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Hearing the Music in Medicine

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Hearing the Music in Medicine

Being *present* can be challenging as a medical intern. Third year is the confluence of haphazard preparation and apprehension. From comforting lecture halls to being submerged in the depths of the hospital, the transition can be quite drastic. Surrounded by profoundly intelligent individuals, practicing medicine can be intimidating. My perspective started to shift when on one dreary morning in October during a surgical rotation I started to *listen* attentively. The convergence of various sounds in the operating room at 7:30AM in the morning creating a symphony. From the beeping noises of the anesthetic monitor to the crisp noise of the surgeon placing the steel scalpel back on the tray – it was all music. Growing up, I was always enamored with music. If I wasn't playing an instrument, then I was listening to one on my headphones. I've always been enthralled by how music can heighten your senses and awareness to the present moment. When playing an instrument, you're fully captivated by the task at hand and the delightful positive reinforcement of hitting the right notes. Similarly, when I started getting caught up in the chaos of the hospital, I was able to ground myself by listening closely to my surroundings. Songs that we listen to tend to have a theme, whether it's about heartbreak or fond memories. When you break down each sound in the hospital to its true essence, the underlying theme is of care and compassion. Each sound is in some way related to the care of the patient. The beeping anesthetic monitor was to ensure to patient's vital signs were being closely monitored. The sharp sound of the steel scalpel was from the surgeon meticulously removing cancerous tissue from the patient. The buzzing sound of the operating room lights were so that staff can adequately visualize the procedure and prevent error. The swooshing noise was an analgesic medication being drawn up to reduce the patient's pain. The theme is care. The theme is compassion. Music is medicine. Medicine is art.