

I was restocking the materials in the Core Rooms when a horrid stench emanated from a closed-door nearby labeled "AP-0284." I peered through the window and I saw the most scarring image that I had ever seen. Although the small, rectangle-shaped window I looked through did not provide the best viewpoint, I could instinctively tell that I was seeing a gauze-wrapped limb with blackened sausage-like fingers poking out. The worst part was that it lay detached from the patient on a metal cart nearby, seeping into a pool of blood.

The scrapes I got after falling on concrete on a hot, summer day were nothing compared to what this patient had to go through. But, I figured that if this man had to endure this bold surgery, the surgeon must have done it for a reason. These past three months of volunteering at the hospital have quickly shown me that a surgeon's values and morals are the basis of healthcare.

The patient was rolled out of the operating room, with the surgeon following closely behind. Then, they began conversing about how the surgery went. I tried to pay attention to my task at hand, but my eyes couldn't help but glance at the patient and surgeon's pure waves of laughter, watching the two talk like they have been lifelong friends reunited at last. The surgeon explained to the patient that his infection had resulted in an unprecedented arm amputation. As he was explaining carefully, the patient held on to the surgeon's words as if they were nuggets of gold. As they locked into each other's gazes, I realized that compassion was more than a mere word; it was a meaningful action that demonstrated love and broke down barriers. The patient smiled warmly and said, "I trust you with my heart, Doc."

This experience broadened my understanding of the surgical field to include the moral face of life: humanism. It is just as powerful to use the humanistic approach to heal as it is to use clinical expertise. Being a "good surgeon" also means being a "good human." There are many reasons why the healthcare field is shedding light on humanism, including unevenly distributed resources, expensive medical treatment plans, immense investments in technology, and even healthcare workers facing a vast number of mental health issues. It is important to not only memorize how to treat clinical symptoms and patients as medical record numbers but also understand the patient experiencing them. When humanistic care is practiced, better health outcomes are achieved and medical advice is followed. And in the future, an ethical structure will be created around the medical field through an increase in patient interaction.