

# Letters



## OR Learning Opportunities

“Operating on Your Mother” (Letters, November) struck a chord with me on 2 counts.

“She held their hand.”

Early in the days of monitored anesthesia care, my patients would request a certain anesthesiologist. When asked why, they responded, “He held my

hand.” He was affectionately chided by envious colleagues that hand-holding is not real anesthesia. Stories I heard from patients over the years included the vast nonverbal communication that his hand-holding conveyed. And this communication went both ways. In the briskness and strength of a patient’s squeeze, our beloved anesthesiologist could tell if the patient needed repositioning, or IV anti-anxiety vs. IV anti-(back) pain vs. IV muscle relaxant medication. On occasion, he would ask me to give more intraocular lidocaine when it appeared to me that the patient was perfectly comfortable. He taught me that IV Toradol at the end of the case would prevent postop pain from my inadvertent intraoperative corneal abrasion. His adult children are currently in the process of recording the nuances of his hand-holding communication. They thought they would name the booklet *Get a Grip*. Yikes—not the correct title!

“Be my assistant in case I crack.” When I was called upon to operate on my colleague, I had another ophthalmologist outside the OR in case I ruptured the capsule. I later discovered that my (most experienced) eye scrub nurse had a backup in case she developed a sick migraine during the case. The circulating nurse also had a backup, and our admitting nurse had a member of the IV team as backup in case she failed to start the IV the first time.

Those are memorable learning experiences that make us better and more humble people.

*Eileen Marie Wayne, MD  
Moline, Ill.*

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**WRITE TO US.** Send your letters of 150 words or fewer to us at *EyeNet Magazine*, American Academy of Ophthalmology, 655 Beach Street, San Francisco, CA 94109; e-mail [eyenet@aaio.org](mailto:eyenet@aaio.org); or fax 415-561-8575. (*EyeNet Magazine* reserves the right to edit letters.)

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