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May 20, 2019

## Checklist versus Reading List

I love checklists, just as Atul Gawande does in his book *The Checklist Manifesto*.

Gawande unfolds the benefits and his research on using a checklist in every aspect of our lives. He reveals stories to the reader of near-death patient experiences and how physicians reversed the mistakes. If you are in healthcare, like me, his checklist will guide you in the right direction in avoiding errors and getting it right.

“Avoidable failures are common and persistent, not to mention demoralizing and frustrating, across many fields—from medicine to fiancé, business to government. And the reason is increasingly evident: the volume and complexity of what we know has exceeded our individual ability to deliver its benefits correctly, safely, or reliably. Knowledge has both saved us and burdened us.”

Gawande's research in creating a checklist for the medical field was to prevent the numerous medical errors happening every day, and he used this research with other careers such as pilots and builders. The purpose of the stories was to enlighten his readers, that even if you are master at your work, mistakes will and can happen. Physicians, nurses, pilots, and builders become exhausted at some point from being overworked, and human nature occurs. Gawande demonstrates that when there are overworked providers in the operating room, and the checklist is followed religiously, errors become few to none. The masters of their field know how to do the work, but human ignorance and egos prevent them from sometimes always doing it right. As Gawande mentions, avoidable failures are common and persistent, not to mention demoralizing and frustrated. I relate to this as there have been times I was swamped, and I've made errors and

brought something incomplete to my boss. The failure is frustrating, especially when I knew what to do, but didn't check everything off before handing it off.

“But sometimes over the last several decades-and it is only over the last several decades-science has filled in enough knowledge to make ineptitude as much our struggle as ignorance.” In each of his studies, the checklist was proven to work. Gawande's book was chosen spontaneously, as it wasn't related to the global literature on the list. The Chief Executive Officer of the company I work for (an emergency medicine company), directed the medical directors to read this book. The reason for this, there were too many mistakes being made in the emergency department. These mistakes weren't being made because the providers didn't know what to do, yet they simply forgot a step. There are many reasons for measures to be overlooked in the emergency room, such as being overworked, exhaustion, on a time limit, angry patients, and the list goes on. These errors would have been avoided if the simple checklist was used, but the ignorance of many providers failed the patient.

“We have an opportunity before us, not just in medicine but in virtually any endeavor: Even the most expert among us can gain from searching out the patterns of mistakes and failures and putting a few checks in place. But will we do it? Are we ready to grab onto the idea? It's far from clear.”

I am a Healthcare major and have worked in the Healthcare industry for ten years. I am a very literal and to the point person, and I knew I would connect to Gawande and his idea of the checklist. Every day I work into work and make a checklist of things to do for the day or week. That opportunity he explains is what I am doing day to day. The opportunity is there to make sure we get it right, the mistake of not using a checklist has been proven numerous times in his studies, yet will providers do it? Gawande is expressing that humans are stubborn and ignorant,

which is why they miss the opportunity to get it right. This is why the CEO told the directors to read this book and follow a checklist.

The checklist of novels at the beginning of the semester was intimidating, frightening, and like Gawande's stories, I was ignorant to it. I like things short and to the point, similar to my writing. The reading list started with the book *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates, a story of anger and assumptions that I profoundly disagreed with. His story is told in a very dramatic structure, in which he is the protagonist. He describes his struggle with the black man and his battle with America.

"You must struggle to truly remember this past in all its nuances, error and humanity. You must resist the common urge toward the comforting narrative of divine later, toward fairy tales that imply some irrepressible justice. The enslaved were not bricks in your road, and their lives were not chapter I your redemptive history. They were people turned to fuel for the American machine. Enslavement was not destined to end, and it was wrong to claim our present circumstance-no matter how improved-as the redemption for the lives of people who never asked for the posthumous, untouchable glory of dying for their children. Our triumphs can never compensate for this." Coates writing style is aggressive and perceives the world in wrongdoing for the years of slavery. He believes that the desire to hate others in order to improve one's status requires that there be an "other," a race "inferior" to one's own. Such as when rich white folks drove plantation owners to reduce their black slaves to possessions, strip them of their rights, and deny their humanity. His obvious feelings that slavery wasn't accounted for enough and that people, especially white folks, never took into account that America was built on black slaves. This is one of the many instances that he has resistance against white people and America.

Reading this story, I became frustrated; as I am white person that doesn't have a racist bone in my body.

Coates grew up in the 1980s in the streets of Baltimore, where he learned the meaning of "black bodies." The letter to his son was indicated to express his concern of him growing up during a time of violent police acts, even in the recent time. The notion of black bodies suggests the fear of being targeted by cops, drug dealers, and the toughness covering his fear. After he left Baltimore, the fear of being a target weighed on him wherever he went.

"Americans believe in the reality of 'race' as define, indubitable feature of the natural world. Racism – the need to ascribe bone-deep features to people and then humiliate, reduce, and destroy them-inevitably follows from this inalterable condition." Coates suggested that this is the way America thinks about race - and use the concept of race as a biological reality to justify racist acts. My initial reaction from this passage and after reading the entire book was anger, just like the anger he had. I couldn't wrap my head around the issue against white folks. I soon understood him better and his reasoning for writing the letter to his son – it was to protect him but make sure he knew what it means to be a black man with a black body — the concept of learning to not be vulnerable in a country that still has police brutality in 2015. As white women, I may never understand what a black man feels, but I can accept the feelings of someone different than me. Coates writing style is ignorant, harsh, and abrasive, just as my emotions were toward the reading list and just as Gawande describes the ones not using the checklist.

The nonfiction story *Americanah* told by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie ties into the subject of race and racism. Ifemelu is the main character in *Americanah*, who was born and raised in Nigeria. Ifemelu battles with childhood struggles but excels in her academics, and eventually meets the love of her love, Obinze. She experiences her first sexual encounter with

him and is in lust. Ifemelu eventually moves to America, and she stops responding to Obinze. During her time in America, she quickly learns that she is Americanized. She is baffled that she is identified as non-American black and discovers quickly race is a dynamic part of America. She dates men in America, white and black and never feels the same connection she did with Obinze.

"I did not think of myself as black, and I only became black when I came to America. When you are black in America and fall in love with a white person, race doesn't matter when you're alone together because it's just you and your love. But the minute you step outside, race matters. But we don't talk about it. We don't even tell our white partners the small things that piss you off and the things we wish they understood better, because we're worried they will say we're overreacting, or we're being too sensitive. And we don't want them to say, look how far we've come, just forty years ago it would have been illegal for us to even be a couple blah blah blah, because you know what we're thinking when they say that? We're thinking why the fuck should ever have been illegal anyway? But we don't say any of this stuff. We let it pile up inside our heads and when we come to nice liberal dinners like this, we say that race doesn't matter because that's what were supposed to say, to keep our nice liberal friends comfortable. It's true. I speak from experience." The humor of Ifemelu in her passage is uplifting and gets the reader to see racism through her eyes. The liberal dinners and keep our liberal friends comfortable is a playful way of expressing that America's "non-racist" liberals are fake to her. She thoroughly explains to the reader why race doesn't make sense to her and why it shouldn't be a concept in America. For Ifemelu, race was not a subject in her home country until she came to America.

Adichie is brilliant in her writing because unlike Coates, she uses language that is educational as opposed to aggressive. As a woman, this may be the reason I connected and

understood racism from Adichie's point of view as it was soft and humorous. Her writing helped me enter Coates world of racism and understand and empathize with him. Although the writing style is different, they both discuss their views of racism. Adichie was unfamiliar with being called black until she came to America, and Coates was born and raised in an upbringing of violence against blacks. "If you're telling a non-black person about something racist that happened to you, make sure you are not bitter. Don't complain. Be forgiving. If possible, make it funny. Most of all, do not be angry. Black people are not supposed to be angry about racism. Otherwise, you get no sympathy." Her statement is bold, and Coates would very much agree with. These are the type statements that Ifemelu makes that make us "white people" who may not understand racism that much, appreciate it from their point of view.

"I have to take my braids out for my interview and relax my hair..if you have braids, they will think you're unprofessional." Ifemelu was also a feminist and was taught that if you are a black woman in America with braids, you are juvenile and unfit for a professional job. This quote relates to both racism and feminism. Ifemelu strived to be successful in America because in Nigeria, this was not allowed. It is easier for a female writer to establish herself in America than in Nigeria.

*We Should All Be Feminist*, also written by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a novel and TED talk in which Adichie talks in her point of view, explaining feminism in a way that inspirational to all women. Adichie expresses her writing in ways to engage all readers, especially female readers like myself. Her story was enlightening as she unfolds the standards Americans have of women to this day. If a woman did not see herself as a feminist before this, then they did now.

"We teach girls to shrink themselves, to make themselves smaller. We say to girls; you can have ambition, but not too much. You should aim to be successful, but not too successful. Otherwise, you would threaten the man. Because I am female, I am expected to aspire to marriage. I am expected to make my life choices always keeping in mind marriage is the most important. Now marriage can be a source of joy and love and mutual support, but why do we teach girls to aspire to marriage and we don't teach boys the same? We raise girls to see each other as competitors not for jobs or accomplishments, which I think can be a good thing, but for the attention of men. We teach girls that they cannot be sexual beings in the way that boys are."

This quote is one of the best ways to describe how America and most of the world views women. I have personally dealt with situations like this in my life. I am always working to strive for more in my academic and professional career. Although I do not have children and a family yet, I do have a fiancé and getting married this year. I am continually being battered on the issue of having children and eventually being a stay at home mom. I always tell people I have no interest in being a stay at home mom and I wasn't raised with a mother who stayed at home - we were brought up as feminist and didn't even realize it. My mother taught my brothers and myself that marriage is a partnership, a team, and a mutual support system, as Adichie quotes. "We teach girls to aspire for marriage," Luckily, I didn't and always focused on my career. I'm getting married now because not only have I found my soulmate, but he is a "source of joy, love, and mutual support" to me.

Adichie is making an argument that women rights are just the same as human rights. Adichie and Coates views and stories are comparable to racism. Despite the fact they were raised in different parts of the world, they each connect in racism in America as a "black body." Ifemelu learns in America that she isn't Nigerian, she is a black non-American, just as Coates is

the subject of racism being African American. They have similar views of the "American Dream," which I became slightly defensive. Coates directs his anger towards white Americans, expressing that blacks cannot achieve the white picket fence Dream. Ifemelu also is puzzled by the Dream that American strive for. Although Ifemelu became successful in America, that would be impossible for her in Nigeria. Coates examines the Dream as "perfect houses with nice lawns. It is Memorial Day cookouts, block associations, and driveways. The Dream is treehouses and the Cub Scouts. The Dream smells like peppermint but tastes like strawberry shortcake." Why is this Dream a negative thing for Coates? I grew up on Long Island, in a house with a fence and perfect lawn, but the lawn was perfect because my father was obsessed with his landscaping. My father came here illegally, with not a dollar in his pocket 35 years ago from El Salvador and worked for the business he has today. He worked day in and day out to support my mom and me even when they were divorced. My father lives the Dream, and this is why I became defensive at Coates. Just because you grow up in a poor environment, doesn't mean the Dream is impossible to achieve. Ifemelu, on the other hand finds this Dream more achievable as her views are not as close-minded. She was extremely successful, and she made a choice to move back to Nigeria. Just like my father, he aspires to move back to his home country, but will not because his children are here. We all have different views of the Dream, it doesn't have to be perfect, but it can be about being successful. Fighting the stigma of racism and working for what you want. I do agree with Coates that achieving the Dream is more challenging as a minority.

*Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe is a classic novel about the clash of European colonist and Nigerian tribe Igbo. The novel is narrated in the third person, the sympathetic point of view is located within the Igbo culture. The Igbo, a proud warrior race from what is now



Nigeria, see their culture and way of life destroyed by European Colonists. Although this novel is based in a different time and another side of the world, it confines to the theme of racism.

*Things Fall Apart* is a novel of cross-culture misunderstanding and the consequences of humanity. It conveys the arrogance of culture taking it upon itself to invade another culture and civilization, more specifically white men versus black men. Achebe's writing is similar to Adichie's as their stories are educational and modest in the talks of racism. They tell a story in a way that opens the reader's mind to understand why African Americans feel subjected. As opposed to Coates, language is rough. The only reason I can appreciate Coates point of view is because of Adichie and Achebe.

*The Bluest Eye*, written by Toni Morrison, tells the story of Pecola Breedlove, a young African American girl immerses in poverty and sought to be "ugly" by the standards of American culture. This story was taken place in the early 1940s in America, a time when Shirley Temple was what defined beauty. Pecola comes from a poor family and suffers gut-wrenching events such as being raped by her father and beaten by her mother. "It has occurred the Pecola some time ago that if her eyes, those eyes that held the pictures, and knew the sights – if those eyes of hers were different, that is to say, beautiful, she would be different." The personification of this passage describes Pecola's desire for blue eyes to conform to the white standards of being beautiful and wanting to see the world differently. She faces harsh, dramatic events throughout her life and wants to see reality with a different set of eyes. Pecola becomes pregnant and yearns for blue eyes. She is spoken about badly and blamed for her pregnancy. Her wish for blue eyes made her lose her mind. After thinking she has her wish granted by Soaphead Church, she goes mad and soon after loses her baby. She was a young black girl, that came from a poor family, no

female guidance, brutally beaten, sexually abused, this eventually led to her wanting to look into a set of different eyes.

Pecola's story is a sign of possible mental illness, and as the reader in healthcare, you want to help her. Even though this story is heavily based on race, my instinct was to help. Compared to the other stories about race, Pecola's is much different. She is a young girl with no direction from parents or elders to help her find her way. This was also a time when black women had no rights and before the civil right movement in the 1960s. One of the most famous slogans of the Civil Rights Movement was "Black is Beautiful," an attempt to raise the self-esteem of blacks who felt inferior to white standards of beauty. Morrison found fault in this slogan and hoped that blacks would instead rely on the strength of their communities, instead of power, wealth, or beauty. Morrison's background emphasise the point of view that physical beauty can be deadly for black children like Pecola. The media from the 1940s to present day show the "Shirley Temples" of the world and aspire to possess that kind of beauty. Similar to Ifemelu story about relaxing her kinky black hair. When she came to America was encouraged not to have braids and look like a white woman to be successful.

*The Fire This Time: A New Generation Speaks About Race* written by Jesmyn Ward is a contemporary view on racism. The book is constructed into many different stories discussing racism in the modern day. The stories discuss police brutality, white rage, and the movement of Black Lives Matter. "Instead, white rage carries an aura of respectability and has access to the courts, police, legislatures, and governors, who cast its efforts as noble, though they are driven by the most ignoble motivations. White rage recurs in American history. It exploded after the Civil War, erupted again to undermine the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, and took on its latest incarnation with Barack Obama's ascent to the White House. For

every action of African American advancement, there's a reaction, a backlash." This quote is from the story in the book *White rage*, which analyzes that white people are the ignorant ones. Compared to Coates, who makes the reader feel that he is the ignorant one, these stories disclose that white folk may be the ones at fault. The message the author was spelling out was that although laws were created to make all humans "equal," there is always a backlash, which gives the title *White Rage*. In the Civil Rights Movement, there was massive resistance against African Americans rights as citizens, just as there was resistance against having a black president or the Ferguson and Trayvon Martin cases. As a white woman, I never felt racism against others. It was difficult to connect to the authors but obvious to understand and feel empathy. Similar to the empathy felt towards Pecola. We started with the Checklist to understand the importance of checklist with our careers, but all these authors made a checklist of their stories, views, and reasons for a reader like myself to grasp and accept their views on racism.

I thoroughly agree with all these writers and their views on racism, because I have seen on social media the white rage people are posting on the internet. One of the stories discusses how we are all aware of the police brutality against young black men because technology has made everyone more aware. Everything is videotaped and recorded. One author states that is isn't something that has gotten worse, but it has given people a picture of what goes on.

The *Patience Stone* is a fictional novel written by Atiq Rahimi. Rahimi does a brilliant job of portraying a women character in Afghanistan and the treatment that women face in their country. This story he gives a face and voice to an Afghan woman which unheard of. She cares for her husband, who is in a comatose state from a bullet due to war. "Sang-e saboor.! That's the name of the stone, sang-e saboor, the patience stone! The magic stone! Yes, you, you are my sang-e saboor!" She refers to him as Syngue Sabour, the name of the black stone, patience stone,

which absorbs those who confide in it. She resents him. She cares, and she speaks to him. She talks to him more and more, opening up her deepest desires, pains, and secrets. While in the streets, rival factions clash and soldiers are looting and killing around her, she speaks of her life, never knowing if her husband hears. And it is an extraordinary confession, without restraint, about sex and love and her anger against a man who never understood her, who mistreated her, who never showed her any respect or kindness. Her admission releases the weight of oppression of marital, social, and religious norms. The character never has a name which symbolizes Afghan women who have no say or face in their worlds.

"My sang-e saboor is exploding! She cries, closing her eyes. Thank you, Al-Sabur! I am finally released from my suffering!" This passage is at the end of the story when the husband awakens from his coma and grabs the wife to beat her. She is insisting she will be free if he kills her because being alive she is in prison. Rahimi engages the reader to want her to kill him or pull the plug while he is in a coma, but that would make things worse for her. In her religion, if the husband were to die, she would have to be remarried and controlled by another man. She was free and in control while he was in this state.

"So, raping a whore is not rape. But raping a young girls virginity, a woman's honor! Now that's your creed!" She says this to her husband after she had to insist she was a "whore" to men who broke into her home. Otherwise, they would have raped her. This occurrence views how men see women in their country. They have total control, and it is their religion to be a virgin until married. The character explains her feelings towards her religion and treatment, and even though this is how she was raised, it does not fulfill her life.

This reading checks off another race and religion and the stories behind their struggles. Adichie would be an inspiration to this character, and Coates would relate to her suffering. This

story is unique compared to all others, as it presents the cause and effect of the treatment of women in another country. Adichie touches on this slightly in Nigeria, but nothing compares to the horror Afghanistan women face. Rahimi tells her story about the struggle and survival of Afghan women. Similar to Coates, Adichie, and Ward, they all have a story of surviving in their enjoinment.

The following checklist of reading material was *Memoirs of a Woman Doctor* by Nawal El Saadawi. This is a fictional novel written in a narrative style that discusses the constraints of being a woman. In this story, the young female expresses her resentment of being a girl and the freedom her brother had compared to her. Growing up, she couldn't play outside, had to make her bed and her brothers bed, learn how to cook to prepare for marriage and grow her hair long. All of these became a challenge for her to love the person she was due to the fact she didn't feel being a female was a good thing. She started to feel trapped inside her own body, much how Coates felt trapped inside his "black body." As she gets older, she excels and becomes a doctor. She loved science and relates science to her life. "A woman had heart, a nervous system, and a brain exactly like a man's, and an animal had a heart, a nervous system and a brain exactly like a human." Her determination and anger in her voice tells the reader she will not be the woman society tells her to be, and we are made equally; thus we should all be treated equally. Becoming a doctor was her way of stepping out of the norms of women occupations and gain control over her life. I believe women doctors are inspirational, and as a healthcare professional, I am seeing more and more women doctors every day. This helps society and women feel equal, as they should and as El-Saadawi wants to prove.

“The weak spot that a man focuses on in his attempt to gain control over a woman: her need to be protected from other men. The male's jealousy over his female: he claims to be

frightened for her when he's frightened for himself, claims to be protecting her in order to take possession of her and put four walls around her." This section of the book was heartbreaking for the reader. When she finally finds the balance of her career and finding love, the man turns on her quickly. She explains how men think towards women and this is true. Many men can be intimidated by a successful woman, or if the woman is the breadmaker. To social norms, this is not acceptable. Adichie would agree with this as well, because females can be ambitious, just not too much.

The first time around, I felt as though El-Saawadi hated men and hated being a woman, and it was hard to wrap my head around it. After understanding how society treats Egyptian, black, and Afghan woman, it came together, just as the pieces came together for Coates story. They all believe in human right, not only women or black rights. The reader has to understand the society in different cultures. And healthcare professionals, especially in New York, also need to understand different lifestyles to treat patients or work with clients. Howard Stern quotes in his new book *Howard Stern Comes Again*, "empathy, emotional openness, and a genuine curiosity about the beauty in the world have begun to develop. Allowing myself to be a depending and vulnerable is new to me." He explained my feelings as a stubborn reader about my views on racism, religion, and basic human rights. I was closed off. I didn't understand why the authors told their stories with anger and abruptness.

*Saturday* by Ian McEwan tells a story of Dr. Henry Perowne, a successful neurosurgeon. The structure and writing style of McEwan was the most difficult for me to follow. I can't say I disliked the book, but I disliked his style of writing. I chose this book over others, as it told a story of a neurosurgeon, and I have a predominate history working in neurosurgery. One thing I took away was Dr. Perowne was a compassionate physician and had empathy towards all his

patients and those who mistreated him, such as Baxter. Dr. Perowne relates to *Memoirs of a Female Doctor* as they both loved what they did as physicians, and they wanted to treat and guide their patients. Novels divulge into the medical world instantly draw me in, due to my history of working in the medical field for ten years. I have the same compassion of wanting to help others, whether it be a patient, friend, or character in a book I feel sympathy for.

*The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka is a fantasy book involving physical transformations. Gregor is a salesman who wakes up one morning to discover that he has transformed into a bug. His change makes it impossible for him to work, no matter how hard he tries. Gregor takes care of his family financially and keeps a roof over their head. His coworker shows up at his house to fire him if he doesn't get into work, with no regard to the physical changes in his body. His family is frightened by his appearance and shun him. Gregor's father eventually throws an apple at him, causing injury and eventually an infection. "We wouldn't have a brother anymore, then, but we could carry on with our lives and remember him with respect." He suffers from isolation, hunger, and persecution from his entire family, and this is their rationalizing to rid of him, instead of helping him. He is trapped inside a body he has no control over it. "I cannot make you understand. I cannot make anyone understand what is happening inside me. I cannot even explain it to myself."

Gregor faces a traumatic transformation, similar to the transformations neurosurgeon patients. Brain tumors affect patients with blurred vision, face defects, inability to speak, all of Gregor went through. He was a patient and needed to be treated. Brain tumor patients feel helpless and eventually become depressed as Gregor did. Our human physical symptoms can severely affect the mental state as well. Gregor faced constant physical and psychological abuse from his family due to his appearance and inability to work. Brain tumor patients suffer the

same type of treatment; sometimes, they lose the ability to work, end up getting disability that pays minimal, and family can turn their backs on them as Gregor's did. Dr. Perowne would help Gregor in his situation as he was a man of kindness and mercy. Gregor's character connects to Pecola in *The Bluest Eye* as they both were helpless, weak, and powerless with no help or guidance from anyone and their family turned their back on them.

*When Breath Becomes Air* by Paul Kalanithi is my favorite novel of all time, Kalanithi writes the story about his life and becoming a neurosurgeon resident. He has a loving wife, family, and friends. He is a genius in his work, loves what he does, and his passion for helping patients is truly genuine. He struggled during the beginning of his career with the long sleepless nights; his relationship suffered with his patients and his wife. He starts to feel ill and ignores his symptoms until one day, he couldn't take it anymore. Without getting any tests done, he knew he had cancer.

"At moments, the weight of it all became palpable. It was the air, the stress, and misery. Normally, you breathed it in, without noticing it. But some days, like a humid muggy day, it had a suffocating weight of its own. Some days, this is how it felt when I was in the hospital: trapped in an endless jungle summer, wet with sweat, the rain of tears of the familiar of the dying pouring down. As I sat there, I realized that the questions intersecting life, death, and meaning, questions that all people face at some point, usually arise in a medical content. In the actual situations where one encounters these questions, it becomes a necessarily philosophical and biological exercise. Humans are organism, subject to physical laws, including alas, the one that says entropy always increased. Diseases are molecules misbehaving; the basic requirement of life is metabolism, and death is cessation."



Paul writes this passage during his first and toughest year in residency. His imaginary senses relate his stress and misery to the hot, muggy days in the city, which are the toughest to get through. The hot, humid summer is the nature of the dreadful operating room and stress of being overworked and sleepless. He compared the patient's tears to the tears of pouring rain on the humid days. These humid days when we feel as though we can't breathe, he is overworked, he can't get up for air either. He is describing the human body like a science project, and there is life and death, no in between. He foreshadowed his own death.

“I began to realize that coming in such close contact with my own mortality had changed both nothing and everything. Before my cancer was diagnosed, I knew that someday I would die, but I didn't know when. After the diagnosis, I knew it that someday I would die, but I didn't know when. But now I knew it acutely. The problem wasn't really a scientific one. The fact of death is unsettling. Yet there is no other way to live.”

Paul cared for patients every day who were on their death bed, and now he was on his. The cancer was hard for him to believe as he was so young, had his entire life ahead of him. He didn't have children yet, and he and his wife decided to conceive before his death. Paul knew first-hand what his patients felt being on the hospital bed, not knowing if you were going to survive. He fought for his life, but mostly for his wife and to have a family. He stopped seeing bodies as a science project but as humans. He wanted to get better to continue helping patients again. Unfortunately, he was unable to do so. He didn't have the opportunity to check off his checklist in life. He was able to graduate from his residency program and have a child with his wife, but that is where it ends.

Paul was a strong survivor, as many of the characters discussed were. His style of writing is authentic and beautiful. He wanted to help everyone but couldn't help himself. He worked

himself to death, literally, and didn't take care of himself. I worked in Neurosurgery for years and knew the extreme physical and mental strain the residents put on their body. When I read this book, I wanted to help Paul, just as he wanted to help others. I connected with him in the way we are the type of people who want always to extend ourselves to others. The happiness of others is what makes us happy. Similar to our authors, Adichie intends to help women and have them understand them that being strong and ambitious is a beautiful attribute in life. El-Saadawi wants to inspire women of all cultures that they can achieve any career they want. Ward and Coates stories are written, so African American know they are not alone in their pain they feel. Even Gregor in *The Metamorphosis* wanted to still help his family to make ends meet, after they mistreated him. Everyone has a story to tell with a purpose behind it. Stories of racism, science, medical stories, all have their purpose, and it's to enlighten the reader. I became enlightened and eyes wide open to all authors. This will always help me with my medical field endeavors, as I am still working with cultures all over the United States, and hopefully, the world.

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