

heavily. “One hour of care in the emergency room means one hour of paperwork. It’s not a good way to keep people who went into the caring professions content.” Nevertheless, Stock reports

that hospitals around the country are coping with labor shortages by doing more to lure and retain long-term employees with better benefits, job flexibility, incentives for career advancement, and improved working conditions.

So is healthcare still a viable, stimulating profession with ample enough rewards? Yes, answers Spiro, in the *Yale Guide’s* chapter, “Growing Old in Medi-

cine.” “Medicine [and healthcare] is still a wonderful career: Physicians have the chance to help people, to feel needed, and to enjoy the spiritual arrogance that comes from ‘doing well by doing good.’ That is a great feeling at the end of the day, and at the end of a life.”

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“Medicine changes you.”

VIVEK MURTHY '98 • INTERNAL MEDICINE RESIDENT • BOSTON

Rather than lay out his every future career move, Vivek Murthy has looked for those things in his life that have generated “feelings of exhilaration.” One pinnacle involved his work for VISIONS Worldwide Inc., a nonprofit organization that he and his sister, Rashmi Murthy, founded in 1995.

It focused on AIDS education and other community-health projects in the United States and in India using volunteer student emissaries, and gave Murthy an understanding of his own need to be creative and innovative and to work with a wide variety of people. “Life is essentially all about looking for those opportunities,” he says, “and recreating those experiences, that passion, on a daily basis.”

He also learned about fundraising and marketing—noting that he lacked the necessary formal training in “management science.” But after considering business school and an advanced degree in public health, Murthy, 26, chose to attend medical school, following up on another passion—for science (he was a biochemistry concentrator)—and a childhood fascination with doctoring (his father is a family practitioner in Florida).

Still, at the Yale University School of Medicine, he was thrilled to find he did not have to leave economics and industry behind, and chose to pursue the university’s new, combined M.D./M.B.A. five-year program, from which he graduated this spring. He is now a medical resident at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston. Of medical training, he has some pithy thoughts: “...understanding who you are and who you are becoming through your experiences is the single most important part of medical training and practice,” he writes as a contributor to *The Yale Guide To Careers in Medicine and the Health Professions: Pathways to Medicine in the 21st Century*, published earlier this year.

“Medicine changes you,” he continues. “In subtle though profound ways, it affects how you think about people, health, and especially yourself. This change can be very positive. It can broaden your thinking, enrich your understanding of the human experience, and deepen your capacity to connect with the humanity in others. On the other hand, it can also generate cynicism, distance, loneliness, and an all too common myopia that allows medicine to consume one’s life.”

Myopia is the least of Murthy’s worries, however. His career path represents what he calls “part of a slow trend in which physicians are gaining experience in nonmedical areas—especially in healthcare policy and business.” The medical community “has to do a better job of unifying and advocating for itself, and help more in designing a healthcare system that will be both cost-effective and will preserve the meaningful doctor-patient relationship,” he asserts. “We’re going to have to train many more physicians who can bridge the gap between medicine and other fields.”

Murthy’s combined expertise in medicine and business (and he still might pursue an advanced degree in public health) makes him well qualified to follow through with one of his dreams: to develop a system that provides proven, affordable, integrated (traditional and alternative) healthcare in a standardized fashion.

His interest in alternative medicine stems from his own cultural background—both his parents emigrated from India. Although he grew up in Miami, Murthy’s frequent visits to his parents’ homeland allowed him to witness that country’s ancient art of healing, Ayurveda (Sanskrit for “the science of life”). “I have tried various alternative medical therapies myself,” he reports, “and I have found that many alternative modalities are based in principles that make sense, and seem to frequently be effective with patients.” Research in recent years has made important strides in investigating alternative medicine in the United States, Murthy says, but much more needs to be done, and he would like to be a part of that process.

In the meantime, he is working very long hours at the hospital. Any free time is used reading “things that inspire me to think about life outside of work,” he says, “and spending time with friends, and other anchors in my life, who remind me of who it is I truly want to be.”