The Soul of Care: The Moral and Emotional Education of Doctors

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Noon, Thursday, January 30, 2020
Mailman Center for Child Development, Room 3023 | Light lunch provided

Caregiving is long, hard, unglamorous work—at moments joyous, more often tedious, sometimes agonizing, but it is always rich in meaning. In the face of our current political indifference and the crisis of burnout and dissatisfaction with our health-care system, I emphasize how we must ask uncomfortable questions of ourselves and of our doctors. To give care, to be “present” for someone who needs us, and to feel and show kindness are deep emotional and moral experiences, enactments of our core values, and at the heart of our professional and family relationships. The practice of caregiving teaches us what is most important in medicine and in life.

Dr. Kleinman, author of The Soul of Care: The Moral Education of a Husband and a Doctor (Penguin/Viking 2019), is a renowned and influential scholar and writer on psychiatry, anthropology, global health, and cultural and humanistic issues in medicine. Educated at Stanford Medical School, he has taught at Harvard for more than 40 years. He is professor of psychiatry and medical anthropology at Harvard Medical School and the Esther and Sidney Rabb Professor of Anthropology in Harvard’s Faculty of Arts and Sciences. He was the Fung Director of Harvard’s Asia Center from 2008 to 2016. He is the author of six other books, including The Illness Narratives: Suffering, Healing, and the Human Condition. He is a member of the National Academy of Medicine and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

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