

other new stories, and art into an annual periodical, called "*Spirit: The Permanente Literary & Arts Journal*." When published in Summer, 2006, it will be our second book. The first book, published in 2005, was *Soul of the Healer: The Art & Stories of The Permanente Journal: The First Seven Years*. Motivated by our readers' comments, we created this book to bring to-

gether our art and stories they say are so beautiful and uplifting.

The editors hope you enjoy reading your colleagues' never-before-told stories and poems, and that they bring you health. Write and tell us one of your stories, and please attend one of our writing groups, or tell us of your interest in starting your own. ❖

References

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commentary

Restoring Our Humanity: Our Intention to Heal



Fred Griffin, MD

Being a doctor can be such a lonely place to inhabit. Our task-oriented approaches to patient care can all too often reduce us to feeling more like two-dimensional characters in someone else's story than three- and four-dimensional people in our own meaningful lives. Never has there been a time in the history of medicine when physicians have had a greater need to find meaning in what they do. When we translate clinical experience into written narratives, we bring to life the physician-patient relationships in which we live. The act of writing helps us to restore our own humanity, and the act of seeing ourselves with our patients on the written page reminds us of what led most of us into medicine in the first place. These stories both humanize the physician-patient encounter and make physicians feel more like the human beings they are than the "human-doings" they sometimes become. And it is only through being more fully human ourselves that we may convey convincingly to patients our intention to heal. ❖

Fred Griffin, MD, is a psychiatrist and a professor at the University of Alabama School of Medicine. Dr Griffin has written extensively on literature in medicine, the use of writing in psychoanalysis, and the physician-patient relationship. He presented to and attended the *TPJ* writing workshop in Atlanta, Georgia in October 2005.