



What pathology taught me about gray: from certainty to nuance in diagnosis and in life

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I used to think in black and white. If you asked me to choose, I would choose one side or the other - never the gray in between. That was true not only of my opinions but also of my personality. I was expressive, outspoken, cheerful and emotionally transparent. If I liked something I said so. If I disliked something I said that too. I did not believe in hiding my feelings behind a mask or keeping my opinions to myself.

Earlier, even my wardrobe reflected my mindset. I loved strong colours, strong contrasts, blacks and whites. Gray seemed dull to me, almost lifeless and completely unlike the person I believed myself to be.

As I grew older, however, I began to change. Not because I became less passionate, but because I realised that not every situation requires a strong - or any - reaction. Gradually, the difference between reacting and responding became clearer. I learned that I do not have to express every thought, defend every opinion, or engage in every emotional moment. Calmness was no longer a compromise - it became a quiet strength.

Interestingly, this change permeated even my

hitherto vibrant wardrobe. I now own and enjoy gray-coloured dresses. I love to pair my gray sarees with other colours. What once seemed dull, now feels elegant, balanced, and full of possibilities.

I'd like to believe that the discipline of pathology has taught me this lesson. When I was younger in the profession, I craved a clear diagnosis, preferring the obvious benign lesions and the unmistakable malignancies to borderline lesions and indeterminate diagnoses. The gray zones frustrated me. I wanted definitive answers. But over time, I came to realize that the true challenge of pathology lies in the gray areas. Those are the cases that demand deeper thought, careful judgement, and intellectual humility. The thrill now is not merely to label something as benign or malignant, but to understand its potential, its behaviour, and where it truly belongs along the spectrum.

Pathology has influenced not only the way I diagnose but also the way I approach life. As the years have passed, I have become more comfortable with uncertainty. I still have strong convictions, but I no longer feel compelled to see every issue in black and white. I now

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understand when to let a colour shine and when to allow gray to provide balance. I have not lost my colours but have gained control over them. Experience has taught me when to leave room for nuance. Complexity is not a limitation but an essential part of both pathology and life.

I never did consider myself a gray person, yet today, I value gray deeply. It has become a symbol of maturity, balance, restraint, and

thoughtful judgement. It does not replace my colours: it allows them to exist more beautifully. Perhaps that is pathology's greatest lesson - not merely to diagnose with certainty, but also to face uncertainty with grit, patience, and gratitude. Ultimately, gray has become more than a colour; it is a metaphor for maturity, balance, and thoughtful decision making. And for that, I have come to appreciate the person I have become.

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