

# 10 Life Lessons I Learnt-and Words Of Wisdom For Young Doctors

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Born with a silver spoon in my mouth, being the son of Professor Dr. B.T.Maskati, (who later rose to be head of Dept. of Ophthalmology at KEM Hospital, Mumbai and President of AIOS 87-88), I did my schooling and my entire education in Mumbai, doing both my MBBS and MS from the GS Medical College and KEM Hospital. I also passed my DOMS (with a Gold Medal) and FCPS exams from the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Mumbai. After a year's stint as a lecturer in BYL Nair Hospital and Topiwala National Medical College, Mumbai, I went abroad to Rochester, NY and Boston for observerships in Cornea and Anterior Segment Microsurgery, training under legends such as Dr. G.N.Rao (in Rochester) and Dr. Claes Dohlman and Dr. Kenneth Kenyon (Mass Eye and Ear Infirmary, Boston), before starting solo private practice in 1986. I am currently Consultant and Chief, Maskati Eye Clinic, situated in South Mumbai. The views expressed are my personal ones.

1. Goal Setting
2. Consistency
3. Stand for Your convictions
4. Karma theory
5. Value yourself and others
6. Ask for advice
7. Be ethical
8. Collegiality
9. Empathise
10. Virtue of patience

1. **GOAL SETTING:** It is important to have long term vision and short term goals – achieve them and then set a new goal. In my first house-post, my short term goal was to excel in refraction using a plane mirror; after achieving that, I wanted to be able to see the retinal

periphery with the indirect ophthalmoscope and so on, all the time retaining my long term vision of being a good ophthalmologist.

2. **CONSISTENCY:** You need not be the best person in the batch, or the smartest, or most charming or most popular, just be consistent in your behaviour and approach. Your smile and attitude to the last patient in a busy OPD should be exactly the same as it was for the first patient you examined. Do not give excuses, just strive for perfection. Work hard and practice till you get it right, whether it is retinoscopy or indirect ophthalmoscopy

3. **STAND FOR YOUR CONVICTIONS:** If you are carrying out a research project and the results are not what you expected, don't fudge the results. Publish what you truly find. An honest negative result, for e.g. failure of a new anti-glaucoma medicine to lower IOP, is more valuable for the ophthalmic community who reads the article than a false thumbs up given to the drug, just because a pharma company is sponsoring the study.

4. **The KARMA THEORY: GIVE WITHOUT EXPECTING A REWARD:** This is enshrined in our holy scriptures like the Bhagwad Gita as well. Help your colleagues unstintingly, teach your juniors with all your heart.. Ultimately you will get rewarded in far greater and unexpected ways.

5. **VALUE YOURSELF AND OTHERS:** Each of us is unique like a diamond. Even if bosses or seniors constantly berate you for being a "good for nothing", you must have a sense of self-worth or self-esteem that no one can destroy. For example, a 100 rupee note, no matter how crumpled, dirty or stamped upon it gets, will still retain its value when taken to a store to buy some goods. Similarly, when you become "senior", do not



destroy a colleague or junior's self-esteem – gently guide them to improve themselves.

6. **ASK FOR ADVICE:** No man is an island. You cannot be the best in everything. Do not hesitate in asking for advice, whether it is a second opinion, in the best interest of the patient or a senior or parent or spouse for non-ophthalmic decision making when in doubt. Also, be receptive to constructive criticism. It is the only way you will improve yourself.

7. **BE ETHICAL:** If something is unethical or dishonest and you do not wish to do it, don't do it..it does not matter if everyone else is doing it or that you will never get caught. Ultimately you have to live with yourself. As you grow older and have a family of your own, your kids will not have to look outside for a role model..they will have one in you!

8. **PRACTICE COLLEGIALLY:** Instead of asking a patient who has come to you due a post-operative complication, "Which butcher" has done this surgery, tell the patient, "let me see how I can help you". Share your knowledge and expertise with your colleagues. When you have a practice of your own, be willing to share your equipment and even your operation theatre with colleagues in the same city or town.

9. **EMPATHISE WITH YOUR PATIENTS:** Patients will forget what you said or did but will never forget how

you made them feel. You must be able to communicate with your patient that you share their pain, their discomfort, their stress and you are doing all you can to alleviate their misery.

10. **PRACTICE PATIENCE:** You will ultimately have enough patients to keep you busy. Do not let anything frustrate you.. Be it an endophthalmitis post-op or lack of patients queuing up at your doorstep in spite of you being the best eye surgeon in the world

The Medical Profession is unique – it is definitely a noble profession. In spite of numerous attempts to vilify us in the media and the destruction of nursing homes, hospitals by enraged patients over perceived negligence, the public by and large still regard us as "noble". It is up to us, the medical fraternity to practice the highest ethical standards in spite of all hindrances. The joy that we get on restoring sight, as eye surgeons, makes every difficulty worthwhile. Remember, it is only the medical profession which willingly does charity using our skills and precious time to help those less fortunate on a regular basis.

The ten points I have mentioned above are all those that I have practised and still continue to practice myself. The reader is free to accept one or more or all of them - they have improved my life and earned me a restful sleep each night – the choice is yours!

## Congratulations

### 1. Prof. Sandeep Saxena, KGMU, Lucknow

*For being Conferred with the prestigious AN oration at Bihar Ophthalmological Society.*

### 2. Dr. Sarad Bajpai

*For being felicitated by Hon. Cabinet Minister Shri Narendra Singh Tomer ji, at Muraina MP, for exemplary community services*