

I Give

Category: Holding On

written by Jessica Faraci | February 14, 2019

I give her my sympathy: my self-control and dignity as I listen to her story of how her ear has been hurting for one day and she just can't take the pain anymore.

I give him my patience: my knowledge and my experience as I put together the puzzle of his complex, nine-month hospital admission in a fifteen-minute acute visit.

I give her my compassion: as I politely but firmly tell her that I am not willing to prescribe chronic opiates for her fibromyalgia and depression.

I give them my time: cleaning out my in-law's cluttered, dusty house on my first vacation in five months of eighty-hour work weeks and three-day calls.

I give her my love: rocking my screaming baby, trying to soothe her as another tooth breaks through tender gums.

I give and I give: fighting against time and the never-ending stream of work that flows from my body like an opened artery.

I give myself away, and there is nothing left.

I wrote this story-poem at the peak of my burnout, which occurred during my residency training in family medicine. From my experience, I learned that job burnout is a very real and serious issue facing health professionals, especially resident physicians.

I wish I had learned some secret preventative or cure that I could pass on to others, to save them from the struggle and the pain. To all those facing burnout right now, all I can say is this: keep holding on.

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