

ART OF MEDICINE

When I Take Off My White Coat...

Joseph Gascho, MD

Abstract

Lay persons might think physicians spend all their time in hospitals or clinics or that physicians fly their private jets to exclusive resorts for long weekends. But physicians are regular people just like their patients, and, when not on the job, they do many of the same things for the same reasons: playing with pets and doing sports, music, and art. Physicians might not have a blue-ribbon dog, might not have played varsity basketball in college, might not have gone to Julliard before medical school, might not have had one-person exhibits at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, but what they do when they are not wearing their white coats can make them better physicians when they put the coats back on again.

Figure 1. Dwight Davis, MD With Dog and With Students and Residents on Rounds

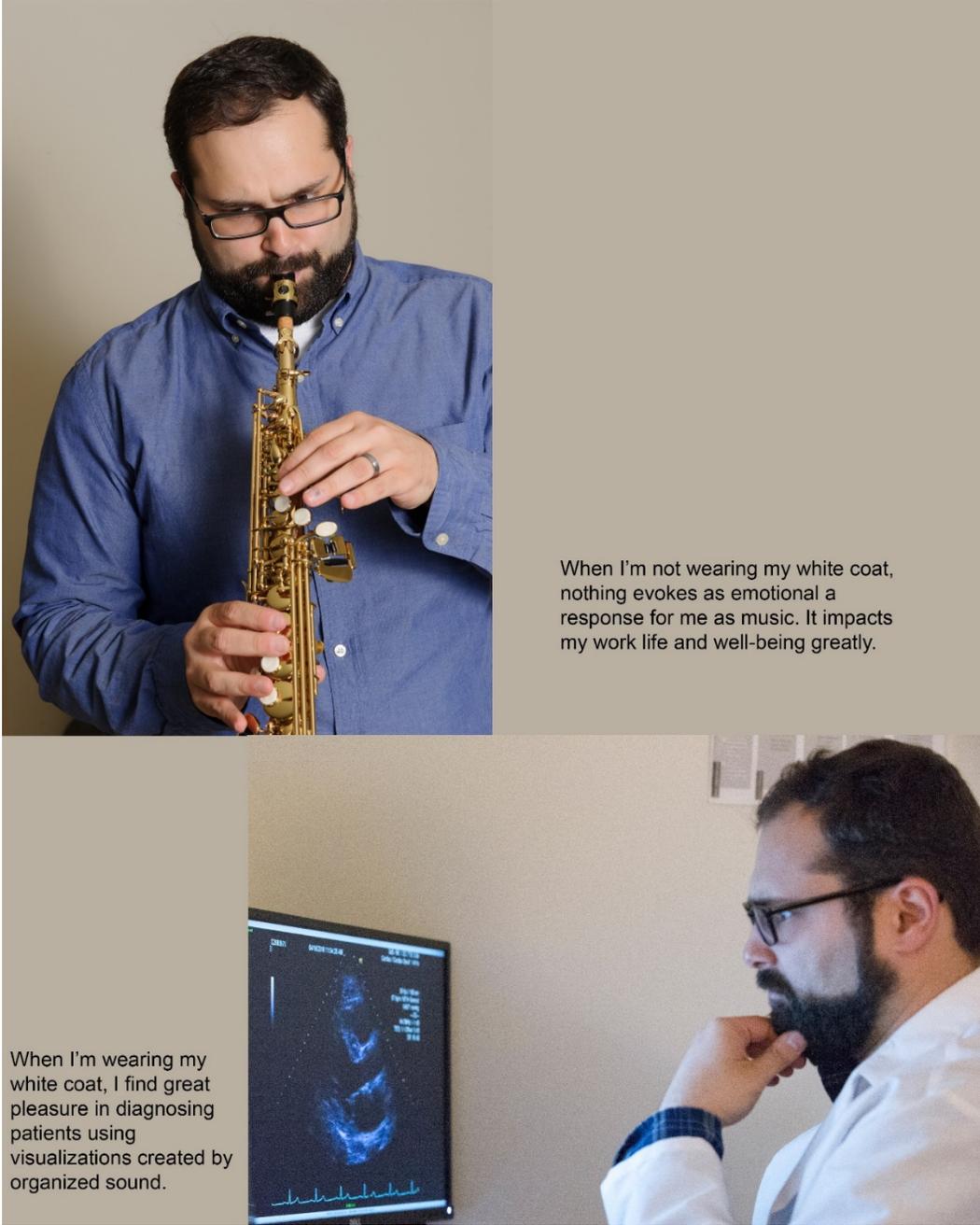


When I'm not wearing my white coat, I try to enjoy and give thanks for the many simple pleasures of life.

When I'm wearing my white coat, I remind our residents and students about the unique responsibility we have to provide humanistic care to our patients during difficult times in their lives.



Figure 2. Michael Farbaniec, MD Making Sound and Reading Images of Sound



When I'm not wearing my white coat, nothing evokes as emotional a response for me as music. It impacts my work life and well-being greatly.

When I'm wearing my white coat, I find great pleasure in diagnosing patients using visualizations created by organized sound.

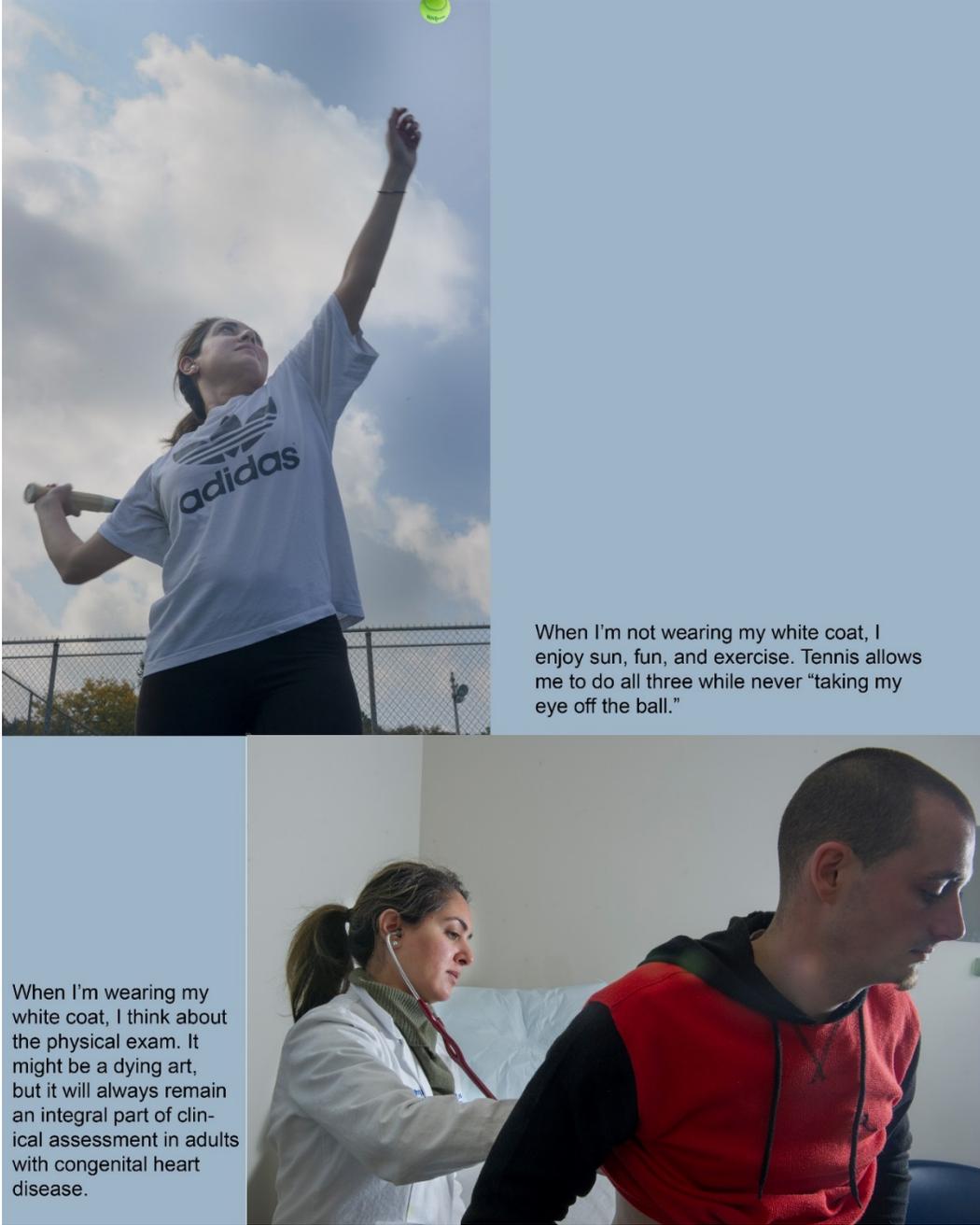
Figure 3. Faisal Aziz, MD Holding a Painting and Gowned in Operating Room



When I'm not wearing my white coat, the world is beautiful and despite using all the colors that I use to paint, I can only capture a tiny portion of its beauty.

When I'm wearing my white coat, the whole universe stops and the only thing that matters is the patient on the operating table.

Figure 4. Anisa Chaudhry, MD Serving a Tennis Ball and Examining a Patient



When I'm not wearing my white coat, I enjoy sun, fun, and exercise. Tennis allows me to do all three while never "taking my eye off the ball."

When I'm wearing my white coat, I think about the physical exam. It might be a dying art, but it will always remain an integral part of clinical assessment in adults with congenital heart disease.

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Citation

AMA J Ethics. 2018;20(11):E1094-1099.

DOI

10.1001/amajethics.2018.1094.

Conflict of Interest Disclosure

The author(s) had no conflicts of interest to disclose.

The viewpoints expressed in this article are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the AMA.