

# It Has Always Been About Relationships

Anne Katz, PhD, RN, FAAN

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Since the beginning of my nursing career in South Africa, for me, it has always been about relationships. I was three years older than my classmates in nursing school and was married before I graduated, so my social life was separate, but I made friends and enjoyed listening to their dating successes and woes. One of my instructors lived down the road from me, and we spent many an evening talking about nursing. She had worked in Canada's North, and I remember her telling me that it was so cold that her contact lenses froze. Little did I anticipate that, one day, I too would move to Canada (the cold certainly has been a persistent issue for me). In many ways, she was a mentor—although I didn't realize it at the time—and she was certainly an inspiration.

After an absence of five years from clinical practice in which my husband and I traveled, emigrated, and had two children, I finally returned to work in a part-time position at a large hospital in my new hometown of Winnipeg. The unit used a primary nurse model, and I was not used to the idea of being solely responsible for "my" patients and the lack of teamwork I experienced. Fortunately, a couple of experienced nurses were willing to help this rookie, and I enjoyed being back at work and feeling useful.

In short order, I worked in HIV/AIDS care and then moved to the University of Manitoba to teach in the

Faculty of Nursing, fulfilling a dream of mine to influence nurses of the future. Both experiences focused heavily on relationships.

Caring for young men with HIV/AIDS at a time when treatment was limited created strong bonds between members of the interprofessional team as we struggled each day to keep going in the face of too many deaths that came too soon. My relationships with my patients were intense, and there were many days when I thought that I could not do enough. However, there were other days when I felt that I had made a real difference—not because of my technical skills, but by merely being present.

On the other hand, teaching at the university felt, at times, like I was not making a positive difference; students were more likely to complain than appear to be inspired! However, I established mentoring relationships with a few students that have lasted more than 20 years. I have enjoyed seeing students graduate and succeed in so many different ways. Some have gone on to graduate school, and I take vicarious pleasure in their new roles as nurse practitioners and clinical nurse specialists. I have encouraged them to write, do research, and publish, and their trajectory has perhaps been just a tiny bit influenced by my support and guidance.

Being active in different ways in the world of professional publishing as an author, reviewer, editorial board member, and editor is a different way of being a mentor. The relationships one fosters in these roles are often at a distance, but with a much larger sphere of mentorship. The relationships forged in these roles are, at the same time, professional and personal. Writing is an often lonely endeavor, but one I relish in the

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early morning hours of the day. Reviewing others' submissions is similarly isolated, but I always think about the authors who worked diligently on what I am privileged to read and comment on. Being part of an editorial board is a group effort with the potential for future collaboration and relationships with fellow board members that may last a career.

Being the editor of this journal, my second editorship in 16 years, has been an honor for me. The *Oncology Nursing Forum* is one of the top, if not premier, oncology nursing journals. Facilitating the dissemination of oncology nursing science and knowledge has changed practice and made a difference. But, equally important to me, it has created relationships with so many that I will treasure for the rest of my career. First, there are the readers who have told me again and again how much they have enjoyed my editorials. These musings and reflections are usually not of a scholarly nature, and I make no apologies for that. I have a voice, and I am grateful for the opportunity to share that with you. After each issue, I have been buoyed by the responses to the survey sent out to our authors; almost universally our authors are appreciative of the efforts of the various staff who edit, polish, and generally make everyone's words the best they can be. The expert team of copy editors do their work with grace and speed, and each editorial I have written is proof

of that. No editor can do the daily work without a stellar editorial assistant, and Michelle Scheponik, BA, and more recently Rachel Geffrey, BFA, have unfailingly forgiven my memory lapses and general frustration when technology gets away from me. My relationship with Leslie McGee, MA, senior editorial manager, has transcended the professional and moved into the personal, and I will miss our regular contact, not to mention our joint presentations and culinary adventures at ONS Congress. Of course, there are other staff at ONS who have shared their expertise with me, and, although there are too many to list, their guidance has been valuable to my professional growth for many years.

If you haven't realized by now, this is my last editorial for the *Forum*. Let me end with my best wishes to the incoming editor, Debra Lyon, RN, PhD, FNP-BC, FAAN, whose words will grace these pages. There is so much I will miss about this role, but it is time for someone else to experience it all.



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## **Lyon Named as Incoming *Oncology Nursing Forum* Editor**



The *Oncology Nursing Forum* (ONF) welcomes Debra Lyon, RN, PhD, FNP-BC, FAAN, as its sixth editor, effective January 1, 2020. Contributing to more than 80 publications and working as principal investigator or coinvestigator on studies collectively supported with more than \$7 million in research grants, Lyon brings her in-depth knowledge and expertise as both a nurse writer and researcher. She is currently the executive associate dean and Kirbo Endowed Chair in the College of Nursing at the University of Florida in Gainesville.

Lyon will succeed outgoing ONF Editor Anne Katz, PhD, RN, FAAN, a clinical nurse specialist at the Manitoba Prostate Centre and a sexuality counselor for the Department of Psychosocial Oncology at CancerCare Manitoba, both in Winnipeg, Canada. Katz has served as ONF editor since 2012.