“Caring is what we do best.”
“Curing is what we do best.”
Words shaping thought

- Theodore Roethke
- Frank Luntz
U.S. healthcare in the digital age

Pulling the lid off
Slowing medical education & clinical care

- The “new” tools
- Narrative medicine
- Reflective writing nested in curricula
- Columbia/UTSW
Reflective essays: excerpts

“What I do know now is that we must do our best not to miss the things that we can fix despite the tendency of wanting to get these patients out of the office as fast as possible, which happens more than we wish to think.”
Reflective essays: excerpts

“Basically, [what I’m learning is] this: we have to be there for our patients. And surprisingly, that's often enough. My intern on surgery told me that patients usually preferred a “nice” doctor to a “good” one. These words are the truth, I'm learning. We can prescribe all the right medicines, do all the right tests, but if we don't take the extra minutes to validate our patient's suffering, sit across from them, look into their eyes, listen to their words, then in their view we haven't done our whole job.”
“From reading my resident’s behavior toward the patient, Mrs. C clearly became the purulent ulcer on her right calf: unkempt and unclean. Two years into residency, it seemed my resident was completely jaded. Though I cannot vouch for Mrs. C’s behavior on her previous visit with my resident, I can choose to maintain a positive attitude toward the patient. I’ve decided that despite my resident’s general negativity on staff, patients and other doctors, I would form my own opinion about each patient and not allow the previous experiences of others to suction out all my empathy.”
“When I asked the basic question of how her day went - she gave me the answer to her problems.”
Writing the reflective essay

• No how-to manual

• Starts well before the blank screen
Forced space for stories
Thank you

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