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Reflections

Just A Call Away

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The meaning of my name embodies the spirit of "protection"—a connection I had never truly reflected on until recently while penning this reflection. The realization stopped me in my tracks, leaving me in quiet awe of the mysterious energies that seemed to shape our paths. Perhaps this is why, in both my personal and professional circles, I've often been known as the doctor who personifies the phrase "just a call away." It dawned on me that this wasn't merely the result of my deliberate effort but rather a natural extension of who I am—an inner drive rooted deep within my being.

As they say, Ne te quaesiveris extra—do not seek outside yourself. In embracing this truth, I have spent years turning inward, allowing my journey through clinical practice and teaching to become not just a profession but an unfolding of my essence. Each patient, each lesson, each tragedy and human suffering has been a mirror—reflecting growth, compassion, and an ever-evolving commitment to the sacred act of healing and learning.

Instrumental in my journey as an emergency medical doctor and a teacher was my first day as a young physician in the emergency department who was both overwhelmed and excited. The urgency, unpredictability, rush and constant tension building with each incoming patient pinning all hopes onto us as their saviours were unlike anything I had experienced during my training.

It felt rewarding but challenging, nerve-wracking but relieving. I can never get over the smiles and gratitude, the sigh of relief and comfort in the eyes of a patient who once saw no light at the end of the tunnel, which makes me value the sacredness of human life even more. Reflecting on my journey, it becomes clear that my path has been shaped not only by the technical skills acquired in the field but also by the profound human connections that form the backbone of emergency medicine, for it is God's way of manifesting Himself through the valiant looking and treating the pains of people who are at the brink of survival. The feeling of being able to alleviate the sufferings of humans and becoming a harbinger of hope to them so that they turn back to life is

unfathomable and impossible to ever put into words.

Emergency medicine thus has shaped me in ways I could not have imagined: the decisions that need to be taken in the blink of an eye, the astuteness, the sense of impending danger, the required skills to turn the hazard away from the patient as humanly far away as possible, the need to think clearly amidst chaos; to have attained this and more, is a no small feat and it has prepared me to take life head on even outside the constant bustle and horrific sights of the emergency corridors.

I have learned that being calm, collected, and methodical in my approach was key to providing the best care for my patients despite the constant gloom of the emergency units.

Over time, this once nervous girl entering the emergency room as a trainee became increasingly passionate about teaching to share her experiences and skills with the newcomers, who she knew were as anxious as once passionate Sadaf was. I realized that

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being a professor was not just about imparting knowledge but about inspiring the next generation of emergency care providers. Blabbering on knowledge without forging human connections and understanding as a professional is something I never believed in. Soft skills for medical students are something no book no AI can impart, and therefore, I sought to blend my clinical experiences with the latest research, ensuring that students understood not only the science behind emergency medicine but also the art of patient care.

And what else could be more rewarding and cherishing for a professor than to watch her students grow from nervous beginners to confident practitioners healing lives while being compassionate?

With all the rewards that my journey so far has come with as a professor and a doctor, it would be an understatement to say that my reflections have certainly not been without challenges. The sirens blaring, the beep of the lifesaving machines building on the tension, the scared onlookers, to say 'sorry, we could only have done this'; emergency medicine is a field that does take its toll and demands resilience. It is easy and very humane to become fatigued and feel immensely overwhelmed by the constant pressure of hope while dealing with life and death experiences on a daily basis. But those challenges have been making me more empathetic and dedicated to the well-being of my patients, and in turn, I try my best to disseminate it to my students.

Looking at my journey and how far I have come, I am no less than proud of my contributions to the field and the lives I've touched, whether through direct patient care or the guidance I've provided to my students. This field has transformed me completely, and I even need to say that this change was certainly for the best! It would be unfair to show the hopeless a ray of hope and not be able to look at the light this profession brings into my personality, so this is why, with all certainty, I say that emergency medicine, with all its intensity, has given me the opportunity to be part of something much larger than myself—a community of healthcare professionals united in a common mission to save lives in critical need.