

Doctors are humans

They are getting divorced, remarried, in a custody battle
Have a partner who is going to chemotherapy or having surgery
Today

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They have children at home who have crippling anxiety, ADHD, autism
Who are transgendered, depressed or have a big job interview
Who won't speak to them, or... need them constantly
Who are leaving home, addicted to drugs or on their honeymoon!
It's tiring, confusing, frightening, exciting, being a parent

Their car broke down this morning and the landlord told them they need to move
They are helping their mum move into aged care tomorrow
Dad is already there, he has dementia.
Next week they will pack up their parent's home
Negotiate with their siblings and the real estate agent.
Then fly back interstate for work, to be on-call.

Others are staying in the hospital accommodation
The bed is terrible, so on days off they drive two hours home for a good night's sleep
They are kind of used to it
For years now their training has required moving to a new job every 6 or 12 months.
It's pretty hard to have a social life, to keep up with friends
There are no other doctors this week because everyone's sick
And the Registrar has just gone on maternity leave

When they get home from this 14-hour shift, they will try to study for a couple of hours
For their next exam in three months' time.
This is the second time they have tried to pass this one
There is just so much to remember, and they are so tired.

They paid thousands of dollars for the privilege of sitting this exam
Knowing only 64% of applicants will pass
Yes, it's stressful
But they are 34 years old now, they have to keep moving, can't get stuck
The promise of becoming a consultant, that's what they live for
Every spare minute, studying, rehearsing, practicing for the exam

Freedom awaits...

Their partner gets up to the baby all the time, so they can get some rest
It's creating some tension, but they're okay... they say.
It's hard to tell
This state of tired feels so normal now
Sometimes they wonder if they are depressed, burnt out, in decline
They love their patients, the work... not the paperwork

They love solving problems, fixing things
Do they?
They've been saying that for so long now, like a broken record
It's a calling, a vocation, it's more than a job they say
Where is my life they say?
What happened to me? Who am I?

Next time you meet a doctor
Remember you are meeting a human being
With all the human needs and frailties that you have
With a life that can get messy like yours outside the hospital walls,
beyond the clinic

They want to help you

And... they are depleted.

Meet them as your partner, as a fellow human, smile if you can
They don't want your pity, they actually want to keep pretending they are okay
They are incredibly invested in helping you
So much so that they sometimes forget they are human too
You can help them, help you.
Tell them what you need, be clear, ask questions, say thank you.

Remember: Doctors are Humans.