Reader Comment

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Dear Dr. Roberts:

I thoroughly enjoyed Dr. John Fordtran’s article “A Tribute to Zeck Lieberman” in the July issue of *BUMC Proceedings*. As a former internal medicine resident at Baylor University Medical Center (1977–1980), I remember Dr. Lieberman’s exciting and learned presentations well at the weekly interdisciplinary cancer conference.

I most focused on references to Dr. Peabody and his observation that, in addition to good skills, a good physician is personal with his patients. I believe almost all patients seek a personal relationship with their medical provider, especially their primary care provider.

I sincerely believe that a patient with x-ray–confirmed lobar pneumonia who is treated appropriately with antibiotics will respond more quickly to a provider with a caring manner (e.g., someone who sits down, listens, and calls the patient by name) than a provider who is skillful but appears detached and distracted.

But, alas, the forces of today’s medical delivery system (mobile society, fragmented care, third-party payers) discourage such “personality.” It is a daily challenge for all of us, especially primary care providers, to be “impersonal with the disease and personal with the care.” I suspect Dr. Peabody would feel equally challenged in today’s medical practice.

—Ross M. Carmichael Jr., MD, FACP
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