

Being Known and Seeds

BERYL LAWN, MD

Editor's Note: As with all human interactions, teaching is an interpersonal skill with great emotional subtext. Creative insights that highlight our motivations for teaching should be shared. When well expressed, memorable teaching moments can inspire the larger audience of readers. Similarly, described from the learner point of view, interactions that led to a light-bulb "flash" of awareness between teacher and learner may positively affect our next teaching encounter. In the new category of "On Teaching," JGME invites personal essays about teaching or learning that are entertaining, enlightening, or thought-provoking and of interest to other teachers of graduate physicians—the readership of JGME. Please contact jgme@acgme.org for questions. — Gail Sullivan, MD, MPH, Editor-in-Chief

BEING KNOWN

Medical students are often afraid
to ask personal questions
for fear of offending
the patient.
I tell them
we can ask anything—
anything at all—
if we ask
with care, concern,
compassion.
Patients, like the rest of us,
yearn to be
known.

SEEDS

Today I began reading
a book
given to me
thirteen years ago,
previously untouched.
I once diagnosed
a patient's challenging medical
problem
based on my vivid
recall
of a vignette in a
medical school lecture
thirty-six years before.
We're often unaware
of the seeds we're sowing,
or when
they might take root.

Beryl Lawn, MD, is a psychiatrist at Scott & White Memorial Hospital in Temple, Texas.

These poems are reprinted with permission from Dr Lawn's book, *Poems From Both Sides of the Fence* (Texas Review Press, 2011). Dr Lawn's poetry reflects her experiences in medical school, residency, and more than 30 years as an attending physician as a paraplegic.

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