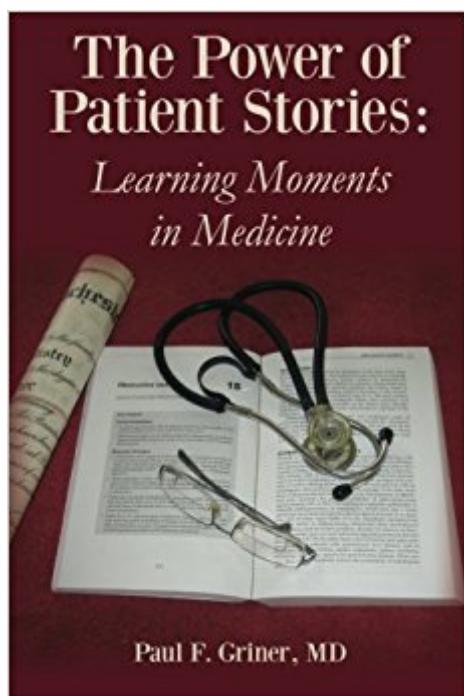


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# The Power Of Patient Stories: Learning Moments In Medicine



## Synopsis

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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"In a remarkable assemblage of both pre-existing knowledge and novel approaches drawn from a multitude of sources, ranging from Hippocrates to contemporary studies of the medical community, Griner makes a case for the importance of the human aspects of treatment, which he illustrates with a plethora of anecdotes."Kirkus Indie

Paul Griner is an Emeritus Professor of Medicine at the University of Rochester School of Medicine & Dentistry, Rochester, N.Y. He was also a Senior Lecturer at Harvard and Consultant at the Massachusetts General Hospital and the Institute for HealthCare Improvement in Cambridge, Mass. Paul is a graduate of Harvard College and the University of Rochester School of Medicine & Dentistry (with honor). He took his residency training at the Massachusetts General Hospital and was then Chief Resident and Hematology Fellow at Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester. He served as a Captain in the United States Air Force and was awarded the Air Force Commendation Medal. Paul is recognized nationally for his studies, in the 1970s, of quality of care, most particularly the cost, in dollars and lowered quality, of the excessive use of diagnostic tests and procedures. He is an elected member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences and was President of a number of national medical organizations including the American College of Physicians. Teaching has always been Paul's highest priority and his greatest privilege. He has been a teacher and mentor to hundreds of students, residents, fellows, and faculty. He was the recipient, in 1982, of the first mentor award given by the University of Rochester. He is the author of over 130 scientific publications. His book, *The Power of Patient Stories: Learning Moments in Medicine*, is a work intended for both students of the health professions and the general public. It is an example of the use of stories to make a teaching moment memorable for the learner. Paul's son and daughter are both college professors, carrying on a tradition of teaching that now spans four generations. His first wife, Mimi, died in 2005 and he is now happily married to Margaret, the widow of his late identical twin brother. He enjoys fishing, travel, golf, and his extended family which now includes an additional three children, thirteen grandchildren, and two

great gran

Dr. Griner's book is a very thought provoking and insightful view into the field of medicine and patient care. Having been on "both sides of the fence" as a registered nurse, a patient, and now teaching health promotion and disease prevention at the college level, I wish this book had been written some thirty-odd years ago! The experiences described with patients, their families, and fellow physicians, along with pondering the challenging questions at the end of each chapter, should be a part of every health professional's knowledge base. As a required text, "The Power of Patient Stories" would benefit students in nursing and medical schools, and, as most of us end up with some kind of hospital experience during our lifetime, would also give patients a valuable glimpse into the realm of medical decision making. I plan on using some select chapters as a basis for discussion in my course next semester. I have no doubt they will elicit some stimulating responses as well as promote learning and perspective. A good read.

In this era of "high tech" medicine, there is a danger of losing the "high touch" aspect of medical care. Dr Griner combines the two in an interesting telling of more than 50 brief stories that he collected over a 58 year career. These stories have provided learning experiences for the author and subsequently for his students. They range from the interesting aspects of medical practice to the poignant moments that physicians are privileged to share with their patients. Dr Griner divides his presentation into four parts: 1) Ethics and Professionalism, 2) The Importance of Good Bedside Skills; Listening, Observing and Examining, 3) Learning Moments from Other Stories and 4) Key Challenges for Today's Medical Schools. Further, the author organizes the presentations so that toward the end of the account, he phrases some questions. At the end of the book he gives his responses to the questions. The stories are well written, appropriate in length and interesting to read. They provoked thoughtful deliberation. The follow-up questions were added opportunities to explore my own attitudes and opinions. I appreciated the thoughtful approach that Dr Griner practiced and described and his ethics in dealing with the medical issues faced over many years of practice and teaching. I found this book to be interesting and thought provoking. I identified with the circumstances of many of his patients and that if in a similar situation, I might be fortunate enough to have a physician with the care, concerns, patience and intelligence of a Paul Griner. As a lay person, married to a physician and a member of a "medical family", I can say that this book is not just for lay people, but speaks to those in the medical field as well. My husband, now retired, read the book and found it of great interest. He reminisced over situations similar to ones he had faced and he

exclaimed over how helpful the book could be in working with medical students as they begin their experiences in a patient care setting. This book contains stories of absorbing interest and is one to be shared with others.

This book will benefit people in the healthcare profession the most, but not only. I am not a physician, just a layman interested in the world of medicine. Having had the good fortune to obtain Dr. Griner's book, I read it with the greatest interest and have learned more about the inner work of the practice of medicine than ever before. This book helps you to see your own medical situation through the eyes of a physician and is most useful to understand his or her actions. The honesty and candidness with which Dr. Griner has written his book is truly astounding. The case histories with the subsequent medical decisions are fascinating and compel you to think what you would do in a similar situation. - Don't be afraid of the medical terms you don't understand, Wikipedia is an excellent help. This book is a fountain of knowledge and captivating to read.

I read Dr. Griner's book without putting it down. It is insightful, inspiring and clearly demonstrates a commitment to self-improvement. His caring for those he is entrusted with is evident. His devotion to improving care for his patients through introspection, better instructional methods and suggestions for institutional advancement as well are exceptional. But, I am not a doctor or healthcare professional! I am an airline pilot, retired military officer and my education is primarily in computer science. I found myself relating Dr. Griner's stories to situations I have encountered or might encounter in my professional career. I found strong parallels between the medical community and the aviation community. In particular, Dr. Griner's suggestions relating to process review and performance review. The aviation world has already made great progress in resource management training and performance review. We have a long way to go, but the safety record of air travel reflects the success of such programs. I feel this book has something for everyone. I would highly recommend it to anyone - but it should be required reading for all those interested in or currently in a medical profession.

The book encompasses a series of personal stories from the author's own practice. Even though the stories take place in the past, with different technological dependence than today's medicine, the author is capable to present ethical and emotional aspects that are timeless. At the end of each chapter there are questions to be answered by residents and students that will aid these values to sink into the heart. At the end of the book the author answers these questions in an organized

way. A very good tool for a residence program regardless of the specialty field.

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