



# AIAMC Annual Meeting Book Club

*WHEN BREATH BECOMES AIR PAUL KALANITHI*

*APRIL 5, 2018*

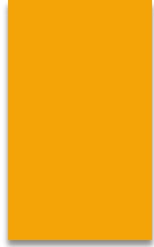
*MOHAMMED SAMEE, M.D., R.N. AND JAMES DALTON, M.D.*

# Objectives

- ▶ The participant will recall three ways s/he and his/her colleagues find meaning in work
- ▶ The participant will recognize the elements of narrative in Kalanithi's book, *When Breath Becomes Air*
- ▶ The participant will reflect on her/his response to Dr. Kalanithi's illness narrative by using a "parallel chart"

# Exercise One

- ▶ Break up into groups of three.
- ▶ Interview each member of the group for five minutes. How did the book make you feel about the following:
  - ▶ Meaning and joy in **your** work.
  - ▶ Combating burnout.
  - ▶ Life purpose and work-life balance.
  - ▶ What struck a chord with you in the book - would you have continued your training if you knew you had limited time?
  - ▶ When have you experienced deep meaning in your training - what happened, what caused the meaning?
- ▶ One spokesperson from each group report back



# Narrative Medicine

## The Parallel Chart

- ▶ The importance of listening for the story
- ▶ Recognize the features of a narrative – temporality, singularity, causality, intersubjectivity, and ethicality
- ▶ By actively listening to the author – or the patient's – story, the receiver becomes part of the story
- ▶ Written reflection by the receiver – the **parallel chart** – can be used as a tool for teaching and understanding the meaning of illness

# The Parallel Chart

- ▶ “Every day, you write in the hospital chart about each of your patients. You know exactly what to write there and the form in which to write it. You write about your patient’s current complaints, the results of the physical exam, laboratory findings, opinions of consultants, and the plan. If your patient dying of prostate cancer reminds you of your grandfather, who died of that disease last summer, and each time you go into the patient’s room, you weep for your grandfather, you cannot write that in the hospital chart. We won’t let you. And yet it has to be written somewhere. You write it in the Parallel Chart.” p.155

# Exercise Two

- ▶ Dr. Paul Kalanithi (and his wife Lucy in the Epilogue) have shared their narrative with us. As we read it, we may do so with the ear of a physician, wife, father, friend, colleague, counselor, or just another human being hearing the story.
- ▶ In the next 15 minutes, write YOUR Parallel Chart from the perspective that seems most authentic
- ▶ Please consider sharing what you have written



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