

Florence nightingale essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

My name is Florence Nightingale. Many people know me as “ the lady with the lamp. ” My history tells that I was seen as an angel of mercy. My contributions to medicine are still very much seen today. I was born May 12, 1820 and Fanny Nightingale in Florence, Italy. William My mother wanted her children to have different names, so her firstborn, my sister, was named Parthenope after an ancient Greek site. I was named Florence after the town in which I was born. My parents were known to be very strong-willed and intelligent people. When I was a year old, my family moved to back to their homeland, Europe.

My father had inherited a large amount of money so I grew up in an upscale world of games, guests, excursions, pets and amusements. My father began educating me and my sister when we were quite young. He taught us Greek, French, Italian, and German. I remember very clearly his consistency in teaching me to study history, philosophy, math, ethics and the Bible. I expressed early on my desire to help people when my sister and I were playing dolls. Parthenope had fun taking the dolls apart, while I found amusement in sewing and putting them all back together.

I grew up to be known as the better looking sister who was better at school work. My sister played the role of a more “ normal” daughter according to society’s standards, who enjoyed socializing over studying. In my early teens, I became dissatisfied with my life. There were expectations of me to take on the ordinary activities of a lady. Those things only bored me. I felt different from other people and it seemed like I was in a completely different world than everyone else. Finally, on February 7th, 1837 when I was the age of sixteen years, God spoke to me and called me to his service.

Although I wasn't sure exactly what he wanted me to do or when, I felt a sense of peace knowing I was going to do something important in my life. Soon after that, I began to ask my parents for their permission to further study mathematics with extra tutoring. My mother did not approve of this, and my father urged me to study things that were more suited for a woman. They just did not understand why a young woman like me would want to spend my time studying mathematics when I should be putting that energy towards finding a husband. Eventually, after much persuasion and many emotional battles, my parents finally agreed.

In an attempt to try and reform me more to a “ lady,” my mother tried to start suggesting that it was time for me to start looking for a husband. I was simply not interested and had no desire to find a husband. I felt I had more important things to accomplish in my life. However, much to my mother's surprise, I did attract and I was courted by many suitors because of my good looks and intelligence. However, my agenda was a lot different than my mother's. Nearly seven years had passed since God had last spoken to me. I began to grow restless and I felt frustrated.

I still didn't know what exactly it was that God wanted me to do and at that point in my life. England was in a state of hardship at that time. Disease and poverty crowded the streets of England. Because I came from a wealthy family, I felt ashamed for having so much luxury. When I saw all the hardship and agony so many people were suffering from, I felt hopeless. People were starving while I had my choice of anything I wanted to eat. When, I wondered, was God going to speak to me again about what mission he

wanted me to do? Whenever I could, I helped sick friends and relatives by assisting them with their medicine.

I felt much gratification offering them condolence and comfort. I helped the poor when extra clothes, medicine or other supplies became available. It was around this time that I met Richard Milnes. He and I shared the same concerns for society and we thought alike. I soon found myself falling in love with him. In this time period, marriage for a woman meant simply to obey her husband and have children. It was thought that “ man with a head; woman with a heart; man to command; and women to obey”. Despite my strong feelings of affection for him, I had no intentions of starting a family just yet.

Turning down his marriage proposal was one of the hardest decisions I had to make, but with all the hardships in England at that time, marriage was the furthest thing from my mind. Because of the current situation in England, I began to pay closer attention to how serious the issues around me were. At that time people had no idea that disease came from dirty drinking water. It seemed poverty and disease had claimed all the people of Europe. There was death and disease all around me. By 1845, I came to realize that God’s plan for my life was clearly somewhere in the area of helping the sick and wounded.

In that time period nursing was neither suitable nor usual for a lady. Nurses were known as “ ignorant, dirty, and drunken women,” who sometimes earned extra money through prostitution. Hospitals were generally unclean and unhygienic. Despite what nurses were known as, I wanted to gain some

hospital experience. I urged my family to give their blessing but, they were furious! How could a lady want to work in such a disgusting place as a hospital? They were firmly against any idea of me working in a hospital environment. I was now twenty-five years old, and I felt completely helpless.

When were all of my dreams and aspirations going to come true? With each passing day I felt more and more trapped. For a short time I took upon the normal duties of a lady such as, going to balls and entertaining guests. Secretly, I hadn't given up entirely on my dreams. I confided to myself that if my parents wouldn't allow me to work in a hospital then I would simply gather information on my own the best I could. While I studied each night, I was able to discover a highly respected institution in Kaiserswerth, Germany that doubled as a college and a hospital for nurses.

I finally felt like I had found a solution to my problem. However, convincing my parents to let me go was a whole different issue. In the meantime I read charts and notes on mortality rates and sicknesses. I was able to gain better knowledge of the issues and concerns of Europe, as well as the nursing profession. Five years later I was still in the same spot I had been five years earlier. Every night I prayed and pleaded with God to send me some kind of answer as to where I was supposed to go next. Frustrated, I fell both mentally and physically ill thinking that God had ultimately forgotten about me.

My friend, Selina Bracebridge, and her husband saw how down I had been and convinced my parents to let me travel with them to Egypt, Greece and other European countries. I was thrilled! I was going to be right by the

hospital in Kaiserswerth. Once I arrived there, I helped out with patients and talked to the doctors. My mood and health were excellent for the first time in a very long time. After two weeks, I had to go home. My mother had somehow managed to find out exactly where I had been and was furious. My entire family was livid!

By 1851, I had at last come to the realization that in order for me to fully pursue my dreams I would have to break from my family. I left on my own back to Kaiserswerth to begin my three month nursing training. I was finally taking a step in the right direction! The conditions in the hospital were, to put lightly, very dirty. Many of the nurses and doctors had very poor training but nonetheless I took pride in helping the surgeons with operations. I began to keep reports of the everyday activities of the hospital and how the doctors and nurses handled their patients.

I paid very close attention and made mental notes especially of the hygiene and sanitation. When my training in Kaiserswerth ended, I returned to London. I was desperate to begin more training and after much struggle and persuasion I was granted a position as the superintendent of the Establishment for Gentlewomen during Illness. It was agreed that I would not be paid but I luckily accepted, thrilled at the idea of running a hospital. The hospital needed someone who could help systematize the facility. I gained much experience and completely reorganized the hospital's renovations and supplies.

In a very short amount of time I had the hospital running in good order. In March of 1854 a war began to rage. Britain, France and Turkey had

confirmed war against Russia. Constantinople was a vital and valuable location because it was right between the Mediterranean and Black sea. Both sides fought desperately to claim that territory. In the end the Russians were defeated. Shortly after the war a cholera outbreak broke among the soldiers. Many lives were being taken because of the lack of medical supplies and shortage of skilled doctors and nurses. I found my calling when I was asked to become a nursing administrator.

My job was to introduce nurses to training in military hospitals in Turkey. My job would include nursing wounded soldiers. On November 4, 1854 I arrived in Turkey along with 38 other nurses. I was completely appalled with the germ-infested atmosphere and the way soldiers were being cared for. The hospital was filthy and the surrounding area outside was covered with garbage. The toilets didn't work and therefore a strong stench was carried all throughout the hospital. Most of the patients there were infected with Cholera and there were no pillows, blankets or clean sheets for them.

All of this was enough to make me feel sick to my stomach. The first step I took to overcome the hospital problems was to begin to organize a record keeping system. What I was able to calculate was why the mortality rate of soldiers in the hospital was so high. From this information I was able to determine that with an improvement in the sanitary methods that rate would drop significantly. I enforced improvement through cleanliness, fresh water, proper drainage and plenty of light. I funded buying fruit and vegetables out of my own pocket.

I genuinely cared for all of the wounded soldiers and wanted to see the hospital progress. I got the nickname “ the lady with the lamp. ” because every night I made my rounds to all the patients with a lamp. The many vast improvements that I enforced in sanitary reform reached the media and people all around the world. I had begun to teach other hospitals the same principles and common sense that I had used to develop sanitation in the Turkey hospital. People began to write stories about my life, put my face on glass figurines and I even had a replica of me in a wax museum!

It was through all of this hype that it came to my attention that the army stationed in India had a outrageous mortality rate. Through statistics and much studying I found that the overall public health system was the problem. I figured this without ever taking a trip to India. In 1858 I became the first woman to be elected to be a Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society because of my efforts in army and hospital statistics. Some of my friends, unbeknownst to me, started a fund for me so one day I could use that money to open up my own nursing school.

By the time it was announced to me that money had been saved for me, thousands of people had already poured and donated money to the fund to show their gratitude for my work. The war had finally ended and my services were no longer needed in Turkey so I decided to take the journey back home to England. In 1860 the Nightingale Training School and Home for Nurses opened. My school taught two basic principles: that nurses should have sensible training in hospitals and that nurses should live in a home that has morals and discipline.

My involvement with my students at my school went beyond just schooling, after their graduation I kept in close touch and helped launch many of their careers. I helped bring the term respectable to the nursing through my school and my past. For the last remainder of my life I was mostly confined to bed because of an illness I had contracted while I was in Turkey. I was not able to keep working as a nurse, however I was still able to push the medical field toward better health standards. I was also able to publish over 100 books about nursing.

I became the first woman to receive the Order of Merit from King Edward VII. In 1874 I became an honored member of the American Statistical Association and in 1883 Queen Victoria awarded me the Royal Red Cross in recognition of my work. On August 13, 1910, at the age of ninety I passed away. I was buried in Europe, near Embley Park. I am known as one of the most influential women in the nineteenth century. Much of my research and reforms in nursing are still in effect today. Today, I am distinctly remembered as a hero of medicine.