Me and my editorial team (which is correctly stated as my editorial team and I) have reviewed some of the less formal submissions and determined that they are written the way many people talk today. For me to write (which, of course, should be for me to write) an editorial about the misuse (or maybe it is no use) of basic grammar may seem ludicrous to some. After all this is a professional publication, or at least that is what one would think! But, alas, such is not the case. This is a professional publication but not every submission could be classified as professional writing.

I now believe that no one must be teaching, at least in a way it is heard, when to use I, when to use me, and in what sequence those words belong when used with other people’s titles, names, roles, and so forth. (I is the subject. I or me should always be last in a string of related words.) To further complicate things, adverbs must now be too long to say. Generally an adverb (which modifies a verb) is created by taking an adjective (which modifies a noun) and adding the following complex sequence of letters: ly. Instead of “travel safely” we may say “travel safe.” This seems minor, and we all know what people mean by such words. However, the more accustomed we become to hearing misused words, the more “normal” they sound. And thus they also begin to creep into the written word.

Although my mother was not an English teacher, you could have fooled me. Every time I would slip into some current misuse of words, she would quietly correct me. I remember the day I did the same thing with my daughter. My mother lives on! The best part, of course, is when I hear my daughter correcting her children. There is no escaping it!

Some of you may wonder why I would write about this topic when there are so many pressing issues in nursing and in the world. Quite simply it is because you may have something of vital importance to say, but if it is written so poorly that it doesn’t pass a basic copy-editing test, most publications in nursing will not accept your work for publication. If you want to be “heard,” then you have to speak the language of the audience. Just as I would not expect this editorial to be shared with people who read only French, I would not expect an unclearly written statement to make it to print.

Two time-tested strategies to improve your writing are buy a good grammar book or hire a good editor. Both will increase your chances of saying something profound in a profound manner. Helping people remember your thoughts is part of the journey to being a recognized author. For those young in the profession, we need your ideas!

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