BOOK REVIEWS

Zlatic TD, Zellmer WA, eds. *Nourishing the Soul of Pharmacy: Stories of Reflection*. Lenexa, Kansas: American College of Clinical Pharmacy; 2011, 322 pp, \$39.95 (softcover), ISBN 9781932658835.

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Editors Zlatic and Zellmer have compiled a book of personal reflections from 69 different authors. These reflections are written by practitioners, student practitioners, educators, and others in the field of pharmacy. There are essentially 10 different chapters in the book which contain reflections from authors surrounding a number of personal and professionally relevant topical areas. The work contains a well-written preface explaining the concept behind the book as well as providing specific notes to the reader regarding purpose of the book. The book's intention is to capture stories that illustrate the soul of pharmacy in its many forms. The primary and underlying purpose of the piece is to include, "...stories, particularly of patient encounters, that lead to complex insight and improved patient care."

The editors acknowledge that this volume is not intended to be a warm and fuzzy kind of text like *Chicken Soup for the Soul*. To be sure, some of the stories in the volume will touch individuals differently depending upon the way the reader chooses to interact with the stories being told. Storytelling and writing are an art; the reader who opens this text expecting the likes of Shakespeare or Dickens will be sorely disappointed. Every story is written from the perspective unique to each author's reflection and what they learned from their experience or encounter. It does not mean that each story is Pulitzer Prize-winning writing; although, to underestimate the quality of many of the writers would be an unfair evaluation of the text as a whole. The reader should know that each story uses reflection and analysis in a way that a simple narrative story may have failed to do.

The reader should approach the text with an open mind and consider the life-changing reflection that is being read. Respect must be given to the writer's courage and care to tell a reflective story which shows all we may be as we practice our life's work. Sometimes

those pictures are not pretty, and they can also come from very deep "soft underbelly" places within our makeup. These are often those places we do not want others to see or even want to see in ourselves. This is not a weakness but instead a profound strength when the analysis provided by these reflections has the power to remind us why we chose a career in pharmacy. Because we are all human and our humanity comes in a beautiful myriad of shapes, sizes, colors, etc, we have much to learn from our own introspection and reflection, but we also have much to learn from this text in the reflections of our peers.

This reviewer found herself reflecting upon many of the student encounters I have had with student pharmacists over an 18+ year career in pharmacy academia. For this reason, this reviewer thinks this work has much to offer the reader. It reminds us all of our humanity and the power we have as individuals to transform the world in which we live. As pharmacy professionals, we are a very evidence-based lot of highly educated individuals. This work intends for us to reflect on our roles in the work we do each day. What kind word can we say to a patient, student, caregiver, or colleague that will transform that person's day, therapy outcome, etc? What act have we performed that has made a difference in the lives of other human beings? The answers to these questions are not easily quantified in the evidence based ways we expect as educators and practitioners. However, Zlatic and Zellmer argue effectively in this volume that reflection provides us with power to learn, to empathize, to humanize, and ultimately to transform the lives of others and the profession we have chosen.

As an educator, this reviewer sees many uses for this volume. How many of us have asked for student reflections which leave us feeling flat and as though little or no introspection occurred? Zlatic and Zellmer not only include the reflections mentioned above in this work, but also provide an afterword and 2 appendices which further illustrate how reflection can be used in our teaching and our learning. It provides us with additional tools that as pharmacy educators we so often look for in trying to inculcate professionalism in our students.

In comparison, there are several texts that provide short stories in a larger volume. This text does so using storytelling as a tool, but more importantly, it uses reflection as the tool for learning and continuously improving ourselves and the work we do. If as a reader you want to read flawlessly written stories and come away with a feel-good sense of being, I suggest you skip this book. If however, you are looking for

a book to make you think about your own limitations, about how you can overcome them, and how you can make the profession of pharmacy better, than you should consider this book. The criticisms I have addressed are also addressed by the editors, and for these reasons, I would recommend this book to anyone within any area of pharmacy. The reader who is paying attention will have no other choice but to reflect upon

their own story and thereby reaching the “soul” that is their life’s work.

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