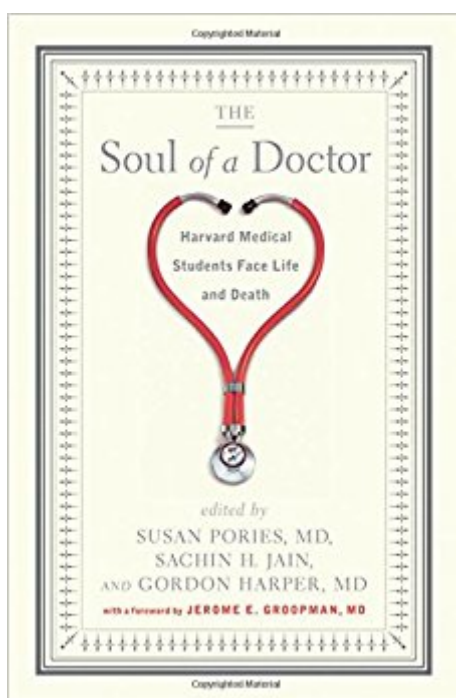


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# The Soul Of A Doctor: Harvard Medical Students Face Life And Death



## Synopsis

By the time most of us meet our doctors, they've been in practice for a number of years. Often they seem aloof, uncaring, and hurried. Of course, they're not all like that, and most didn't start out that way. Here are voices of third-year students just as they begin to take on clinical responsibilities. Their words focus on the odd transition students face when they must deal with real people in real time and in real crises and when they must learn to put aside their emotions to make quick, accurate, and sensitive decisions. Their decisions aren't always right, and the consequences can be life-altering-for all involved. Moving, disturbing, and candid, their true stories show us a side of the profession that few ever see, or could even imagine. They show, often painfully, how medical students grow up, right at the bedside.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As Groopman states in his foreword, "each interaction between a doctor and a patient is a story." The moving stories of 44 doctors-in-training collected by two M.D.s (Pories and Harper) and one medical student (Jain), all at Harvard, are accounts written by medical students. Their tales convey lessons both emotional and medical, from learning how to communicate and empathize with those afflicted by illness to ways to ease suffering and loss. In one heartrending incident, David Y. Hwang describes a marine's rage followed by tears on hearing that his wife was going to die, while the wife herself remains in calm denial. Rajesh G. Shah explores how he learned from his first patient to overcome his judgmental attitude about those so beset by anxiety they cannot function without

medication. In a particularly self-revelatory (and anonymous) piece, a student describes the endless hazing experience at the hands of interns and residents and the student's need to constantly manage a sense of insecurity. These are thoughtful and illuminating accounts of beginning physicians under stress, growing and changing as they progress through their chosen field. (June 2) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Adult/High School — This collection of essays written by medical students going from the classroom to their first experiences with live patients gives personal views of the issues doctors face. From communicating diagnoses to patients to balancing medical protocol with patient needs, medical students have a unique perspective. They see established procedures with new eyes and question everything. Each essay conveys a pivotal moment or experience for its author. One individual learning to take medical histories watched a video of himself interacting with patients and realized that he never looked up and was brusque to the point of rudeness. Teens exploring medical careers will find much to think about here. — Charlotte Bradshaw, San Mateo County Library, CA Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

I am entering my first year of Medical school and this was a required summer reading assignment, but I have to say that it was worth it. This book is a collection of essays that tell the stories of actual students and their experiences with patients, healthcare and with finding themselves as physicians and caregivers. The stories aren't always happy but they are realistic and I appreciate the honesty.

This book gives an inside look at the experiences of many third year medical students as they endure the clinical rotations. Each chapter is written by a different medical student. The title is quite appropriate, as well as reading the nuts and bolts of learning to be a doctor, the reader gets a glimpse of the inner thoughts, the "soul" of these medical students. I recommend this book especially for relatives and friends of medical students, to get a feel for what the med student is experiencing, both the visible activities, and invisible thought process of the future doctors in training.

As a long time physician, I found this an interesting read. For the lay person, it highlights many of the struggles that physicians deal with as we learn that medicine is an art and not a science. The old training was to distance yourselves from the patient emotionally but luckily for me, my father was a

primary care MD in the mold of Marcus Welby and the personal touch is valuable in every specialty. It would have been nice to get a little more background on each author. Also, this is Harvard Medical School so the experience might be skewed by being at an academic mecca.

This collection of "havened reflections" (to quote the Epilogue) illuminate the transformational experience that each medical student must go through. I strongly recommend it to relatives, friends, and spouses of young physicians. It may provide insight into things your young physician-in-training cannot articulate.

Fast and easy read. What drew me to this book was the intention behind it- to provide the life and death view of medical students. I appreciated the different perspectives of each individual author, but I didn't feel that each essay had such an epiphany as to the realization of said life and death and the life lessons they learned. I expected a little more depth from the students and what they learned. Nonetheless, it was a nice easy read.

This book is fantastic. Insightful memoirs about the demoralizing defeats and glorious victories of medicine all told through the eyes of medical students who each have their own unique reasons for pursuing a career dedicated to a life of learning and service.

Interesting and heartfelt, views of young physicians initial experience in several different aspects of medicine. However, since these are essays by several different interns, residents, and new doctors, the writing is often uneven, and more or a college essay assignment than a professional exercise in writing. That being said, it does provide an intimate unjaded look into the profession.

We like to think of our doctors as wise, seasoned, experienced. These essays by the med students who are indeed the next generation of seasoned, confident doctors proves how the journey requires soul. Sobering, because it is also clear some of them will not become successful in their search.

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