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Spaces

By Anameeka Singh

Spaces spaces spaces spaces spaces
We live in all these ...
In the past two years especially, I've spent way more time than usual in the space between my ears:
A space of flowing colors—blue, black, white, even red, orange, pink,
A space of swirling smells—joy, love, gratitude, even grief, anger, isolation,
A space of various sights—inner demons, humans, even ourselves,
A space of twisting tastes—hope, relief, victory, even despair, frustration,
A space of two sounds—the resounding echo of a heart + the deafening pulse of the
neurons,
So much happens in that space. In so little
time.

Soon, all that internal noise builds up to a
crescendo.

So I open my eyes.

Only to see that there are more spaces. An infinite number of spaces. Of so many different tenors.

These spaces are different from the one between my ears – here, I am not alone. Here, there are
people: people with their own experiences, emotions, beliefs, and spaces.

What goes on in the spaces between people's ears translates to the spaces that surround them,
spaces

that I sometimes find myself in. These spaces are filled with conversation – both
verbal and non-verbal.

I don't know every person that I find in each space. *The heart races.* Will this space be for
me?

Self-preservation tells me to just listen. Listen for the signals and intuition will give
me

“The answer?” *My brow furrows.* Test answers, grades, scores, knowledge—
these noises abound in the space I'm in most. I fear for the people that only talk about these
things. I know that these things matter, but they should come with a black box warning: “Side
effects: stress, fatigue, burnout, unhealthy mindset, changes in personality, etc.” What if they
become the docs that see symptoms, labs, and diagnostics where they should see a patient first?

What if they lose the most valuable space of all, the one that *b r e a t h e s* between our
lungs? We can't lose our hearts in these rigid spaces. They house our
morality, our instincts, our nature. They make us human.

And, after all, isn't that who we are at the end of the day? Patients, physicians, nurses—humans.

Today, in the era of COVID, being human looks different. Everyone has been impacted.
Everyone has lost something, maybe even someone. For all the things that COVID has
stolen, it's given us one thing: a call to connection. Connection anchors us – it gives us solace
strength and a c k n o w l e d g e m e n t. We yearn to be seen. We yearn to be

heard. To be in the spaces where connection blooms requires authenticity humility and grace.

These are gifts of the heart.

Medicine takes mind, but more importantly, it takes heart. But what happens when heroes find themselves drowning in spaces of COVID – spaces where they give their all to care for people whose views may aggravate them, whose behaviors may weather their patience, whose presence serves as a constant reminder that the seemingly unending nightmare exists within these walls and beyond?

Falling dominoes: the heart selflessness compassion anchors purposes
After endless pouring, when our cup is truly and fully empty, the heart fades into darkness.

The question then remains: how do we get it back?

By tapping into every sense.

Feel everything that you feel in this moment. Acknowledge it.
Validate it.

Taste the anger, the frustration, the hollowness, the exhaustion. Pause.
Then swallow.

Smell the fear and sorrow that fills the air. Realize you aren't alone. Open your eyes.

See the space around you in its dark and pure magnificence. Remember why you are here.
Listen to both voices: supporting and seeking. Realize you need each equally.

You are human.
Rekindle that flame of compassion.
Ask yourself: "How do we save ourselves from burnout?"
Tell yourself: The HEaler's ART.

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