

# What Don't I Know that I Know?

Category: Bravery

written by Ross Carne | January 16, 2026

She arrives in a flurry of fabric and frills, whisking her mask away as she gazes out the window. "Oh, I'm not wearing this. I can't breathe."

My registrar and I share a brief glance through our goggles, over our N95s. She huffs onto the bed.

"And what is it that brings you here?"

"Oh, it's too tedious to go over that again. What are you doing today?"

"We've been asked to do a nerve conduction study of your arms and hands to assess for neuropathy and carpal tunnel syndrome."

"Actually, I have symptoms all over."

"Oh. Unfortunately, we are only allowed to study what your doctor has requested."

"You're busy, I 'm busy. I would like it all done now."

"Unfortunately, we don't make these rules."

"Speak up! I can't understand you with a mask on!"

"We wear the masks as much for your benefit as for ours. We see many patients."

"It's not for my benefit if I can't understand you."

"I sense you're upset. I'm not sure what we've done to earn that. We're here to help."

"I don't want to be sitting here, two hundred dollars out of pocket..."

"The test is covered. There is no out-of-pocket cost. As I say, we are here to help."

"I heard you say you're here to help. You've said that three times! I may as well not say anything... Okay, then, proceed. Proceed!"

"Would you like us to perform the test as referred?"

"Yes. Would you like me to take off my jewelry? See, I am here to help as well."

"Thank you."

Silence falls as the test begins. A difficult silence. And more silence.

"I am anxious and scared," she finally says. "This may seem rude. I apologize."

The mood teeters with her gift.

She has chased and caught a will-o'-the-wisp of wisdom: What do I not know that I know? She is our teacher.

"Apology accepted. Thanks. It is hard to be unwell and to come for a test when you don't know what to expect."

Silence falls once again as we proceed. A companionable silence.

"And tell me, what are the things that you love?"

*Ross Carne*

*Malvern East, Victoria, Australia*