



The Gift of New Eyes, by Rachel Naomi Remen

Many years ago, I had just given a talk on the messages, both positive and negative, that we convey to our patients without our awareness; sometimes with words but often with just our tone of voice, our touch, our facial expression or the way in which we listen. At the end of the talk, I was standing with those who wanted to share their thoughts and discuss things a little more when a student came up to me, slipped a little piece of paper into the pocket of my white coat and walked off. I carried it around forgotten for almost a week. When I finally found it I was looking for something else (a lifelong pattern of mine). He had put together some lines from two other poems:

I had a dream
That honeybees were making honey in my heart
Out of my old failures.
There is no right or wrong
Beyond the right and the wrong
There is a field.
I'll meet you there.

I have never had the chance to thank him for the healing and the gift of new eyes. As a patient myself I knew how strengthening and life transforming such genuine meetings can be. How they open new possibilities. Perhaps this poem is the message that education needs to deliver to every student. It is a message for all of us as well.