

## Preface

I am a doctor and I see patients, every day. I work in primary care, which essentially means that I am the primary point of contact. When individuals have a medical issue, they become a patient. When a patient needs a service, they require a medical system. When the medical system opens a door as a point of entry, a clinician awaits. That is where I come in. I am the clinician waiting . . . the doctor in the office . . . the doctor on call . . . the doctor in the trenches.

I once worked with a physician author back in medical school. It was an interesting experience to pick his brain about how (and why) he practiced medicine and also wrote books. When I asked him how he did it he said it was simple, “Every day for six months I spent fifteen minutes early in the morning writing. Six months later, I had an unedited manuscript.”

I’ve always wanted to write a book and felt like I had much to share. So I tried it, and it worked. I committed fifteen minutes every morning at 4 a.m. to writing, and did this every single day (work days, weekends, vacations, every day) for four consecutive months. In the end, I held a manuscript of 50,000 words.

Through my teaching experiences to date, I’ve also encountered many medical learners, students, and residents of all levels and from all walks of life, people who I thought would make excellent contributions to the book. One lady in particular, Emily, is an individual whom I’ve worked with often, and realized that she was perfect for this endeavour. She shared with me many thought-provoking perspectives on life and

medicine. She amazed me. I knew then that she had to contribute to the book.

Emily, now a resident doctor in family medicine, was a former student of mine in multiple settings. I taught her at all levels during her medical school experience at McMaster University. She had scars on her arms which presumably were from previous self-harm incidents, and when I asked her if they were, our conversation bloomed.

Emily is very insightful, intelligent, and reflective. She was able to engage in dialogue about some fairly difficult and dark times in her past. Initially I think this proposition scared her, but after some nudging she agreed. Emily provided me with ten compelling chapters, and I am so fortunate that she did. Her thoughts and views are well articulated and you will find her insights, from the perspective of a medical student, scattered throughout the coming pages.

This book is about family and academic medicine. It's a memoir of sorts with story-telling and reflection, as well as a slice of life advice. The stories are true and accurate, with patients' particulars omitted of course. I talk about both positive and negative experiences and how they contributed to my growth and learning as a person while winding my way through the medical system. Some chapters are concise, others more detailed.

I encourage medical and non-medical people to read this book. It's my hope it will shed light into our profession, and what we actually encounter on a daily basis. I should clearly state how fortunate I am to be in medicine, at the same time acknowledging how challenging the daily grind can be.

The title is a metaphor to describe what it feels like sometimes to walk a day in the shoes of a family and academic physician. I hope not to be overly cynical but rather honest, not jaded but genuinely reflective, not a pessimist but a realistic optimistic.

And finally I wish to thank my publisher, Sheri and I C Publishing, for their fantastic support and wise guidance in producing this final product. Without writing, my thoughts are merely collections in my mind, and without my publisher my writing is merely scribbles on paper.

Before you indulge, please remember that success is not a destination to be chosen. Rather, we shall choose, without any guarantee, to endure and overcome the struggles and endeavours that may or may not lead us to success. Always enjoy the process, not just the destination.

—Dr. Jason Profetto, MD, CCFP