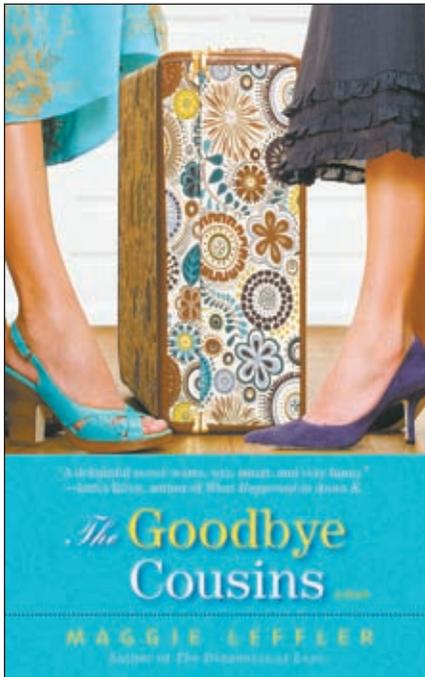


Maggie Leffler Finds Inspiration for Her Words in Family, Patients, and a Life Well-Balanced

by Christopher Cussat

Maggie Leffler has found balance in her life and that is a good thing. As a novelist, family doctor, and mother of two sons ages three and seven, she definitely has a lot going on.



Originally from Maryland, Leffler first came to Western Pennsylvania for her residency at UPMC St. Margaret Hospital. As fate would have it, she met her husband (who is also a family doctor) on the first day of her residency at St. Margaret's! "We have stayed in Pittsburgh ever since," she adds. As a board certified family practitioner, Leffler currently works for West Penn Allegheny Health Systems, and sees patients of all ages.

Leffler is also the author of two novels published by Bantam Books: *The Diagnosis of Love* and *The Goodbye Cousins*. The first book is about a young physician who moves to England to reclaim her life the year after her mother dies. The second book is about a few of the minor characters from the first book and their search for family. "I am just finishing my third novel now about a whole new cast of characters," she adds.

Very often, family members can inspire and instigate an artistic drive. Leffler is no different. In fact, she feels that her inclination toward writing was sparked in part by her maternal grandmother. "She was the author of five books, a lawyer, as well as a mother of five," Leffler explains. "As a little girl, I found her to be incredibly inspirational."



Even since her childhood, Leffler says she has always been writing stories, novels, and screenplays. This helps her to balance and moderate the stressful nature of working in the health care field. "Redirecting some of the emotional energy that goes into practicing medicine into a fictional world is also restorative for me," she notes.

Leffler believes her ability to stay up late often helps her balance her professional time demands with dedicating time to her artistic interests. "I have always been a night owl—and I write a lot at night, after I get my boys into bed!"

When asked if she would ever desire to write novels full-time, Leffler contends that finding and living with a balance between her medical career and creative output has been a perfect match for her. "I would certainly consider the option, but for me, writing works better as part of a dual career with medicine."

She concludes that working with people everyday not only gives her personal enjoyment and fulfillment in her medical profession, but these experiences also often inspire her creativity. "I really enjoy interacting with people, listening to their stories, and trying to solve problems—at this point, I can't imagine one without the other."

For more information about Leffler, her novels, and her essays, please visit: www.MaggieLeffler.com.

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