

Donna Henderson has been many things to me – a professor, mentor, colleague, department chairperson, and friend. Although our relationship and our roles over the years have changed, much has remained the same. She has always been very caring and thoughtful. She has always been very insightful and motivating. And, she has always been tirelessly loyal and dedicated to students, her colleagues, the profession of counseling, and her colleagues. I entered the WFU master's of counseling program in AY2004-2005, the year Donna served as the President of the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision. This was a very busy leadership responsibility that required her to travel all over the country. As such, she did not teach her normal load of classes that year. Therefore, I only had Donna for one class, Counseling Children. It was an amazing class, one in which Donna demonstrated her passion for learning, as well as her expertise and wisdom in the subject matter. Throughout the course, she taught us practical skills to use with children, and she brought these ideas to life with her detailed examples. She is an amazing teacher!

As a doctoral student, Donna and I would cross paths at national conferences, NBCC, and, more than once, Costco. In each instance, Donna, in her own way, would make me feel that (a) I was special, (b) I was supported, (c) and I could accomplish hard things. For example, one Saturday I ran into Donna at Costco and she asked me about my doctoral program. I responded by telling her that I was being asked to supervise 2nd year master's students and did not feel comfortable in my ability to do so. Her short but pithy advice remains to me to this day: "Act as if." She followed that up with saying I was more prepared than I thought I was.

Fast forward four years. I am in my first faculty appointment as a visiting lecturer in the WFU Department of Counseling. Although I had far fewer years of experience and was not many years removed from being her student, Donna made me feel like I was a colleague and a professional. In particular, she made it a point to come to my office regularly and ask for my opinion on important departmental matters. I do not remember if I ever gave her answers that she acted upon. In retrospect, I do not believe that was her goal. I think her goal was to mentor me -- to help me develop my voice and to realize that I was a professional. She has helped me with that throughout my career. That same year, I performed poorly in a job interview for a tenure-track position at another counseling program in the area. I told Donna what had happened, and she shared with me that I was selling myself short by not explaining what I had to offer. She then proceeded to write down a list of qualities that made me a great colleague and a valuable counselor educator. Nine years later, I still have the list in my wallet. In short, I owe a lot to Donna; I would not be the person or the professional that I am today without her instruction, mentorship, leadership, and friendship.

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