

Episode: *Author Interview: “Narrative, Embodiment, and Health”*

Guest: Jake Young, PhD, MFA, MPH

Host: Tim Hoff

Transcript: Cheryl Green

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[bright theme music]

[00:00:03] TIM HOFF: Welcome to another episode of the Author Interview series from the *American Medical Association Journal of Ethics*. I'm your host, Tim Hoff. This series provides an alternative way to access the interesting and important work being done by Journal contributors each month. Joining me on this episode is Dr Jake Young, a senior policy analyst at the American Medical Association in Chicago, Illinois. He's here to discuss his article, “*Narrative, Embodiment, and Health*,” in the June 2025 issue of the Journal, [Embodiment in Art Practice](#). Dr Young, good to have you back on the show.

DR JAKE YOUNG: Thanks so much for having me. [music fades]

[00:00:39] HOFF: So, what's the main ethics point of this month's article?

YOUNG: The key point is that stories matter. Stories matter personally, socially, historically, and they play a fundamental role in medicine and in human health more broadly. Stories give us access to interiority. They provide space for reflection, both about ourselves and about others. On a fundamental level, storytelling can be empowering, and listening to stories can lead to revelations.

[00:01:07] HOFF: And so, what should health professions students and trainees be taking from the lessons that you're presenting here?

YOUNG: Learning how to engage with patients requires narrative understanding, and the stories that patients have are some of the greatest tools at their disposal. It seems like such a simple thing, but creating time and space for patients to share their experiences—which can be an extreme challenge in today's medical environment—is one of the most fundamental things that medical professionals can do to support their patients and foster the trust that is so fundamental to medical encounters.

[00:01:39] HOFF: And finally, if you could add a point to this article that you didn't have the time or space for, what would that be?

YOUNG: It's easy to think about the importance of stories and storytelling and go directly to the patient perspective, to active listening and engagement as tools for physicians, which is why I think narrative approaches to medicine have been so widely embraced in recent years. But stories and storytelling are important for everyone. For medical practitioners, I think storytelling is an incredibly important tool, not just for engaging with patients and providing quality care, which it is, but also for their own self-

reflection, for thinking through the challenges that they face on a daily basis. And sharing those stories can be a powerful form of advocacy for their patients, but also for themselves, for their colleagues, and for the practice of medicine as a whole. [theme music returns] Because no one can begin to address a problem if they don't know that it exists.

[00:02:26] HOFF: Dr Young, thank you so much, again, for your time on the podcast today, and as always, thanks for your contributions to the Journal.

YOUNG: Thank you.

HOFF: To read the full article, as well as the rest of this month's issue for free, visit our site, [journalofethics.org](http://journalofethics.org). We'll be back soon with more *Ethics Talk* from the *American Medical Association Journal of Ethics*.