

The Misconceptions About Surgeons

Rachita Chopra¹ 

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The broad guide to choosing specialties iterates that if you want to read, do medicine; if you do not, do surgery. This is a misconception. All good surgeons are voracious readers. Their knowledge is crisp. They are some of the most well-read and practical people I know. Their approach to everything in life is logical, clear, and decisive. This does not come without due diligence and intelligence.

It is believed that surgeons are some of the most obnoxious people you come across. They have big pockets and bigger egos. This is a myth. The confidence and decisiveness are easy to mistake. It is not ego when they insist on their way forward. The good people I know definitely stand by what they say; it is very difficult to get a word in but they are the first to recant if they have made a mistake and immediately rectify. It is also ingrained in their training to ask for help. Know when you do not know. They are self-sure and self-sufficient but they are team players. They are brought up to reflexively work on consensus.

They are the least trusted of people, by their colleagues on regular days—Are you sure surgery is required? And by their patients almost always—Can it not be managed without an operation? But when push comes to shove, they are also the go-to people. Not only just for their expertise but also because they are inherently reliable, reassuring, and calm.

Surgeons are also described as heartless, interested in cutting the patient open and not so much in the patient. If actions

do indeed speak louder than words, it is hard to miss their compassion. The hours standing in the Operating Room are just the tip of the iceberg. Sleep, friends, family, and hobbies are not shed just because it was opted for. It is not force. Neither is it thrill that keeps them awake for hours after days of no sleep. It is compassion; the understanding that, if they did their job right, it could save that life. I do not know a single good surgeon who does not know all the parameters about their patient. This is their way of showing they care.

They do not do all of this as martyrs. And, it is not the God complex. It is what they love. Good surgeons are some of the most enthusiastic and spirited people I know. Their eyes light up, voices become steady, and hands automatically stretch whenever the subject of surgery is brought up. Sheer joy drives them forward. It does not matter if they sweat and bleed. It is not work. It is their passion.

Surgeons are commonly misunderstood. As a surgeon-in-making, as I strive to emulate my role models, it is hard to not notice that they do not fit in the frame. The good surgeons are not how the stereotypes are painted. A lot of those I know are good. So, next time you meet them, meet them with an open mind.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of Interest The author declares that she has no conflict of interest.

✉ Rachita Chopra
rachitachopra@gmail.com

¹ Hindu Rao Hospital and NDMC Medical College, G-18, Lajpat Nagar III, New Delhi 110024, India