

radiographic alignment and range-of-motion charts. If the imaging looked satisfactory and the joint moved within expected degrees, I felt the task was complete.

That evening in Alicante expanded that view.

Movement is not simply a mechanical outcome. It carries memory, discipline, sacrifice, and meaning. When a dancer injures her foot, she does not merely lose function; she risks losing expression. When a laborer tears a ligament, he does not only lose stability; he risks losing livelihood.

The body is not only structure. It is purpose in motion.

Since that night, I find myself asking different questions in clinic. Beyond assessing swelling or alignment, I ask: What does this movement allow you to be? What does its loss take away? Restoration, I have come to understand, is not only about returning anatomy to baseline. It is about returning people to the roles that give their lives coherence.

The dancer taught the surgeon something simple yet profound: while we treat bones and tendons, we serve human aspirations.

Imaging will always remain indispensable. Technique will always matter. Precision will always be the foundation of orthopaedic practice. But precision without perspective is incomplete.

Watching flamenco did not alter my surgical methods. It altered my awareness.

When I now observe a patient walk across the clinic floor, I no longer see only gait mechanics. I see the fragile continuity of identity expressed through movement. I am reminded that beneath every joint I repair lies a story that cannot be captured on film.

Flamenco was not merely a performance. It was a reminder that preserving motion is, at its core, an act of respect—for the life that moves within the anatomy we so carefully reconstruct.

Delivering

The obstetrician:

Failure to progress.
Decels. Nonreassuring.
We need to section.

Me, the patient:

Love? Come back. Right now.
Mom? I'm fine. Nothing is wrong.
Sis? It's emergent.

Me, the physician:

Here is the number
for ECMO. And CMO.
I'm scared. I love you.

Heard & Thought in the OR:

Hemorrhage. Suction.
How much neo am I on?
Blood loss 1.5.

Nuchal, times one, times
two ... Times three
A cry. Times two, three.

—Suchita Shah Sata, MD