular experience for him and it had reached a point that he could no longer continue visiting this physician.


While the patient was recounting his story, I listened intently. I empathized with him, and I apologized for what he was going through. He said that he was "tired of people apologizing and that he just wanted his lab results so he could go home." I discussed his lab work thoroughly, making sure he completely understood what each abnormality meant. I treated him with kindness and with respect, even though I knew this would most likely be his last appointment at this office.

Through this conflict, I learned several important lessons. I learned that not everyone is going to like you, and that's okay. And while this conflict wasn't about me, it taught me that there will be plenty of times like this throughout my medical career, where I try my hardest to interact with a patient, but some patients will not be receptive.

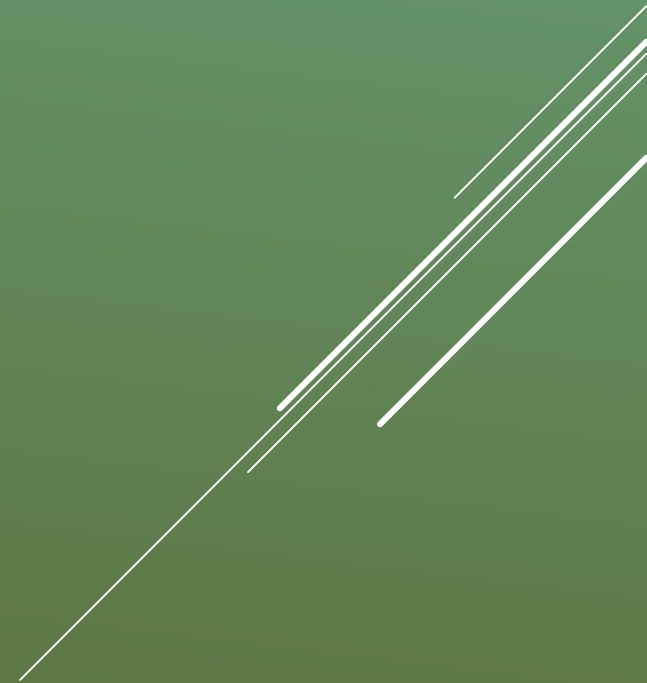
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It is crucial when you practice medicine to respect others, *no matter what*. I had witnessed what the doctor was doing with his time—a time that was meant to be for his patient. It showed a lack of respect towards another person's time. After I had presented the patient to my attending and informed him about the situation, the doctor came across as dismissive and quite rude to the patient, and he never apologized to him. I learned that it's important to respect the patient's wishes, even if that means they no longer want to come see you or take your advice. The patient deserved to be treated with graciousness.

I learned that there is great power in conflict: **the power to learn from others**. One of the most profound things we can do as humans is to push our ego and pride to the side and learn from people because it is how we grow and adapt in our ever-changing environments. There is such a great power in sharing what we know and how we feel with other people because it's a mutually beneficial experience. This conflict also pushed me to think more about boundaries. The patient had experienced being ignored many times and finally, he was setting his own personal boundaries by not allowing anyone to waste his time again. Setting good boundaries is an extremely difficult task, but it was important for this patient to stand up for himself because he was more than worthy.



Conflict does not always need to be viewed in a negative sense. It can teach you about how to deal with different situations in the future, which is a useful tool. With the right mindset, we can all learn from our mistakes and constantly try to better ourselves for all our days to come.



Samantha Sostorecz is a third-year medical student at KPCOM. She is from Easton, Pennsylvania and obtained her bachelor's degree from the University of Pittsburgh. She is currently interested in pursuing a career as a family medicine physician. She has a special interest in women's health and wound care and hopes to incorporate them into her future practice. Samantha is also the owner and creator of Life in Scrubs Blog, which can be viewed at www.lifeinscrubsblog.com.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR