

"One ward round remains forever etched in my memory. It was the morning round after being up all night admitting patients to a very busy medical ward. The entourage of white-coated doctors arrived at the bed of a man in his mid-60s admitted for acute asthma. Connected to drips, he wheezed away as his doctor presented the case to the rest of us. He exuded anxiety and fear. A few practical decisions were made about his medical management. Asthma is usually a mild disease but on occasion can be fatal. Treatment options for physicians are limited – so not much to think about, especially when you are practising mechanistic medicine where the mind-body connection, at best is paid lip service. And there were 30 more cases to see before we could get started on the real work of the day. We moved down the row of beds and saw a few more cases. Then our medical registrar whispered to us: "Don't all look at once," she said, "but our asthmatic gentleman has made a rather sudden improvement!" So of course everyone looked over to his bed at the same time. Amazingly, he did look a lot better, chatting away to other patients. Then he saw us looking at him and at once he started to huff and puff again. Everyone on the ward round laughed, but was this merely funny? In reality I had just received my first lesson in holistic medicine. I had just seen, first-hand, the incredibly powerful effect the mind could have over the body. But why weren't we using this? It was a good question; a question that would fuel my journey towards becoming a different sort of doctor altogether. A doctor, not merely a practitioner of medical science. A doctor that related to his patients, even loved them; a doctor like Uncle Louis."

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