

# On Grieving during Residency

Category: Loss

written by Bibhuti Adhikari | October 17, 2025

As time passes, I no longer remember her face or her name. But I know what brought her in. And I clearly recall how, as an intern, I walked into her grim hospital room, where two tired parents sat by her bedside: a young woman with a small pimple patch on her forehead.

She was twenty-four and had no chronic conditions—but now no sign of life. I'd spent six months as an intern at that point and was still learning to become a doctor. I'd written down all I could find about her medical history and headed toward her room, not for a second pausing to reflect on the fact that she was just twenty-four.

I go to bed some nights with a pimple patch on my own forehead. A small, silly act I call self-care for my acne, it's first thing that peels off me as I start my morning. Now, two years after my encounter with that young patient, all I can remember is thinking how there would be no more nights or mornings like those for her.

I walked into her room armed with data, but as I walked out I was not the same physician. I still grieve for her, someone I barely knew except through her medical problems. I carry the love she had for herself, and that I have for myself, in our little act of self-care. It's a strange kind of grief—confusing at first, quiet now, settled into acceptance.

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