

Foreword

As a small-town family physician, I am fortunate to have a practice of patients that welcomed many students into their lives and experiences over the last seventeen years. A very few of the medical students and residents I have taught are memorable because of their lack of ability, their poor bedside manner, or their disinterest in the learning opportunities I provided. Many of them were intelligent, kind, and capable individuals who were a pleasure to work with yet blend together in a faceless haze. Some of these learners stand out for their bright personality, their keen interest in family medicine, their genuine compassion towards patients, and their enthusiasm for learning. Those superstars make it a joy to teach. Following their career paths keeps me engaged and optimistic about the future of medicine. Dr. Jason Profetto is notable among even the most exceptional learners, and his current book, *In the Trenches*, shows what an outstanding family physician he truly is.

I first met Jason ten years ago when he was a new and very stylishly dressed medical student; and I was a family physician in a small town eager to pass on my love for family medicine and the satisfaction this career can provide. Jason arrived early to clinic every day full of energy and charm with genuine excitement about the opportunity to learn medicine in a rural community. Jason put great effort into understanding the possibilities of a career in family medicine and trying to forecast his future career, interests, and family life.

Through the years I have watched Jason continue to impress and excel through medical school, family medicine residency, and into practice. I was not surprised to see that he set up a smooth-running practice surrounded by the family that is so important to him. No sooner had he entered practice than he joined McMaster faculty and began teaching, which is what he had been doing among his peers and juniors at every step along his training path. Jason's strength in leadership and clear vision of successful medical education were evident from early days, and I was pleased to be involved in hiring him for his first junior leadership position at the medical school. Jason rapidly established himself firmly in a world where he was comfortable and talented, and he has climbed the ladder in medical education swiftly. As he has increased his influence over the teaching of future physicians, he has also increased his presence in leadership among his medical community and provincial organizations. When a difficult and contentious issue arises, I often find myself calling Jason to ask him about his opinion and understanding of the problem because I know he will be up to date, well informed, and decisive in his stand.

Jason's very strengths are also sometimes his downfall. This dedicated doctor is too often popping in to the clinic to help out when he is on holidays or supposed to be away from the office. If you sit beside him in a meeting, you realize his phone never stops buzzing and he is usually carrying on at least four different text conversations, many related to patient care but also cute photo updates about his children that day, a few good-natured jabs at his brothers and sisters, and some checks in on sports scores from the many teams he follows. I have lost track of the number of times I have given him a lecture about

setting boundaries, leaving the work to someone else, and walking away from the office from time to time. He tries to listen, he really does, but few other people will live up to the standards that Jason sets for himself, and so he continues to keep a close eye on so many of his projects.

In the Trenches is a brave and honest book as it provides a glimpse into the joys and challenges of medical school, family medicine, and the health-care system. Jason has never been one to make excuses for what does not work well in the system. He is usually the one shining a spotlight on the problem and then coming up with a creative way to address it. His opinions are strong and he is vocal; however, his advocacy comes from a place of genuinely wanting to leave the world, the health-care system, and each individual he encounters healthier from his presence. This book provides an inside look into one man's path to choosing a career in medicine, some of the challenges he faced in training, and an honest and candid picture of the daily life of a doctor who seems to have it all. The sacrifices he makes, the rigor with which he lives his life, and the dedication he gives to everything from his exercise routine to his office set-up is evident as he allows us into his world.

By inviting Dr. Emily Dewhurst to collaborate on this project, Jason demonstrated the true teacher and student advocate that he is. We are fortunate that, through Emily's writing, she allowed us in to the vulnerable, exciting, and terrifying places that medical students are required to inhabit. Through her recounting of stories, we see the transformation of a medical student from learner to professional, and see the struggles of being ushered into the health-care arena as a provider. She is bold and brave in exposing the challenges, the

barriers, and both the excitement and heartache of medical school, and I hope her honesty allows us to improve the process and help future physicians learn from our experiences.

Jason's honesty in the highs and lows of his career to date, the challenges he faces, the successes he has seen, and the room for improvements is unwavering. This is in complete harmony with who Jason is in all areas of his life. Devoted father, brother, husband, and son; committed teacher, administrator, and leader; dedicated physician, colleague, and employer. For all the good and the bad, those of us who are fortunate to care for patients, to teach future physicians, and to influence medical school directions are in a privileged position which we should not take for granted. Jason's stories cause me to reflect on my career path, training experiences, and patient encounters that have profoundly shaped who I am today. I am thankful for these reminders and hope to never lose sight of the reasons I chose this road.

I was greatly touched when Jason approached me to write this foreword. It is a privilege to be a colleague of Jason's and I have no doubt, as I watch his career grow and flourish, that the student has surpassed the teacher in knowledge and ability. As I have from the beginning, I continue to follow Jason's career with joy, pride, and the optimism of knowing the world is a better place, and health care has a strong future because of physicians such as Dr. Jason Profetto.

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