

dear residents

The Currency of Trust

July 19, 2026

Dear Residents,

Trust may be the most important currency of residency training.

I don't mean the trust that develops between you and your patients, although that relationship is among the most sacred in medicine. I mean the trust between a residency program and its residents.

Trust is not assumed as a given. It is earned gradually and deliberately through consistent actions that align with our words.

Growing up in Pakistan, I learned early that there were some things you simply could not take for granted. Drinking water had to be boiled. Even when the traffic light turned green, you looked both ways because there was no guarantee that cross traffic would stop. These were not reflections on individual people. They were reminders that trust in systems had not yet been fully earned.

When I came to the United States, one of the things that genuinely surprised me was that people drank water straight from the tap. It sounds like a trivial observation, but to me it represented something much larger. I realized that many of the things we rarely think about in daily life depend on systems that work so consistently that we almost forget they exist. Trust becomes invisible because it is reliably earned.

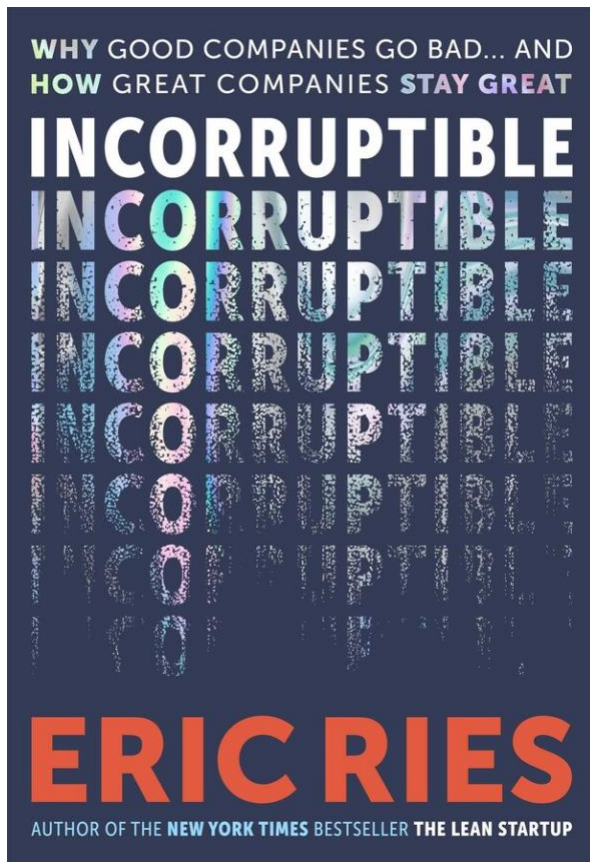
Residency programs are no different. We notice trust most when it is absent. When residents no longer believe they will be heard, that their education will be protected, or that their well-being matters, the culture begins to erode.

That trust is reflected in the confidence that your program will advocate for fair compensation and benefits, protect your learning environment, and invest in your professional development. It is the belief that when you bring us a concern, we will listen carefully, respond thoughtfully, and, whenever possible, solve the problem. It is knowing that our decisions are guided not by convenience, but by what is best for your education and, ultimately, for your patients.

One of the guiding principles of this residency has been a simple belief: patient-centered care is only possible through resident-centered learning. Patients receive the best care when their physicians are well taught, well supported, intellectually curious, and able to bring their best selves to work. Caring for residents and caring for patients are not competing priorities; they are inseparable.

As I've been reading Eric Ries's [Incorruptible](#), I've been struck by a recurring lesson. Organizations that earn the trust of their people, by investing in their growth, supporting their well-being, and thinking

beyond the next quarterly result, consistently outperform those that treat people as interchangeable resources. Trust is not simply a moral virtue; it is a strategic advantage.



Eric Ries argues that organizations don't lose their way all at once. They drift, one seemingly reasonable compromise at a time. Residency programs face the same risk. Every request to truncate protected educational time, every pressure to prioritize today's efficiency over tomorrow's physician, may seem small in isolation. But over time, those decisions define a culture. Ries compares this short-term thinking to gravity, a force that pulls every organization toward expediency unless it is intentionally designed to resist it. Trust is how organizations resist gravity.

Medicine is not immune to these pressures. Healthcare is becoming increasingly complex, financially constrained, and operationally driven. There is understandable pressure to improve efficiency, increase productivity, and do more with less. These are real challenges, and every health system must address them.

But residency programs must be careful not to confuse efficiency with excellence.

The strongest programs are not built by extracting the maximum amount of work from their residents. They are built by developing extraordinary physicians. Protecting educational time, redesigning schedules to optimize learning, advocating for fair benefits, investing in educational resources, and listening when residents tell us something isn't working are not acts of generosity. They are investments in trust.

Trust does not require agreement with every decision. It requires confidence that decisions are made thoughtfully, transparently, and with your best interests at heart.

That, perhaps more than anything else, is the enduring work of a residency program.

Best regards,

Dino Kazi