

FM REVIEW 2014 11 COMMENTS

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: This is a simple, but well-written account of an aging parent's decline and death and the lessons the author learned as he faces his own final phase. That the author is himself a physician makes this essay especially poignant and pertinent for our readership, many of whom will undoubtedly go through similar experiences (or are already or have). The reviewers both liked it and I did as well. I would like to see him link back his insights, however briefly, to student/resident/patient education, which I've suggested below. I also agree with reviewer 2 that he could be more explicit about how he intends to make that transition easier for himself and his children. I recommend minor revision.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: This is both a lovely tribute to your mother, and a thoughtful meditation on end of life. I have only one suggestion. Since this is an educational journal, it would be helpful as you reflect on what your mom's decline and eventual death taught you, to apply some of these lessons (even in passing) to family medicine learners and patients. You have clearly learned much about gracefully accepting the inevitable diminution of our abilities, the need for "generosity, kindness, and love" to navigate this difficult final phase. Are there implications for residents who provide care to patients and families at this point? Guidance for patients? Given space limitations, and the enormity of this topic, all I would hope for is an acknowledgment that your mother's passing affected you not only as a person, but as an educator and physician. (You are well within the 1000 word limit for this section, so it should not be a problem to add a paragraph along these lines).

Please follow all of reviewer #2's recommendations, especially referencing the need for end-of-life decisions, etc.. This latter point might tie in with my suggestion above. As well, I was a little confused by the reference to "professional role" in line 56." You seemed to be talking about shifting family relationships and I was not clear how "professional" fit.

This is a touching and honest essay that all our readers can relate to, whether past, present, or future. Thank you for sharing it with us.

COMMENTS TO EDITOR II: The author has done a meticulous revision based on all reviewer concerns and suggestions. In addition, his paragraph crafted in response to the major substantive criticism (briefly address the professional and pedagogical implications of the insights he achieved as a result of his mother's death) is not only on point but lyrical (and improved still further by incorporating an allusion to Osler). An excellent essay made even better by this final pass-through. I recommend acceptance.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR II: Well done. Thank you for your careful revisions. The paragraph noting professional and pedagogical implications is beautiful, both lyrical and insightful; its placement is perfect as well. You have made this already excellent essay even more readable and meaningful.