



*This is a resident case log of a patient encounter in which  
an "Aware Medicine topic" was central.*

### Someone's Mom

During my second year of medical school I experienced the extreme joy of having a baby. It was by far the most spiritual and fantastic moment of my life and my husband's and my experiences as parents are simply amazing.

Family has always been a priority for me, but through the rigors of residency, there were definitely times when my job as a resident took precedence over my role as a wife, daughter, or sister. After having a baby, I struggled, immensely, with returning to work as a resident. I felt that my role as a mother was the most important one that I would ever have, and it should always be my number one priority. But, I had to go back to work. When I returned I started immediately on the OB service. My child had to start daycare. And quickly, I was spending more time at work than with my child.

While on the OB service I had a patient come in one night. It was her first baby. She came in very far along in labor and was progressing very quickly. She had a family doctor as her obstetrician and had a close relationship with her. The patient wanted her doctor and only her doctor to be there and she wanted an epidural. Unfortunately for her, she could not get an epidural until her primary doctor arrived in the hospital, and she was already too far dilated. In fact, it was time for her to push. The patient became hysterical saying that she couldn't do it without her doctor. She said "I don't know anyone in here. I'm scared." After having recently had a baby, I understood that feeling, so I told the patient that. As the patient was still acting hysterically, her mother informed me that the patient was a daycare provider. I asked where and she told me it was the same center that my child attended!

I told the patient that my child went there. She asked the baby's name, and she said,, "you're someone's (actual name inserted here, but withheld for pt privacy) mom! I am so happy you're someone's mom!" And with that, she calmed down, focused on the task at hand, and began to push. By the time her primary doctor arrived about 5 minutes later, the baby was just about crowning and we had a very nice delivery. Both mom and baby did extremely well.

The most important thing I learned from this patient is that even when I feel like work is taking precedence over my family, my family is still the most important aspect of my life; they are who ground me and keep me connected to my patients. Patients expect us to be competent physicians, but they connect with us when they know we are competent people outside of the office/ hospital.

I see this patient now almost every day at daycare, as she is a teacher and her child and my child are in the same classroom. We share a special bond; I helped her deliver her child and she helped me through a difficult transition.