Meditation in Medicine

Category: Coping
written by Ellen Zhang | August 6, 2022

The sun shone brightly reflecting the ripples off the pond. Closing my eyes, I tried meditation for the first time in a long time. Balancing caring for patients in the wards, being evaluated by my team, and applying for residency, I felt more stressed than I had been in a long time.

As I inhaled and exhaled deeply, the worries in my thoughts dissipated slowly. Instead, I was able to hear small, innocuous sounds I didn't notice before: rustling of the leaves, fluttering of insects around me, and melody of various birds coming together to create a symphony of nature. In this vein, I also took inventory of my body: the knot in my right shoulder, anxiety netting inside my throat, and aching in my thighs.

As the minutes felt like hours, I slowly opened my eyes as the meditation finished. The brightness briefly jarring. In those moments, I realized I did my best to listen to my patients in the clinic, listen to the agenda of my team, and the advice of my mentors and friends. Yet, I wasn't very good at listening to myself, whether it be my emotional and mental state or my physical body.

As I rolled my shoulders back and left the pond, I breathed a sigh of gratitude for these moments. While the sounds of nature are so important to the world, they are often drowned out by the roaring of engines, cacophony of traffic, and the bustle and hustle of everyday life. At the same time, the "sounds" of my own health, physical and mental, are sometimes drowned out by the artificial constructs of my own thoughts. I resolved to listen a little more and to take better care of myself so that I might better care for those around me.

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