

Working with Marilyn on the *Beyond Blame* curriculum

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I was EDC's company-wide copy editor for 10 years and had the opportunity to work with Marilyn on a number of projects. She was truly one of my favorite editing clients—working with her always felt like a collaboration, and her joy and enthusiasm for her work were infectious.

But I want to talk specifically about the experience of creating *Beyond Blame*, as I think of it as one of EDC's finest hours. Just days after the 9/11 attacks, a few of us gathered to take part in this project's inception: Eric Jolly, our driver; Stephanie Malloy, crackerjack writer and researcher in HHD; Communications Director Dan Tobin; and Marilyn, the visionary heart and soul of the project. And of course me, the lucky copy editor who would polish each piece as it was written. I was so honored to be in that room.

We all went around the table, telling a little bit about our backgrounds and what we brought to the project. When I mentioned that I had edited some of Marilyn's pieces on International Humanitarian Law, as well as curricula on hate crimes and violence prevention, Marilyn simply beamed and said, "How lucky we are to have you on this project!"

Believe me, a copy editor doesn't always get this kind of reception! But that was Marilyn—celebrating the gifts that each person brings, and truly making everyone feel like a vital part of the process.

We crashed out this curriculum in just a few days—it was important to us that EDC have something available within a week of the attacks—and we did a lot of brainstorming and writing as a group. Usually, as a copy editor, I wouldn't necessarily be included in that conversation, but this group was different—everyone was a participant, everyone had a voice. And it was Marilyn who kept making sure that I had a seat at that table—that I spoke up and shared my opinions. And sentences written by me made it into the final document! This was simply thrilling. But if Marilyn hadn't been in that room, I don't think I would've spoken up nearly as often, if ever.

I don't know if it was actually Marilyn's suggestion to make the analogy between what Arab Americans were experiencing post-9/11 and what Japanese Americans experienced during WWII, but I do know that that section of the curriculum was her baby. The Monica Sone book *Nisei Daughter* was seldom out of her hands, and she spoke so movingly of the Japanese Americans' experience.

The thing is—like every other American, we at EDC were affected by the attacks, too. Our emotions were ragged and raw that week. And having something concrete to do was incredibly healing for each of us.

I am so grateful to have been part of this project, and I am so grateful to Marilyn for making it the rich and rewarding experience that it was.

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