

### Transcript Details

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### Spiritualism in the Storm: A Doctor's Philosophy Through Times of Crisis

Dr. Greenberg:

Coming to you from the ReachMD studios, this is *COVID-19: On The Front Lines* I'm Dr. Michael Greenberg.

I've come across an interesting way of thinking about patients; one that makes me a lot happier and brings the connection between my patients and myself a lot closer. Now, I have to preface this by saying I'm going to mix some science here with some spirituality. Not religion. I'm not necessarily a religious guy. And I've been thinking about this a lot lately, and having time to think during this pandemic has really clarified my belief here. You know, a lot of us note that there are ten commandments that are biblical. Don't worry, I'll get to the science part here. And there's that one commandment that says honor your father and mother. And I've always thought about this, like what's wrong with your grandparents and your cousins and your aunts and uncles? And there must be some type of hidden message here, especially one that we can use as physicians. So, I started to think about that, and I realized something.

I went back to my college botany and how plants grow. Actually, plants take all their nutrients from the soil, from dirt. They use that to grow and they use sunshine for energy. So, literally, and this is the science part, plants are made of dirt. Animals eat those plants to make their bodies and so they're made of dirt too. And our mothers eat those animals and plants and make these bodies for us. So, literally, we are made of dirt. And the word 'human' in front of human-being comes from the word humus that means soil. And in Hebrew, the word for man and dirt are the same, the word Adam. So, literally, we are all brothers and sisters having a common mother, the earth. And wouldn't it be interesting to practice medicine looking at that person across the exam room from you and come to realize that that person over there, that we call them patient, is literally my brother or my sister. How would that change medical practice? It certainly has for me, because I've always spoken about rules for being a happy doctor. But one of the things that I always talk about to residents and medical students is treat your patients like they're members of your own family. Plug it into the algorithm. If this were my father, mother, brother, sister sitting across from me, what would I do? And most importantly, what would I not do?

But now this takes that to a different level. To understand it through science, that's the truth; we are brothers and sisters. And I would challenge or invite anybody who relates to this to start to change that, because during this COVID pandemic, we're really seeing more and more instances of where people are treating each other like family. And if that's one of the silver linings that comes out of this COVID pandemic, I'd like to see it be something that we continue after we get back to whatever new normal life that it is. I think it would make medical practice happier. I think it will make doctors and patients happier, relate to each other as family because, to me, that's the truth.

For ReachMD this is *COVID-19: On The Front Lines* for continuing access to this and other episodes and to add your perspective towards the fight against this global pandemic visit us at ReachMD.com. Thank you for listening.