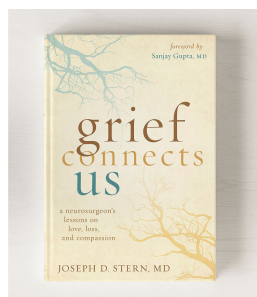




JOSEPH D. STERN, MD

To learn more about Dr. Stern, his memoir, his blog and community, or his availability to speak, please visit josephsternmd.com.

Propelled by my younger sister Victoria's surprise diagnosis of acute leukemia, an unsuccessful bone marrow transplant, and later her death, followed by her husband Pat's death from a ruptured cerebral aneurysm, orphaning their two children, I have been exploring the impact her illness had on me, as well as the personal experiences of physicians and patients going through similarly disruptive losses. Victoria wrote a powerful journal about her nearly eight-month hospitalization, which I have incorporated into a memoir: "[Grief Connects Us: A Neurosurgeon's Lessons on Love, Loss, and Compassion](#)," published by Central Recovery Press in 2021. In this book, I advocate for greater compassion and empathy in the way we treat each other and our patients, and make specific suggestions of how we can improve health care delivery to achieve these goals. In my [TED Talk](#) I discuss the importance of abandoning emotional armor in favor of greater emotional agility.



Dr. Stern has published a variety of essays:

The New York Times:

["Grief as My Guide: How My Sister Made Me a Better Doctor,"](#) Nov 14, 2018
["Moral Distress in Neurosurgery,"](#) Aug 15, 2019
["Dying in the Neurosurgical ICU,"](#) Jan 14, 2020

The Washington Post:

["You See the Best of Us Now: What we are learning about ourselves and each other during the pandemic,"](#) May 18, 2020
["As a doctor, I'm Trying to have more empathy for my patients—and myself,"](#) May 29, 2021
["Tackling racial disparities in cancer care by creating new ways for institutions to operate,"](#) Nov 29, 2021

World Neurosurgery:

"Compassion Belongs in the Operating Room," 132: 441-442, October 2019

Journal of Palliative Medicine:

"Why Should a Neurosurgeon Attend a Palliative Care Conference, Anyway?" <https://doi.org/10.1089/jpm.2022.0274>

Dr. Stern earned undergraduate and medical school degrees, as well as completed internship and residency, at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. He has trained in Palliative Care through Harvard Medical School. He is Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Department of Neurosurgery, University of North Carolina School of Medicine and the University of Michigan. He teaches medical students and directs the "Medical Humanities" program at Cone Health in Greensboro, NC. He practiced Neurosurgery through Carolina Neurosurgery and Spine Associates (CNSA).