Even our ‘fresher’ GP colleagues can be bemused when receiving a call from unhappy patients requesting an inaccessible service. It can be discouraging and confusing when a hitherto positive therapeutic relationship over several years is reduced to nothing or generates a complaint, as a consequence of failing to meet a patient’s expectations.

My heart goes out to all of us, who have been ‘set up to fail’. Take heart and glove up – the work must go on …

**HEALTH WARNING TO A YOUNG CLINICIAN**

_Beware_ —
in our profession, we must beware of what might come through the door, what might be waiting on the other end of the line what we summon up with a push of the button.

Names
masquerading as innocent, posing bright as soft blossom, waiting with hands outstretched: smiling, nodding, gently
Self-obsessed.

_Beware._
And when you reach out to take those hands And offer to ease those burdens, Dress the hurt, and pill away the pain,

Wear gloves.

For sharper than the flick of a neon switch
The bond can dissect;
A searing rip that tears right the way down to the root of the heart driving out breath with pain.

That traitor unseen,
That lurking aneurysm ruptures; and floods the room, hot anger that pulses and sucks and burns wild.

We are not allowed to move, Just to stand.

And after the rage, we Unpick our way out, desperate for air Clawing for equilibrium; upsetting the layers of discarded words and the charred ash of good intentions.

Beware the thorns.

The scars make for tougher hands. But still, my friend Glove the heart, before you call.

---

Rebecca Quinn, Rebecca is an inner-city GP, who occasionally encounters the sublime among the daily grind of people that she has the privilege of calling her patients.

Email: rebeccaquinn@nhs.net

This article was first posted on BJGP Life on 21 Apr 2023; https://bjgplife.com/warning

DOI: https://doi.org/10.3399/bjgp23X733149