

Spring 2023

Lessons From a Natural-Born Teacher: Reflections on Mentorship and Kindness in Medical Education

Chloe Hille

Nova Southeastern University KPCOM, ch2063@mynsu.nova.edu

Brianna Wetmore

Nova Southeastern University KPCOM, bw1058@mynsu.nova.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/bestill>



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#), [Fine Arts Commons](#), [Interprofessional Education Commons](#), [Medical Humanities Commons](#), [Other Nursing Commons](#), and the [Photography Commons](#)

This Essay has supplementary content. View the full record on NSUWorks here:

<https://nsuworks.nova.edu/bestill/vol7/iss1/22>

Recommended Citation

Hille, Chloe and Wetmore, Brianna (2023) "Lessons From a Natural-Born Teacher: Reflections on Mentorship and Kindness in Medical Education," *be Still*: Vol. 7, Article 22.

Available at: <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/bestill/vol7/iss1/22>

This Essay is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Osteopathic Medicine at NSUWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in be Still by an authorized editor of NSUWorks. For more information, please contact nsuworks@nova.edu.

Lessons From a Natural-Born Teacher: Reflections on Mentorship and Kindness in Medical Education

The transition from preclinical education to medical clerkships is an important period of medical school that challenges students to advance their clinical knowledge. The help of strong and inspirational mentors is crucial for students to not only gain proficiency in their clinical skills, but to also develop into confident and compassionate future physicians.

AUTHORS: CHLOE HILLE AND BRIANNA
WETMORE

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, set against the blue background.

Lessons From a Natural-Born Teacher: Reflections on Mentorship and Kindness in Medical Education

The transition from pre-clinical education to patient care can be an exciting, yet daunting experience for many medical students. There is often pressure to learn quickly and to avoid missteps in patient care, compounded by the assumption that you already know what you are doing. While this presents a huge responsibility for the student, it presents an even grander responsibility for our preceptors and professors to not only advance our clinical knowledge, but to shape the next generation of medical professionals as compassionate people and caregivers. Through the chaos of this transition in our education, many of us are lucky enough to learn from natural-born teachers who quickly become mentors and friends. With their help, this transition can be navigated with confidence and enthusiasm.

During our third-year surgery rotation, in between surgeries, we had the unexpected opportunity to learn from the hospital Wound Care Specialist, Sherry. Even though Sherry wasn't expecting to have students work with her, she welcomed each of us with open arms and was eager to have us join her as she made rounds in the hospital and performed wound care consults. Sherry met each of us at our unique level of learning and allowed us to participate in each and every patient case, diagnosing, debriding, and dressing all types of wounds. She used the tried and true method of "see one, do one, teach one" to always encourage us to learn something new, and had the utmost confidence in us each time we attempted a new skill. Her trust in us as learners helped us to exercise autonomy and build valuable skills early on in our medical education. She was always looking for ways to peak our interest, and when not seeing patients, would delve into an office drawer filled with hundreds of photographs of some of the most fascinating cases she has been involved in throughout her accomplished career, recalling each case with vivid detail.

What made Sherry stand out most was her ability to connect with people on a personal level. While rounding through the hospital with her, it quickly became evident how adored she was by staff in every unit who would frequently stop us and say, “You are learning from the best!” She proved them right with every patient interaction she had, treating each person with patience, kindness, and genuine care. One memorable experience was when we were treating a patient who had second degree burn wounds on his scalp from prolonged sun exposure. When we went to follow-up with him the next day, Sherry packed all the wound care supplies that were required for his care. Included in these supplies was a straw hat that Sherry had brought from her own home to gift to the patient. This way, with the hat, he would have a barrier to protect his scalp from prolonged sun exposure when spending time outdoors. In between patient visits, we shared our interests and experiences outside of medicine and created some of our fondest memories sharing stories over a Diet Pepsi at the end of the day.

In the medical field, the role that teachers take on is one that is incredibly intricate. In a field where there is an immense amount of stress and burnout, teachers must find the delicate balance of preparing students for exams, guiding them professionally, and inspiring confidence and continued excitement for patient care. Even now, almost a full year after completing our surgery rotation, Sherry continues to be invested in our personal and professional growth and is always just a text or email away with words of advice and encouragement. Teachers like Sherry lead the way by example, shaping the next generation of doctors through their crucial interactions with students. The lessons we learned from Sherry will undoubtedly shape the kind of physicians we become, and we can only hope to pay forward her legacy of mentorship and kindness to future generations of medical students

- ▶ Chloe Hille and Brianna Wetmore are third year medical students at KPCOM. Chloe is from Minneapolis, Minnesota and is interested in pursuing a career in either Radiology or Psychiatry. Brianna is from Denver, Colorado and is hoping to pursue Emergency Medicine or Dermatology.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS