

# Finding the Way by Following the Heart

Jonelle Hudson

I am a nursing student at Boise State University, a mother of four, and a volunteer at St. Luke's Mountain States Tumor Institute. Three years ago, I was asked to move from the information and discharge desk in the main hospital and over to Mountain States Tumor Institute. I did this move with anxiety, not sure how I would react to patients with cancer. At that time, I had the dream of being a labor and delivery nurse, but now, three years later, I cannot imagine being anywhere else but in oncology.

The lessons I have learned from the patients and nurses are lessons that I will carry with me for life. The perseverance, strength, and faith of each patient that I have come into contact with has touched my soul forever. As a pre-nursing student, in the spring semester of 2011, I was able to take holistic nursing from Marty Downey, PhD, RN, AHN-BC, HTPA, CNE. Her wisdom, strength, and teaching only fueled my passion for wanting to pursue my oncology certification once I finish my degree. It was in her class that I was able to put words to the type of nurse I want to be and to dig deeper into why I want to be a nurse. It is not the money and it is not the job security; rather, it is to be there for patients and their families as they journey through their healing experience.

Each patient's experience is different. Even if that healing comes at the end of their life, to be able to give support to patients and their families through that journey is where I know I have been called. For Professor Downey's class, the students were required to write in a journal each week and record what we learned and our experiences. One week, Professor Downey asked us to write a poem, a song, or lyrics around an

## In the Quiet

Cynthia C. Adams, RN, MSN, EdD

In the quiet, I face the bald head in the mirror  
I breathe in the courage it takes to accept this new branding  
All the peace and joy of my life has taken a sudden turn now  
A fierce spirit of survival grips me as my young children play at my knee  
"Death is not an option," speaks my husband and I nod slowly in agreement  
A new chapter opens and we travel an unknown path with trembling hearts.

In the quiet, I gather all the tools of my twenty year nursing career  
Time to turn the table and receive the best of my own care  
Time to draw from the art and science of all that has come before to heal me  
I do not want to be the patient; I am so much better at being the nurse  
But cancer has taken that choice away now, and I must learn to receive  
I must humble myself in this moment and channel my strengths inward.

In the quiet, I fill with the love and kindness of all the people circling my family  
I live now in the world of casseroles and cards, potted plants and outreached hands  
My doctors reach deep for a special kindness as the end of chemotherapy draws near  
I am tired, weak, struggling to continue. They remind me of the high stakes involved  
My two children center me, anchor me, and pull me forward to the future  
The clarity of my purpose here on earth provides direction that overrides all.

In the quiet, I pause to fill with gratitude for I am blessed to have so much to live for  
There are people in the waiting room who go home to empty houses  
There are people in the waiting room that have no one to hold them close at night  
I share my casseroles, offer rides, and knit scarves for my sister patients  
All the while savoring the smell of my children just out of the bath each evening  
And snuggling close in their pajamas to read bedtime stories that take all our fears away.

*Dedicated to my beautiful children and Hanna Adams*

Jonelle Hudson is a nursing student at Boise State University and a volunteer at St. Luke's Mountain States Tumor Institute, both in Idaho; Cynthia C. Adams, RN, MSN, EdD, is the director of Nursing at Capital Community College in Hartford, CT; and Monica Beck, MSN, RN, OCN®, is a clinical assistant professor at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. The authors take full responsibility for the content of the article and poetry. The authors did not receive honoraria for this work. No financial relationships relevant to the content of this article and poetry have been disclosed by the authors or editorial staff. Hudson can be reached at [HUDSONJONELLE@gmail.com](mailto:HUDSONJONELLE@gmail.com), Adams can be reached at [cadams@capitalcc.edu](mailto:cadams@capitalcc.edu), and Beck can be reached at [monica.beck@uah.edu](mailto:monica.beck@uah.edu), with copy to editor at [CJONEditor@ons.org](mailto:CJONEditor@ons.org).

Key words: lessons learned; blessed; mentor

Digital Object Identifier: 10.1188/14.CJON.125-126