



What Patients Say, What Doctors Hear

By Danielle Ofri



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Can refocusing conversations between doctors and their patients lead to better health?

Despite modern medicine's infatuation with high-tech gadgetry, the single most powerful diagnostic tool is the doctor-patient conversation, which can uncover the lion's share of illnesses. However, what patients say and what doctors hear are often two vastly different things.

Patients, anxious to convey their symptoms, feel an urgency to "make their case" to their doctors. Doctors, under pressure to be efficient, multitask while patients speak and often miss the key elements. Add in stereotypes, unconscious bias, conflicting agendas, and fear of lawsuits and the risk of misdiagnosis and medical errors multiplies dangerously.

Though the gulf between what patients say and what doctors hear is often wide, Dr. Danielle Ofri proves that it doesn't have to be. Through the powerfully resonant human stories that Dr. Ofri's writing is renowned for, she explores the high-stakes world of doctor-patient communication that we all must navigate. Reporting on the latest research studies and interviewing scholars, doctors, and patients, Dr. Ofri reveals how better communication can lead to better health for all of us.

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Editorial Review

Review

“Her revealing doctor-patient stories often make her seem like the doctor that every patient wishes they had, and she draws on patient accounts to illustrate the problems that can arise in communication between doctor and patient. This book, however, goes far beyond Ofri’s personal experiences with patients. She delves into the relevant research on communication, citing some ingenious experiments on listening...A much-needed, convincing argument that, regarding doctor-patient communication, the stakes are very high and that what patients say is all too often not what doctors hear—and vice versa.”

—*Library Journal*

“With disarming candor and penetrating insight, Dr. Ofri illuminates the enormous power of what might seem at first a mundane and insignificant element in the practice of medicine: communication.”

—Deborah Tannen, professor of linguistics at Georgetown University and author of *You Just Don’t Understand* and *You’re Wearing THAT?*

“With the meticulous care of Oliver Sacks and the deep humanism of Atul Gawande, Danielle Ofri has written a book about the role of communication in medicine. She presents compelling evidence that even as doctoring appears to be dominated by technology, the human, affective relationship is at the very center of responsible practice.”

—Andrew Solomon, author of *Far from the Tree*

Praise for Danielle Ofri

“Taut, vivid prose...She writes for a lay audience with a practiced hand.”

—Katie Hafner, *New York Times*

“A gifted storyteller.”

—Sarah Halzack, *Washington Post*

“The world of patient and doctor exists in a special sacred space. Danielle Ofri brings us into that place where science and the soul meet. Her vivid and moving prose enriches the mind and turns the heart.”

—Jerome Groopman, author of *How Doctors Think*

“I highly recommend [Danielle Ofri’s work] for physicians, would-be doctors, and anyone interested in medicine in all its behind-the-scenes glory.”

—Sandeep Jauhar, author of *Intern: A Doctor’s Initiation*

“Danielle Ofri’s sensitivity to every aspect of her patients’ lives is immensely impressive and moving. If only more doctors could be (and write) like this!”

—Oliver Sacks, author of *Awakenings*

“[Ofri’s writing] about the emotional life of doctors and their patients, captivated me so much...Read[s] like a deftly crafted and luminously written novel.”

—Caroline Leavitt, *Boston Globe*

About the Author

Danielle Ofri, MD, PhD, is an associate professor of medicine at the New York University School of Medicine and has cared for patients at New York's Bellevue Hospital for more than two decades. She is the author of, most recently, *What Doctors Feel: How Emotions Affect the Practice of Medicine*, as well as the critically acclaimed *Singular Intimacies*, *Incidental Findings*, *Medicine in Translation*, and the e-book original volume *Intensive Care*. Writing in the *Guardian* in the spring of 2016, Andrew Solomon singled out Ofri as the only woman among an extraordinary new generation of doctor writers, saying, "Ofri has produced four impressive books and numerous articles, all striking for their reversion to empathy, their willingness to sense not only the physical life of a patient, but also the emotional." She lives in New York City.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Danny Johnson:

Spent a free the perfect time to be fun activity to complete! A lot of people spent their leisure time with their family, or their own friends. Usually they performing activity like watching television, going to beach, or picnic in the park. They actually doing ditto every week. Do you feel it? Do you wish to something different to fill your personal free time/ holiday? May be reading a book is usually option to fill your free of charge time/ holiday. The first thing you ask may be what kinds of publication that you should read. If you want to try look for book, may be the guide untitled *What Patients Say, What Doctors Hear* can be fine book to read. May be it is usually best activity to you.

John Sorrells:

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Pearl Miller:

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