



Practical Strategies for Narrative
Based Medicine for Our Patients,
Our learners, Ourselves

Dr. Michael Roberts MD FCFP

- NO DISCLOSURES



Learning Objectives

- Identify Practical ways to Integrate Narrative Based Medicine into patient care
- Foster Resilience using the Humanities for personal and professional well-being
- Apply Narrative Based Medicine to Teaching and Mentoring medical learners

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“Perspective”



Treatment or Meaning?



"Why do you think you cross the road?"

Medical Humanities

“a sustained interdisciplinary enquiry into aspects of medical practice, education and research expressly concerned with the human side of medicine.”

Medical Humanities

Includes several fields:

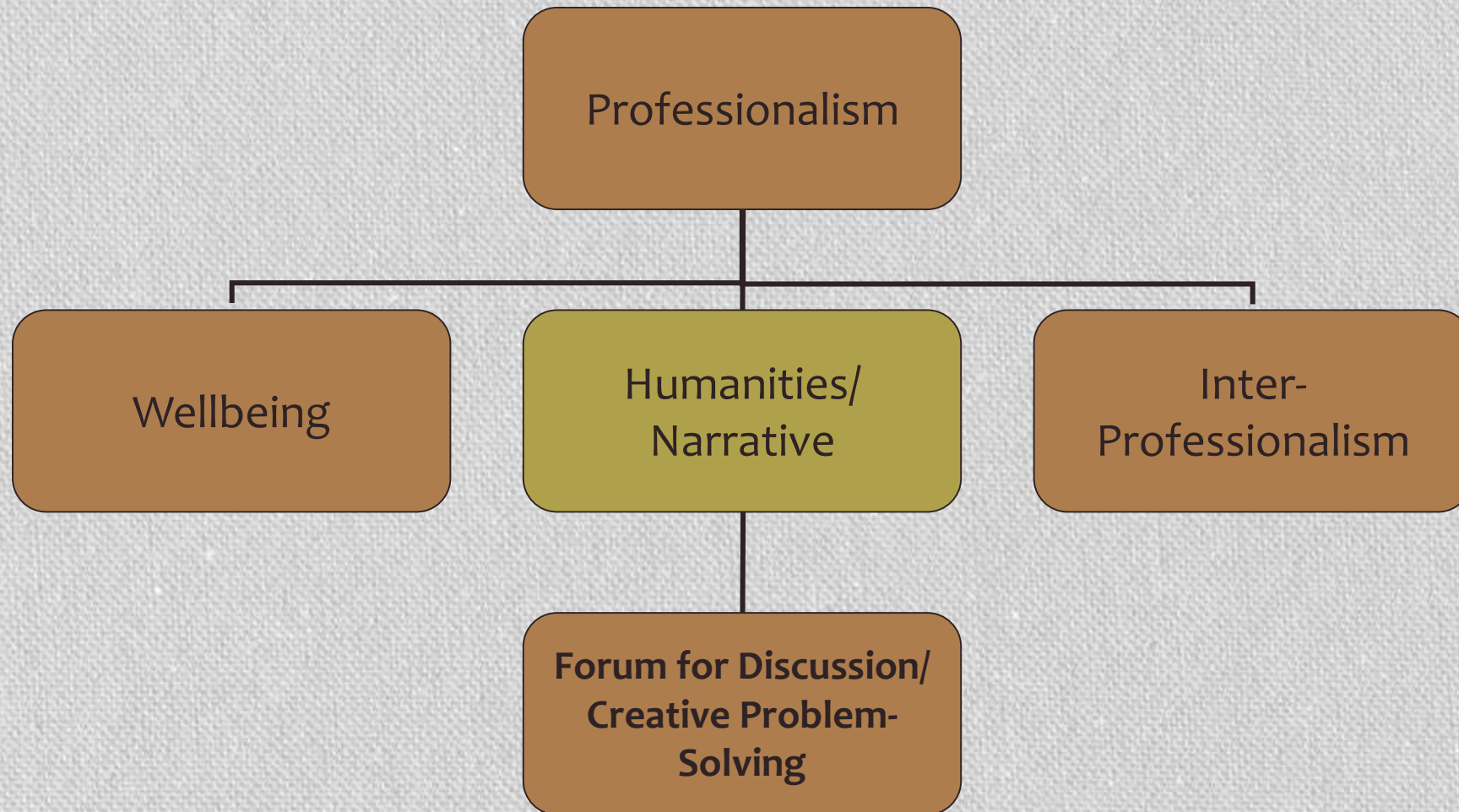
- biomedical
- philosophical
- historical
- artistic
- literary
- anthropological
- sociological



Medical Humanities as a Solution

1. Reducing the gap between biomedicine and the human sciences, such as philosophy, history, sociology and anthropology;
2. Facilitating interdisciplinary teaching and research;
3. Promoting a patient-centered approach to medical care;
4. Counteracting professional burnout;
5. Reducing biomedical hubris; and
6. Equipping doctors to meet moral challenges not “covered” by biomedicine.

Healthcare Humanities





An Approach to Visual Art

REALLY SEEING IS A VITAL
SKILL FOR HEALTH
PROFESSIONALS





Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS)

www.VisualThinkingStrategies.org

Abigail Housen and Philip Yenawine

Three open ended questions:

What's going on in this picture?

What do you see that makes say that?

What more can we find?

Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS)

Facilitation techniques:

Paraphrase neutrally
Point at the area being discussed
Linking and framing learner comments

Narrative Medicine

The ability to acknowledge, absorb, interpret and be moved by stories of illness.



Poetry in the Waiting Room

Rx for Poetry

A poem can offer a moment of reflection, something soothing for the heart or a way to engage with what life throws you. Whether you've come for health care or you work here, take a minute on your journey and get a poetry prescription for what ails you.

Mount Sinai's poet-in-residence **Ronna Bloom** will be dispensing poetry prescriptions in the Family Medicine Waiting Room.

RONNA BLOOM, POET-IN-RESIDENCE
MOUNT SINAI HOSPITAL
RAY D. WOOLF DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY MEDICINE
LEROVIC BUILDING, 4TH FLOOR, 60 MURRAY STREET, BOX 25
TORONTO, ONTARIO M5T 3L5
T: 416-586-4800 F: 416-586-3175

NAME: *John Doe* DATE: *January 28, 2014*


Rx **No Poem**
There is no poem to hold the width,
the breadth, the depth, the time,
the words, the sounds, the colours.
No poem
to catch the light, the heat
the radiator noises. There is
no poem for what we did,
or where we went, and how we
got here; and now,
no poem
to let us go.

Ronna Bloom
Cloudy with a Fire in the Basement
Pedlar Press, 2012

Ronna Bloom, Poet

SIGNATURE

REFILL 1 2 3 4 5 PRN

 RX001

Where: 4th floor 60 Murray Street

When: Tuesday January 28th from 1:30 to 3:00 pm.

**This event is open to patients, caregivers, family
and staff. Please stop by!**

Poetry in the Consulting Room

Poet-in-Residence
MOUNT SINAI HOSPITAL
RAY D. WOLF DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY MEDICINE
LEBOVIC BUILDING, 4TH FLOOR, 80 MURRAY STREET, BOX 25
TORONTO, ONTARIO M5T 3L9
T: 416 596 4600 F: 416 596 5175

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Rx

Steve and me

- He was in intractable pain from his herniated disc. It made him want to die. We had tried everything medically possible to find relief.
- We both reached the end of our options together. We were getting frustrated with one another.
- I thought how can we really speak to Steve's suffering.
- I asked Steve if he would be willing to try something unconventional, I asked him if he would be comfortable hearing a poem.
- I went to my computer and read him *The Wild Geese* by Mary Oliver

Wild Geese

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
For a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.
Tell me about your despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting --
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

- Mary Oliver


- After reading the poem, our appointment become very quiet
- There was a great stillness in the air.
- We had a moment of grace together.
- Steve felt a little better.
- I suggested while I couldn't think of any other pain medication,
- I could suggest a poetry prescription.
- I invited Steve to write his own poetry.
- The next visit we began with a poem by Steve called Living with Pain.
- I asked Steve how did it feel to write this poem.

Living In pain

- Living in pain, is like living in shame.
- To live in pain, makes you feel like in life, there will be no gain.
- No forward gear just neutral and fear.
- Fear that it will not end,
- Fear that things are not just around the bend.
- Life just stands still.
- Making me feel like I'll never be free of this ill.
- It seems that everyone is leaping past me.
- Sometimes by leaps of two and three.
- While I lay here in my cot.
- My mind goes into thought
- Thoughts like, will my life move on!?
- Will this pain ever be gone!?
- But I suppose I need to have hope.
- For without it, I cannot cope.
- Cope with the fact that for now, life does stand still.
- But I guess it is not my fault that I am ill.

- *I can only hope that some day.*
- *This awful pain will go away.*
- *I use this hope take me through the day.*
- *So I can then get to the night when I can pray.*
- *Pray this pain will soon be gone, so I can change gear and start to move on.*
- *I will leave you with my prayers of many layers.*
- *Please god, help me to not feel so bad.*
- *I have two kids who really need their dad.*
- *Please god give me back my life.*
- *So I can have a dance with my beautiful wife.*
- *Please god I am way too young in years.*
- *So see my tears, and take away all my pain and fears.*
- *For if you help me be free.*
- *I will repay you by being an outstanding me.*
- *Amen*

Steve B.



An Approach to a Literary Text

**CLOSE READING IS ONE OF THE SKILLS
EMPHASIZED IN NARRATIVE MEDICINE AND
NARRATIVE-BASED HEALTHCARE.**

**NARRATIVE COMPETENCE-THE ABILITY TO
ACKNOWLEDGE, ABSORB, INTERPRET AND
ACT ON THE STORIES AND PLIGHTS OF
OTHERS –RITA CHARON**

Kindness

- By Martina Scholtens MD
- CMAJ March 8, 2011 pp183-4



The Guest House

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.
Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.
The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing and invite them in.
Be grateful for whatever comes.
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

Jellaludin Rumi,
translation by Coleman Barks

The Stethoscope

Through it,
over young women's tense abdomens,
I have heard the sound of creation
and, in a dead man's chest, the silence before creation began.

Should I
pray therefore? Hold this instrument in awe
and aloft a procession of banners?
Hang this thing in the interior
of a cold, mushroom-dark church?

Should I
kneel before it, chant an apophthegm
from a small text? Mimic priest or rabbi,
the swaying noises of religious men?
Never! Yet I could praise it.

I should
by doing so celebrate my own ears,
by praising them praise speech at midnight
when men become philosophers;
laughter of the sane and insane;

night cries
of injured creatures, wide-eyed or blind;
moonlight sonatas on a needle;
lovers with doves in their throats; the wind
travelling from where it began.

Dannie Abse

Talking to the Family

My white coat waits in the corner
like a father.

I will wear it to meet the sister
in her white shoes and organza dress
in the live of winter.

The milkless husband
holding the baby.

I will tell them.

They will put it together
and take it apart.
Their voices will buzz.
The cut ends of their nerves
will curl.

I will take off the coat,
drive home,
and replace the light bulb in the hall.

- John Stone, MD Atlanta, Georgia

Unpacking the text...

- Read the text aloud
- Pay attention to words, images, feelings
- How is language being used?
- What themes emerge from the text?
- Any reflections/practice points



An Approach to Film

THE DOCTOR-The First Exam

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YZsfdYBllao>





An Approach to Writing

WRITING DOWN THE BONES

WHY WRITE A STORY?

-
-
-
-

ATTENTION
REPRESENTATION
AFFILIATION

WRITING EXERCISE

Post-in-Residence
MOUNT SINAI HOSPITAL
RAY D. WONG DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY MEDICINE
LEBOVIC BUILDING 4TH FLOOR, 80 MURRAY STREET, BOX 28
TORONTO, ONTARIO M5T 2S2
T: 416 593-4000 F: 416 593-5175

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Rx

SIGNATURE

HELL 0 1 2 3 4 5 PM MOUNT SINAI HOSPITAL Health and Well Lived Health Complex 1000

The one thing I can do to take better care of myself ...

Appreciative Inquiry

Writer reads his/her story to group

Writer listens in silence to feedback from group

Group responds with appreciative feedback

Strengths/Comments/Possibilities

Writer chooses to respond to feedback

Story Water

A story is like water
That you heat for your bath.
It takes messages between the fire and your skin. It lets them meet,
and it cleans you!

Very few can sit down
in the middle of the fire itself,
like a salamander, or Abraham.
We need intermediaries.

A feeling of fullness comes,
but usually it takes some bread
to bring it.

Beauty surrounds us,
but usually we need to be walking
in a garden to know it.

The body itself is a screen
to shield and partially reveal
the light that's blazing
inside your presence.

Water, stories, the body,
all the things we do, are mediums
that hide and show what's hidden.

Study them,
and enjoy this being washed
with a secret we sometimes know,
and then not.

– Rumi