



# Narrative Medicine: Honoring the Stories of Illness

*Rita Charon*

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## **Narrative Medicine: Honoring the Stories of Illness** Rita Charon

Narrative medicine has emerged in response to a commodified health care system that places corporate and bureaucratic concerns over the needs of the patient. Generated from a confluence of sources including humanities and medicine, primary care medicine, narratology, and the study of doctor-patient relationships, narrative medicine is medicine practiced with the competence to recognize, absorb, interpret, and be moved by the stories of illness. By placing events in temporal order, with beginnings, middles, and ends, and by establishing connections among things using metaphor and figural language, narrative medicine helps doctors to recognize patients and diseases, convey knowledge, accompany patients through the ordeals of illness--and according to Rita Charon, can ultimately lead to more humane, ethical, and effective health care. Trained in medicine and in literary studies, Rita Charon is a pioneer of and authority on the emerging field of narrative medicine. In this important and long-awaited book she provides a comprehensive and systematic introduction to the conceptual principles underlying narrative medicine, as well as a practical guide for implementing narrative methods in health care. A true milestone in the field, it will interest general readers, and experts in medicine and humanities, and literary theory.

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