

Within the boundaries

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Within the boundaries Reflections of a nurse The Biblical ment " many are called but few are chosen" (Holy Bible, Matt: 22: 14) may have now evolved into clichs, a bumper sticker, the day's reminder or even part of someone's horoscope. Yet for many others like the student nurse in me, it evoked deeper meaning and inspiration alongside the significant realization of how this noble calling can bring extraordinary gifts even from ordinary men and women in the profession.

My journey began inside the halls of the acute mental health hospital and beside this one patient chosen for the ride.

How do I become part of the caring team More importantly, how do I become a good part of the caring team, I asked, though to no one in particular. The answers later came from everyone in general.

As a student nurse faced with the opportunity to perform and make a difference came then that desire to make it beyond good and come closest to being the best. Yet again, how

A basic student-nurse task of getting a urine sample laid down the premise for that " how." As protocol would have it, prior permission was duly sought and the intent thoroughly explained to the patient. Basic, yes, that spelled the smooth finish of the task at hand. And no task would be successful if not for the diligent practice of the rest of the procedures. That I made sure of and took extra note.

Professionalism at all times was the silent battle cry, professional development the answer to the question posed thereafter as to " why"

The mental institution as venue and gauge of that development brought then what Johns (2004a) referred to as " Reflection-on-experience." And as made clearer was explained, " Reflecting on a situation or experience after the event with the intention of drawing insights that may inform my future practice in many ways." (Johns, 2004b, p 2) This was my experience.

The " event" was the task on hand inside the hospital, the " situation" was the circumstance on how the task was conducted including taking responsibility to delegating other supportive roles to other nursing team members and fellow student nurses. The " insights for future practice" were the lessons learned particularly the importance of doing the job right, keeping professionalism tight and sharing the insights as yet another tool for more learning.

It was there and then that the " phenomenon" began brought by the shared learning and shared teaching experience that unfolded. Significant factors for these are the inputs and outputs generated by the team discussions in a process that had fellow student nurses and over-all nursing team exchange ideas. It was a participative process that in the end, silently yet effectively ingrained in us the deeper meaning of the difference brought by working professionally as a student nurse and the responsibility that goes along that

duty.

As a team, we became part of each other. On my own, I was guided by my limitations.

Which brought me to yet another layer of Reflection described by Johns (2004c) as " Reflection-in-action, pausing within a particular situation or experience in order to make sense and reframe the situation proceeding towards desired outcomes."

What was I trying to achieve and why The completion of the task at hand for the accomplishment of the duty as accepted. At whose cost so to speak First to myself and to the patient because the study needed results and, that in clear effect, was the consequence to the actions done. A good consequence. And to the people I worked with, I strongly felt that the entire experience was a plus because experience after all is the best teacher.

We were given respective tasks that we accepted. I did not stop there for I extended myself to other duties that the nursing team members were able to share. The extension also brought us to table discussions on the provisions on Mental Health Act of 1993. It was all about learning and learning the right way.

From my end, I made sure we understood the duties and responsibilities of a good and professional student nurse. I ensured that we did not go beyond the boundaries of that opportunity to serve and care. I made sure and

ensured I am part of the group. And that it is professionalism that will bring us closest to professional development.

Working as a group helped me see the importance of team work. Exposure to the mental institution where patients have special needs helped me see the importance of being a good nursing team member and a good nurse by starting out as a professional student nurse. Being able to achieve the task on hand helped me strengthen my resolve and firmed up my decision to be in this profession. And to be of service with utmost diligence and selfless dedication. It also helped me realize that the rewards are immeasurable. It made me appreciate life and renewed my faith about living. It made me believe the battle fought by Florence Nightingale, the pioneer of modern nursing (Wikipedia online, Florence Nightingale homepage) who brought a deeper meaning to her being " Lady of the Lamp."

This is my journey and my reflections will see me through it. Within boundaries set I shall proceed as I have began. Tediously, diligently, professionally. Then I know I have made good of my contribution.

Holy Bible, Matthew: 22: 14

Johns, C. (2004) *Becoming a Reflective Practitioner*, Second Edition. USA: Blackwell Publishing.

Wikipedia The Free Encyclopedia, Florence Nightingale homepage. (online)

Available from : http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florence_Nightingale.

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