

IN EVERY ISSUE

Message from the Publisher

BY SUSAN MCCLURE

The valuable outcome of an improper word.

When I learned about this issue's Diagnosis Cancer piece on talking to kids about cancer (see "[Straight Talk](#)" by Erik Ness), I flashed back to my treatment in 1997 for breast cancer. My son, Ryan, was two and a half, and one day his day care center called—they needed to discuss "an urgent matter" with me. I was shocked to learn that my toddler, who was still learning words like *french fry*, had blurted out some horrible obscenity in class. Secretly, I blamed his father, who had a habit of yelling while in traffic.

On the way over to the center, I rehearsed my apology. I was going to tell them that I had been pre-occupied fighting this cancer thing, and my parenting skills had obviously slipped. They could rest assured that I would talk to both Ryan and his dad as soon as I got home and that nothing like this would EVER happen again.

Upon my arrival, I was ushered into the front office, and waited nervously. When the manager arrived, her face was full of concern, as she began to recount the day's horrific event. She said Ryan had been playing house with his friends, and while dressing a baby doll, he said, "My mommy's booby is sick." An employee who was within earshot pulled Ryan aside, placed him on a chair in the corner and said, "We don't use words like that in this classroom," and that his mommy would be told about his bad behavior.

"That's it?" I asked incredulously. "I have breast cancer! My son was trying to talk about it and you shut him down!" The manager said she was sorry for what I was going through but that the proper word to use is *breast* and that I should make sure to correct Ryan each time he uses an "improper word."

I was trembling (a.k.a. fuming) at this point. I told her she should try to understand that taking time to comfort a child who was obviously distraught about his mother's illness would have been far more meaningful than merely focusing on the fact that he said *booby* instead of *breast*.

When Ryan and I got home, we talked about my cancer. He told me he liked me better with hair. I laughed and told him that I did too but that my hair would come back in time. He also didn't like how much I had to sleep. I told him that I understood but resting gave me the strength I needed to fight my cancer.

After he had finished asking questions and sharing his feelings, we both felt better. That incident at the day care center prompted a meaningful discussion

with my son and taught me never to underestimate even the youngest child's ability to absorb the stress and fear associated with battling cancer. While we're on the subject of sharing, don't forget to take time to check in with your spouse. This issue's Moving On piece (see "[Marriage and Cancer?](#)" by Curtis Pesmen) reminds us why our partners are called co-survivors.

This issue also brings needed attention to prevention barriers faced by minorities in Jo Cavallo's "[Are Minorities Benefiting From Prevention Priority?](#)". Our cover story, "[The New Specialty in Cancer Care](#)" by Joanne Kenen, highlights how patients are living better thanks to palliative medicine. And finding melanoma's weaknesses leads to new treatment success, which Nicole LeBrasseur and Heather Van Epps detail in "[Below the Surface](#)".

As we begin our seventh year of publishing, we hope you'll continue to come along. No matter where you are on the cancer journey, we're here for you. You can still find us at www.curetoday.com, but for a sneak peak at all we have in store for 2008, check out CURE Media Group's new home page at www.curemediagroup.com.

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