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Book review - You're not just a number: putting care back into healthcare

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Keywords

healthcare, healthcare profession, compassion

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You're Not Just a Number: Putting Care Back into Healthcare

Connie Montgomery and Risa Tolbert

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Lulu.com

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Rebecca Freeman has a Master of Library and Information Science from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She joined the University of South Carolina Lancaster staff as Assistant Librarian in 2012 and was named Director in 2020. Her day-to-day work and library research focuses on the diversity and accessibility of libraries, and she is the co-author of *Creating a New Library: Recipes in Transformation*. In addition to her work in libraries, she has presented at multiple international food conferences.

Book Review: You're Not Just a Number: Putting Care Back into Healthcare

You're Not Just a Number: Putting Care Back into Healthcare was written for those currently in or joining the healthcare workforce. Connie Montgomery, a retired occupational therapist, and Risa Tolbert, a radiation therapist, draw on their work and lived experiences to present a picture of the current healthcare system and how those in the field should focus on care. The book description on the back cover states that the authors hope the book "will open [readers'] minds and lead to a wonderful beginning or a renewed purpose in providing better compassionate healthcare for all those [readers] will serve or are serving."

This book is a short read of only 57 pages and is written in a conversational tone. Taking this book as a memoir more so than a how-to-manual makes this conversational tone work, as it is a very easy read that is more about emphasizing the importance of care in healthcare through the means of stories. This conversational tone brings the reader into the stories and shows why care is so important in healthcare environments and how either care or lack of care has affected the healthcare the authors and their or family and friends have received.

In addition to the conversational tone, the book has two distinct voices provided by each author. The book is organized by chapters and each chapter is broken into a section titled "Connie" and a section titled "Risa." However, the sections

within each chapter are not always cohesive. The sections are not a conversation between the two authors, with Risa Tolbert writing in response to the section that Connie Montgomery wrote. Some of these sections have asides that, while useful in the greater context, did not fit the overall section in which they appeared. Since this book is more of a memoir, it was useful to have the two voices; however, at some points, it was confusing as to what point they were trying to put forward.

The book starts with the two authors explaining why they went into healthcare and why they wrote the book. Chapter 5 goes into more detail about why they wrote the book. The reader sees the passion that both authors bring to the topic and their conviction toward helping others in the profession to provide high-quality care to their patients.

Chapter 2 discusses the history of Black people in the healthcare system. This topic is important on its own and is vital when discussing how to care for patients. However, this section fell short on details and is more of a brief overview. Both authors highlighted how this history has affected them personally and their family members, as well as laid out the basics of how this history has led to discrimination, lack of access, and mistrust of the healthcare system.

Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the more technical aspects of how to accomplish care in a healthcare setting. Chapter 3 discusses consultations and assessments, and Chapter 4 lays out five recommended principles of practice. As with the rest of the book, the authors lay out these technical aspects through stories of how they were either done correctly or not in the authors' lives.

This book would be of interest to anyone in the healthcare profession. It would fit best in a healthcare collection in a university or college. While it does not give many directions on how to incorporate care into the profession, it does work as a motivational piece.