

**University of Health Sciences**  
**Project Professionalism Punjab**  
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**What is your legacy to the future generations of doctors?**

This is an open letter to the Consultants, Senior Registrars, and Big Bosses of all Hospitals, Clinics and Wards across this country and also across the globe.

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**“Dear Sir/ Madam!**

I keep you and your position in high awe and solemn amazement and am rather overshadowed by that firm grimace and the number of degrees that you have very proudly displayed against your name on the nameplate. I hold in high esteem the large number of years of your experience and these white hairs that you have obviously not turned white in the sun.

But dear Sir! All these accolades, research papers and the inscrutable jargon of yours about really complex procedures do not truly impress me, inspire me or benefit me.

I am a rather simple newbie, a fresh house officer in my first rotation, my feelings being a fear of mixture of fear, apprehension and somewhat self-doubt of whether I will be able to perform up to the mark or not.

Yes, I agree strictness and discipline is necessary but let not the dread of your sublimity become a roadblock in my learning that I feel chills in even asking a simple question.

Make the environment friendly for me to thrive, to ask questions incessantly and to learn boundlessly.

Treat me with respect and I shall respect you.

Correct me with gentleness and I will etch this in my heart to be gentle to everyone I train.

Contribute to my learning in every opportunity possible: ward rounds, teaching sessions, and case discussions. I am an empty vessel eager for being filled: fill me with the wisdom of your years of experience.

Don't just instruct me with your pedantic lectures; I am dying to perform the skills and procedures with my own hands: supervise me. Let not the fear of 'he might do something wrong' keep you from letting me perform; after all you are there to assist me in every step. Give me the confidence to perform skills and procedures and I shall soar to new heights and skies.

I live on your appreciation. Your one kind word of encouragement is sufficient to warm many winter months of mine. And your trenchant remarks about "how less I know" and "how come I have made it so far", leave bleeding wounds on my heart.

Show me how to form teams, how to work in collaboration: inculcate in me the spirit of belonging.

Instill in me through example devotion to service, the attributes of helping and supporting others generously.

Make my experience in your ward so convivial, affable and memorable that on my departure, I cannot help controlling my tears; I cannot help dearly missing those who took genuine interest in me and my coaching; those who transformed as a person and as a professional.

Let the memories of the time I spent **'learning, growing, polishing'** in your ward be so sweet that I, on my departure, hail my rotation with you as **'one of the most memorable'** and **'highly recommended ward'** to my colleagues as it is in this ward that **'I had the best learning experience ever'."**

**Yours Sincerely,**

**A Nervous House Officer in his First Ward Rotation**

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**Epilogue:**

To all those in training positions for new house officers, I have but only one question to ask:

**"What is your legacy to the future generations of doctors?"**

These house officers, your junior trainees are not extra pieces in your wards to run errands only and get things done like ward-boys. They are here to learn, grow, and be inspired.

Let not your personal commitments of private patients keep you from priming and cultivating them; they are “the future-you”, they are your “legacy” that you are leaving behind in this world.

They are birdlings: fresh out of their nests, ready to take flight. Remember: your gentleness, support and supervision are critical not only to their flight but also determine the heights that they will soar to in the future.

You are immortal. But the things that you teach become immortal. Consider how Quran describes this beautiful example of human life having similitude to a plants life cycle. Today you are all lush and in full bloom, but tomorrow your leaves shall wither, dry and be scattered away by the winds. What seeds have you sowed today to blossom in tomorrow’s spring when you will be here no more?

How will you respond to the questioning on the Day of Judgment about what you left your future generations to practice?

For whom will you be a leader on that day?

And if you are unmoved so far, remember: These are the very hands in whom your health will lay when you turn old and weak tomorrow; these are the very hands that will be there in hospitals to treat you when you shall be turning in as a patient.

**Who and of what quality have you raised and trained to treat you tomorrow?**

A Point for all to silently ponder upon.

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