



The Spattered White Coat: Intense experiences which formed a young doctor

Edmund Messina MD

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What is it really like to go through medical training? The Spattered White Coat is the author's account of life as a medical student and intern in the some of the most intense urban hospitals, under the most demanding of teachers, in the setting of drastic social change, escalating drug use and exploding crime statistics. Lessons in life are discreet events. Some are wonderful and others will break your heart. Medical training is a collection of those very events that will change a person forever. This is especially true when a young, impressionable medical student learns to be a healer of junkies, hookers, innocent victims and spoiled rich people. "He held her as she died. The nurses and I watched from a distance and I turned off the alarm on her heart monitor when it began to beep. Through my tears, I watched her dying EKG tracing slow down and stop." The deeply moving vignettes in The Spattered White Coat portray the most extreme patient experiences and adverse social forces that forged the cognitive and emotional growth of the young doctor as he passed through the wards, emergency rooms, and operating rooms of the dark and demanding world of inner-city academic medicine. The realms of intensive care and near-death experiences are explored, as is the tragedy of lives lost to addiction and ignorance. The author relates detailed and sometimes humorous stories such as The Man Who Killed a Corpse, fascinating academic tales such as The Man Without a Left Side, or tragic accounts such as The Doctor Who Was Too Smart, The Surgeon Who Couldn't Cut Straight, and dozens of others. This book will help the non-medical public understand how a doctor-in-training evolves from a naive trainee to a confident clinician, protected by a touch of evolving cynicism. The book appeals to the general non-medical public as well as clinical people. Non-medical readers will better understand how their doctors came to be; doctors and nurses will find these stories very familiar. What makes The Spattered White Coat unique is the informal conversational style that differs from other books in this genre. The easy-going voice in Dr. Messina's writing helps to demystify the medical mystique and allows the reader to better identify with the young doctor. The author conveys the joy and sense of privilege of being allowed to learn and practice medicine. This book is not bitter or angry; it conveys the author's true love of the Healing Art.

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