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With a Little Help From Our Friends

At the clinical/research site where I work, a wide variety of nursing journals are circulated among the nurses. As I look them over, I sometimes notice recurring themes. A year or so ago, articles on so-called lateral violence among nurses seemed to be popular. This year, perhaps in response, more articles seem to be addressing topics such as dealing with the difficulties of nursing, mentoring, resilience, and caring for ourselves. It is hard to imagine a specialty that demands more personally than oncology nursing, but in today's healthcare world, the challenges seem to exist regardless of the types of patients you may be caring for.

Partly in response to a recognition that we all need to be nurtured, Debi Boyle, MSN, RN, FAAN, a great friend to nursing and oncology nursing in particular, has just published a gem of a book designed to help each of us through the day. *Nurturance for Nurses: Reflections for Compassionate Healers* provides daily affirmations to support nurses as they care for patients. Many of these affirmations are nurse-specific and some apply more generically, but regardless, they provide us with a brief, easy-to-read dose of some "soul food," if you will. To accompany the book, Debi designed a set of cards suitable for sharing with colleagues who deserve some special recognition. These new products are a reminder to us that nurses know what nurses need.

It is no news that times today are rough for many of us. The economy's problems have resulted in many nurses extending their work life beyond retirement, struggling to help make ends meet for their families, ensuring that they have health

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coverage, and switching roles in an attempt to be able to continue working for a few more years. When you add these stressors to the already stressful job of oncology nurses, the burdens are very apparent. So, it is even more important for each of us to look around us at our coworkers and imagine what we can do to improve our workday world. Kindness, consideration, a helpful attitude, and support go a long way in making each day better for all of us. An inspirational affirmation to get the day (or night) started, even a "chicken soup for the soul" type story, can go a long way in setting the tone for the shift and perhaps the way we go about doing our work. It may contribute to the resilience that Grafton et al. talk about in their article in this issue (see pages 698–705) or help

us avoid the inevitable depletion in our reserves that so often plague us.

Some of these strategies may have a positive effect on our patients, too. Taking a couple of extra seconds or minutes to lighten a patient's spirits comes naturally to most of us, but sometimes we forget and get caught up in the scurrying around that is so vital if we are to do our jobs completely. Much in the same way that exercise can actually decrease fatigue, our ability to stretch those encouragement muscles could have positive short-term effects on each patient and family. Sit. Look the patient in the eye. Wonder what it is that you can do at that moment to really make a difference. Does it take so much time? Maybe it will pay us back in measures we can only imagine.

I think, in the end, that is what I am really saying. We get back much more than we give when we take the time to acknowledge the work we do and the job our coworkers are doing—and don't forget the MDs and ancillary workers. Books and cards are just one option. Take a minute and e-mail me with some of the ways you nurture your colleagues through the tough and the good times. We all will benefit.

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