

My mentor

Words of gratitude: Israel Zighelboim, MD

by *Nora Kizer, MD*

The significance of mentors should never be taken for granted, as they provide an invaluable source of wisdom, support, and advice that is completely voluntary. They are the individuals who give us wings to let us become something we never imagined possible for ourselves. As very few people have the time or ability to be effective mentors, I consider myself lucky to have blossomed under someone who naturally fell into that role for me. My achievements in residency are due in large part to the efforts of a very capable and dedicated mentor, Israel Zighelboim, MD. It has been an unexpected experience that not only fills me with deep respect and appreciation for such selfless guidance, but also instills within me the same desire to positively influence and mold others in a similar fashion.

As a gynecologic oncology surgeon, Dr. Zighelboim did not have an abundance of leisure time on his hands. However, he never failed to find time to answer my questions or concerns. The sincerity and completeness of his guidance lent me a confidence that has helped increase my skills and made me a better physician and surgeon during my residency. On many occasions, he spent extra time to sit down with me and review articles, presentations, and methods of interpreting data, all of which has helped develop my research methods, my scientific writing skills, and my public speaking technique. Such assistance was not required or even expected of him, but because he willingly devoted his time and expertise to me, he provided meaningful educational opportunities that have improved my abilities.

His own wealth of knowledge is inspiring and continues to provide me with motivation to improve mine through reading and clinical education. Knowledge is a quality imperative within the surgical world, as it breeds the confidence that allows a surgeon to quickly assess and manage a critical situation effectively. Quite unsurprisingly, it is one at which my mentor excels. His knowledge extends into the operating room, where each movement and each step within the procedure is purposeful, well thought-out, and executed properly. I hope to



Dr. Kizer



Dr. Zighelboim

imitate such style and competence myself when I am at the head of the surgical team. He is an enthusiastic teacher, both on the floor and in the operating room. His own drive pushes me to excel as a capable surgeon and an inspiring educator.

Lastly, he has been my unwavering support. During my journey through residency, there have been moments where I doubted my abilities or thought my aspirations impossible. Yet, I completed my first clinical research project, published my first articles, performed my first lymph node dissection, and learned how to discuss difficult end-of-life issues in a respectful manner, all as a result of his encouragement, support, guidance, and professionalism. I find it incredibly rewarding that someone whom I have grown to respect and admire would be so invested in my career. But this is the essence of the mentor-mentee relationship, and with this essay, I thank him. □

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