

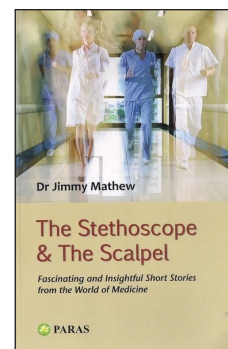
Book Review

The stethoscope and the scalpel

Jimmy Mathews

Edition

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Dr. Jimmy Mathew's 'The Stethoscope and The Scalpel' is dedicated to his Parents, who sought to bring out the best, the wife who 'caught' and kept, the daughters who brought meaning, and the Patients, who taught all that was needed to know.

The first chapter deals with the scourge of 'RESERVATIONS', which is topical, as our parliament is about to pass an amendment to the constitution giving sanction to reservations in promotions also!

Students' politics, strikes, fastings are highlighted in the second chapter, which reveals the role of "leaders", who never get injured and finally effect a 'Volte face' in life.

I was educated to learn that "The Happiness Factor" is documented in "Happiness Research" and the key equation is "attainment versus expectation", in Chapter 3, which I'm confident, will quench the thirst of many happiness seekers.

Chapters 4-12 details the author's experiences with 'Repeaters', 'Lawyers and Forensic Sciences', 'Professors whose words flew clean over listeners' heads'. M.B.B.S could also lead to M.B.A, I.A.S, M.N.Cs, "Psyche influencing the 'Soma'", "Absent radial pulse and C.P.R", "O and G Vis – a-vis Gynecologic Surgery", "Psychiatry = All the disorders of thinking and behaviour not properly

understood", "Beer = an analgesic all of which add to our WISDOM"!

"Every surgery is a controlled assault" is the lesson taught in Chapter 13, dealing with 3 life saving emergencies.

The futility of trying to save Burns victims with over 50% of T.B.S.A is the painful truth in almost all centre in India. Added to that, that vast number of "suicide burns" do not survive leaves most of us, inept. The answer lies in prevention. This is the message in Chapter 14.

"The acute abdomen" 'the last bastion of Clinical Medicine' teaches us much more than surgical nuances. Questions like "Is there a God?", "Do miracles exist?" are answered in Chapter 16!

"Red Tapism even in an M.C.I. office is a reality. Do we accept it or do we opt for a changing world" is sought to be answered in Chapter 17!

The apologetic term 'Clinical detachment' and the sage's dictum – "Our job is to try and save life and not play GOD. We have no right to be judgmental. Just do your job" are well brought out in Chapter 18!

Meanings of terms like "Work-life balance" and "GUPT means secret" are revealed in Chapter 19, which sermonizes, "You should aim to be happy in life more than anything else and you should think about what you want. You should ask your family also, what they want". "Sometimes it takes only one's heart, not even a full brain to come to the right decision!"

Alas! Chapter 20 exceeded authors' liberty in implicating I.I.H.R to be in Madurai! Oh! No!! Madurai was started

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and manned by one, whose name resembled that of a minor prophet in the Old Testament, whereas I.I.H.R was and is 300 miles (480 km) North-North-East in the Coast founded by one whose name is that of a Deity! Madurai never belittled anyone as “Too young to learn”.

“In 1980, Plastic surgery in India was stuck in a rut”. How very true! My only prayer is that India recovers from this rut at least in 2012!! The one sentence “Enquiry is the key to human progress” in Chapter 23 is worth its weight in Gold.

Dr. Jimmy Mathew has taken us through his personal experiences as a medical student, Intern, PG student, Registrar and finally as a 3rd generation Teacher of Plastic Surgery. This short book can be an inspiration for many aspiring surgical specialists and Plastic Surgeons. I strongly recommend every medical college library should have a copy of this book.

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