



Article Served as Inspiration for Continued Journaling

Just a word of congratulations for your article, “Autoethnography: Reflective Journaling and Meditation to Cope With Life-Threatening Breast Cancer” (Sealy, 2012), published in the *Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing*. I so appreciated the piece. Truly, I felt a great calm after reading, a tribute to your ability to write with honesty, compassion, and self-revelation.

I'm an oncology nurse, mostly retired, who shares group facilitation with a young colleague for women diagnosed with breast cancer. We like to include some introduction to journaling with the women in our groups, though we are woefully ill-prepared to do so based on our own learning and experience.

Both the content and *feel* of your article inspire me to continue.

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The Author Responds

I am honored by your feedback. I felt the risk of self-exposure in writing this manuscript, but I think many individuals face unresolved issues from the past that lead to emotional distress during treatment and recovery of a life-threatening illness such as cancer.

As a nursing professor, I was aware of approaches toward journaling, but I felt I was in foreign territory through most of the process of journaling and meditation during my illness. Much of the literature discusses how to journal or meditate, but not how to process your thoughts toward healing and recovery. I do not think it is a quick process. It was only through reflection that I could see the progress I made through meditation. Cognitive insight, however, does not immediately change one's emotional default position. Women need support during this struggle as nurses listen empathetically. Many emotions may have been buried in their psyche prior to the diagnosis.

My family was traumatized by my breast cancer during my treatment, and it has taken more than two years for us to recover. As a family, I can honestly say we are stronger than we were before my diagnosis. If you are interested, please visit my Web site, www.patriciasealy.com,

to hear more information about our story from the (audio) voices of my husband, Kevin, and daughters, Eliza (aged 13 years at the time of diagnosis, and Leonie, aged 9 years). Our book, *A Family's Resurrection From Breast Cancer*, provides intimate details of my journaling and meditation during the day-to-day, and often hourly, struggles we faced and how communication and roles changed in the family toward recovery.

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Reference

- Sealy, P.A. (2012). Autoethnography: Reflective journaling and meditation to cope with life-threatening breast cancer. *Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing*, 16, 38–41. doi:10.1188/12.CJON.38-41

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