

Reflection

When You Are at the End of the Rope Tie a Knot and Hold on**Hina Latif***King Edward Medical University Lahore*

Life is a privilege. Its youthful days
Shine with the radiance of continuous Mays.
To live, to breathe, to wonder and desire,
To feed with dreams the heart's perpetual fire;

“Life” is such a wide umbrella; a word that covers many things and everyone’s experience of it is different. Life presents unique experiences to each and every one of us. It’s a blend of ups and downs, emotions and fears, desires and needs. We need shelter, food and human connection to thrive. Life is tough for most these days because of inflation, unemployment, economic instability and the morning newspaper was an open depiction of that.

“A laborer did suicide for not being able to make both ends meet.”

“A mother of three attempted suicide along with her kids because of poor domestic conditions.”

Most people complaint about the rude and unsupportive behavior of police personnel, bribery, denial of FIR etc. but humanity is above all and here is the police officer with tearful eyes, at the door of a needy citizen who called an hour ago by saying “my kids are hungry for 3 days, there is nothing to eat at home, please help if you can”. That call was totally different and indeed a strong one to jolt the walls of a department like police where you receive robbery, theft or crime complaints all the day, making the whole staff burst into tears. Deep inside they all could feel the misery and the helplessness evident from the voice of that very caller and compelled them to trace the location.

Being a doctor in a government setup brings you a lot of such real stories. You make or break every single day. The emotions that drain you at one moment and uplift you at the next. In just a glimpse of an eye you hear something so positive that makes you gather your pieces and build yourself again. This amalgam of highs and lows keeps you going and serving endlessly.

Negating all that Pandora box of thoughts, I headed to intensive care unit for my usual morning round where my team was waiting. It was full with critical patients



all around striving for life, a one fighting for a smooth breath, another one coping with arrhythmic heart, another one down with high blood sugar and in frank ketoacidosis and a middle aged with a GCS of 3/15 with hemorrhagic stroke. So many silent prayers and burst of tears these ICU walls experience daily and the situation wasn’t different this time. Moving from bed to bed with a deep discussion about the very patients, I came across a rather stable young boy, stable for an ICU I mean. How are you young man? I asked him eagerly as he was the only patient in ICU at that moment who could reply to my questions being fully conscious. Meanwhile my resident replied Mam; it's a case of Wheat pill poisoning and currently on inotropic support. After giving a final plan for his management and before moving to next patient I inquired about the pills he has taken just to confirm if there was anything I was missing.

“How many tablets did you have?” I bought two but took only one he replied. “From where did you get them? A local shop; “May I know the reason, I might help you in that regard” I asked. With tearful eyes and a furtive look he murmured “Nothing doctor.”

His mother was standing by his side, silently crying and holding his hand. In an attempt to console and counsel her she burst into tears and unfolded the story for us that she is a widow with three kids and brought them up all alone by working as house help and as a Quran teacher. The elder one is now the sole bread earner of the family. The morning of admission, he had a quarrel with his elder brother who asked him to work and earn for his family and to contribute for the marriage of their

only sister. Meanwhile his mother narrated this all, he was crying and evading with nervousness & discomfort all evident from his face. While trying to make him at ease and to cheer them up I tried to give him different options to earn if he can avail. There was a sparkle in his eyes with a wide smile on his face when I asked him to earn from free lancing and TikTok. "Oh definitely you enjoy being there on Tiktok?"

"Yes sir, he murmured."

He is hero of TikTok, that's the main reason behind his vagrancy, his mother complained.

"Why not you use that platform for a better purpose young man? What's your qualification?"

I have cleared matriculation few years back sir.

"Why not to start a tuition centre for primary level students or for kids. Do your publicity on TikTok, enjoy that too and make a smart earning if you don't find yourself comfortable in doing some manual work. And don't attempt this suicide again. Face the world bravely. You can defeat this world. We are there to help you at any level. Send me your tuition publicity videos; we will share it for you. Remember young man "When You Are at the End of the Rope, Tie a Knot and Hold On."

Sure doctor, I will not do such suicidal attempt again.

Life can be filled with both beautiful and yet tremendously tricky moments as we move through it. There's a lot going on, there always is, but it's been particularly sharp and thorny lately. In those times of struggle, obstacles, and hardship, you might ask yourself, "why is my life so hard?" This question is incredibly complex, especially when several things pile up, making it feel like you are carrying an enormous weight spiraling out of control and sometimes we need someone to put that into the words we just don't have in us. Words that make us feel heard and understood, that acknowledge our pain and how heavy life can feel. Sometimes we also need to get put back together again; to be reminded of the ways we can get through this, how we have overcome, and how, despite it all, life gives us hope. With all its sham, drudgery, and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world.

Life is just moments,

So precious and few.

Whether valued or squandered,

It's all up to you!

Did you hear about the rose that grew
from a crack in the concrete?

Proving nature's law is wrong it

learned to walk without having feet.

On way back to my office, deep thoughts were fogging my mind. Not everyone is made to fit the same clothes. Not everyone is made for the same job but this society compels you to follow others blindly without discovering your own strength and capabilities. The financial burden doesn't let most of us chase our dreams and ambitions. We need to learn that and make our young generation bloom with proper guidance and career counseling. Not everyone is required to be a doctor or an engineer to survive. There are a number of ways a noble professions to work and earn and achieve your goals. Rather than pushing this generation to follow the same old steps, they must be provided with new avenues to discover and shine. But the haste of earning and financial burdens makes this all a burden not to be handled easily by most. I wish we could do better for our future generations.

A Year Later:

Why OPD is always so rush? And sometimes quite depressing too!! Added my intern who had to break the news of terminal lung cancer to his patient. "Hmmm"... all I had to utter. The day had a depressing start when one of my rapidly improving patients suddenly became unconscious this morning and was undergoing CT at the moment. So many patients were still in line outside the consultant room waiting for their turn and it was already fifteen past one. In a glance I tried to have an idea about the number of patients sitting in front and continued to complete my examination of patient with heart failure. "You need to increase the dose of your medicine and cut down water and salt intake" I was advising that very patient when a young well-dressed boy greeted with OPD slip in his hand. Sir I want little extra time of yours, I will wait till you are free. Being over burdened by the patients I just nodded and asked him to wait at the side bench. The room was almost empty soon. Most of the patients had been checked. I asked that young boy to come and narrate his issue. What he handed over to me was an OPD slip saying follow up case of wheat pill poisoning along with old discharge card and a pamphlet of some kids academy with a highlighted theme of "When You Are at the End of the Rope, Tie a Knot and Hold On. Be a helping hand for everyone." In the blink of an eye, that ICU boy flashed into my mind. Oh you young man; congratulations you did it. I am so proud of you. Not all can see around was gratitude, in his eyes, on his face, in his smile. That dark gloomy outpatient room was all bright and colorful with a dancing universe around.

You may see me struggle,

but you won't see me fall.

Regardless if I'm weak or not,

I'm going to stand tall.

Everyone says life is easy,
but truly living it is not.

Times get hard,
people struggle
and constantly get put on the spot.
I'm going to wear the biggest smile,
even though I want to cry.
I'm going to fight to live,
even though I'm destined to die.
And even though it's hard
and I may struggle through it all,
you may see me struggle...
but you will NEVER see me fall.