

## I will miss you

'I will miss you', she said with her eyes filled with sincere tears. I did not know what to say.

'Please let me know, if you need anything'. I said meekly as I met her eyes. She gave me a big hug as she left the exam room. I pondered over those words, again and again since that day, a cold Monday in the fall of 2015. We express our love and longing for a loved one, when we say we miss them. We express it when we are going on a trip, a journey, somewhere far, far away. We talk about missing someone, when our loved ones are off on a voyage, and we will not see them for a long time, until we will again.

This was an endearing, brave patient of mine, sure she was going away. Going away to a place of no return. She was diagnosed with metastatic liver cancer a month before the office visit. This was diagnosed after a routine lab work showed elevated liver enzymes. She had no symptoms, no pain, and no physical signs. This was a hard diagnosis for her to accept because it came at the heels of her husband's surgery for colon cancer. The last three months, her focus had been on him, and his recovery. She did not want to focus on herself. Her cancer was found to be at an advanced stage, with no hope for recovery.

She opted for no treatments and chose hospice. At our last office visit, she was brave, calm, almost reassuring, reiterating that she felt fine and she did not have any pain. She taught me something very important that day. She taught me, the power of acceptance and the power of love. No matter how much we know as a medical community, no matter how advanced we are as a scientific society, we are limited, we are only but human.

Her acceptance of the inevitable, with such calm and grit, was ethereal, so powerful! It has been two years since she passed away, in her own home, surrounded by people she loved. Every time, I hear those words 'I will miss you' I remember her. The power of selfless love, that misses a connection even from the far beyond.