

[REDACTED]

What a wonderful project you all contributed! I loved the process of memorializing both sad and happy patient encounters. It is such a sign of respect to patients to say, in effect, you are important enough to remember. You can't do it for all your patients, but it is truly a lovely gesture, and one I hope you can continue in some fashion.

The sad stories were very honest and real. Tiffany, confronted with a tragic case of fetal demise, you stood by your patient and were an empathic witness to her suffering. Charles, I very much admired your recognizing that it was your own fear that got in the way of simply comforting your patient's granddaughter. We have all hesitated on that ledge, afraid to "say the wrong thing." But when we find the courage to step out, sometimes we find we fly (and then once in awhile we fall, but unlike some medical mistakes, with the right intention, you can pretty easily recover from an insensitive remark). Virginia, you too owned feelings of shame and powerlessness at the limitations of the medical establishment, and yourself. It was so touching to learn that you *dreamed* a dream of healing for your patient. How wonderful is that! Like Tiffany, you could not "save" your patient from her fate, but you didn't abandon her; and if I were a patient, that would be very important to me. Wonita, like Charles, you saw how your fear of rejection by the patient prevented you from entering into the darkness of his HIV diagnosis. Again, this is so natural. It is probably an overreaction to say that you "failed" him, but you recognize that you could have done more by helping him find a safe space to explore his feelings, examine his confusion, share his fear and anger. It's hard to say, "Would you like to tell me a little of what's going on," but when you dare to do so, simply your willingness to *be with* your patient will provide both comfort and strength.

And of course we all love happy stories! The hostile patient that you won over, Tiffany, was a testament to sheer perseverance (I only wish his billions had been real so you could have been rewarded as you deserved!). It was a wonderful illustration of the concept that the way you respond to the patient does not need to be determined by how the patient treats you – and sometimes, your caring will win out over his anger. Wonita and Virginia, you told stories about medicine working and making people better! These are the stories everybody wants, patients and doctors, and they do happen, and we shouldn't forget them. The healing, curative powers of medicine can be miraculous and truly transform people from being in great pain and confusion to health and wellbeing. Being part of such transformations is a gift not only to the patient but to you as the doctors. Finally, Charles, you know how much I appreciated your story about the robotic tendencies transformed into real caring about the patient as a person. It is the perfect counterbalance to your first story. In this one, you had a chance to "do the right thing," and you did – beautifully!

Thank you all for such wonderful and memorable stories. It was obvious they resonated with your peers. Best, Dr. Shapiro

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I really enjoyed your game, although it definitely proved I don't know anything about being a good doctor :-). A contest is always a great way to get medical students' competitive juices flowing! You succeeded in getting your peers engaged in active thinking about good doctors/bad doctors, which is something all doctors should care about. The other aspect of the project (interviewing actual patients) was equally valuable. I love the idea of actually asking patients their views – good for you! I was especially intrigued by the insight that happy doctors (doctors who like what they're doing) make for happy patients. So by taking care of yourselves and being content in your work you are also doing good for your patients. Nice! And once again, patients validated the insight that no one likes an arrogant physician. In the words of the poet Anne Sexton (yeah, I had to drag in poetry), "Doctors should fear arrogance more than cardiac arrest." Your project really brought to life these platitudes of listening, compassion, respect, honesty, and made them seem important – and hopefully, at least on occasion, attainable. Great work! Dr. Shapiro

Hi [REDACTED]. Thanks for such an interesting project. As Dr. Kwaja commented, I too was struck by how much attention kids pay to their doctors. It really surprised me that children would say a good doctor was someone who took them seriously and listened to them. How cool is that! Or that conversely, they recognized when doctors were in a hurry and not paying attention. It was interesting to me too that parents appreciated when doctors talked not only to them, but directly to their child as well. And it was touching how parents valued a doctor who listened to their concerns *even when they were ridiculous!* This comment reminded me how vulnerable parents are, and how much they are grateful for basic courtesy and respect. And of course, a simple thing like *remembering their child's name* proved to be really important to parents. You know, this is less rocket science and more acting like a human being. Your project was an excellent reminder that it lies within every physician's grasp to be a good doctor (be humble, be patient, take time to explain things, listen, have a sense of humor; don't interrupt, don't argue, to be condescending, don't rush, tear your eyes away from the computer screen once in awhile, use language normal people can understand). Thank you for this excellent work, Dr. Shapiro

Thanks for such a thoughtful collage, [REDACTED]. As you know, I am a big proponent (and practitioner) of the way of gratitude. It is easy to overlook, yet enriches our life when we follow it. I appreciated your domains of personal, family, and future (essentially, Freud's love and work). I am thrilled by your enthusiasm for psychiatry – it is a wonderful feeling to find "your piece of the puzzle" in life :-). I wish your classmates had entered into the gratitude exercise with a little more openness, but I know most of them did it, and I hope it is something they will continue to return to as their lives unfold. You have made beautiful and wise contributions to this class, and I admire the courage I imagine it sometimes took to do so. Speak your truth. Best, Dr. Shapiro

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██████████ I was so touched by the generosity of your project. Especially since you did not have close ties with all of your AoD classmates, it was the most beautiful gesture to give them each a personalized gift that embodied their deeply held wisdom. The whole theme of having a saying or card that you can turn to in times of difficulty or crisis is one I very much resonate to. (In fact, I have a whole stack of 3X5 cards from which I choose one to carry around for a week to keep me on track). Having this awareness and sharing it with your classmates was a wonderful gesture. Thank you also for sharing something of your personal story. It was moving to learn of all you'd been through, the friends that helped you along the way, and the capacity you showed to dig deep and find acceptance of an unfair hand. That also is something all of us have to learn to do eventually; and by sharing your story you were a role model for your peers. I loved the way you shared each item on your card, that was very meaningful and uplifting (especially the innocence of your little niece, and your recognition that, after much hardship, you are exactly where you are meant to be – what a marvelous feeling!) Thank you so much (and I'm working on my card :-)). Best, Dr. Shapiro

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Dear ██████████, you did an excellent job of both “looking back” and “looking forward.” I really enjoyed the way your poem worked with the themes of arrogance, grandiosity, and invincibility – the “all-knowing supreme.” Your portrayal of Agnes was both touching and powerful – I could easily imagine this old lady who pierced your self-confidence and self-satisfaction. Occupational hazard, right? You all are so smart, so capable, so well-educated, it's easy to get lost in your own talents (which are very real). Yet without humility, we have nothing. Knowing we will inevitably encounter limits, even as we try to “save the world,” keeps our efforts in perspective. If “saving one life is the same as saving the world,” as you write (and I think the authors of the Mishnah wrote as well :-)), then it is all about one small step after another. I also loved that you were not afraid to recognize that medicine is partly about treating your patients' souls. When he was dying of prostate cancer, the literary critic Anatole Broyard wrote, “I wish... that [my doctor] would give me his whole mind just once, be bonded with me for a brief space, survey my soul as well as my flesh to get at my illness...” In some way, I believe this is a yearning of every patient, although it takes many different forms. I'm happy that you see that.
Best, Dr. Shapiro

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Hi ██████████ Your “Fish Out of Water” was a great poem to share with the class. It is such a perfect metaphor for the entire medical system – the patients and families, the medical students, even doctors and nurses. Despite the lush underwater scenery, everyone is thrashing around and finding it difficult to breathe. Yet the poem also recognizes the beauty and camaraderie of medicine, when so many different kinds of “underwater life” come together for the purpose of healing. You have an eloquent way with words, not only in the poem itself, but in your introduction as well. I was especially struck by your invitation to your classmates to “lean into discomfort,” and to recognize medicine as “a platform” for creating healing, joy, and learning. You have the gift of seeing beyond the quotidian hassles and burdens of medicine (which are quite real) to its inner heart. Thank you for sharing that vision with your fellow students. Best, Dr. Shapiro

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[REDACTED], you've consistently impressed me as an unusual thoughtful and perceptive student. Your final project was no exception. It was successful in responding to the theme "looking backward, looking forward" as its series of images no doubt reminded your fellow classmates of all they'd done, all the places they'd been, and all they'd been *through* since matriculating at UCI. Even better was your metaphoric use of doors. All those doors were so evocative – I started to think about whom gets to walk through which doors; who is shut in, who is kept out; why certain doors have locks, and others have alarms. The music you chose was well-matched to the images and I suspect contributed to feelings of poignancy and promise in the audience. Altogether, an excellent reflection! Thank you. Dr. Shapiro

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What a fantastic project to end on! This was so good, you guys. First, as I mentioned in class, you did a wonderful job of making connections between two bodies of knowledge and finding their overlapping relevance to your own profession. The way you presented the material was organized and logical, yet showed the inherent creativity of this project. Communication, self-awareness, empathy, networking, collaboration, managing mistakes honestly and fairly – these are dimensions of human interaction that must be addressed no matter whether you are a physician or a CEO. I was really fascinated by the parallels you identified; and also happy to see how carefully you'd attended to both AoD and your MBA program. Thanks for this excellent effort. Best, Dr. Shapiro

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[REDACTED] thank you for contributing your poem to our final session. It was the perfect note to end on. In the end, it is all about understanding and appreciating the patient's perspective. It seems such a simple thing, but how often is it overlooked in the hustle-bustle of clinical care. You captured beautifully the patient's fear and sense of dislocation, that feeling of being trapped (both in the hospital and in the illness). If you are able to nurture that capacity to empathize with the patient's point of view, you will make a fine doctor indeed. Best of luck tomorrow and in the future. Dr. Shapiro