



Please listen to me,
Dear Teacher

Senior Social Worker, Junior RN

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My maternal grandmother influenced me greatly in choosing the path of becoming a nurse. I was raised by my grandmother. When I was young, regardless of the severity of the illness, as long as I go to the clinic to see a doctor, the remedy was always served with a syringe, even if it was a small cold. If I had a fever, that would have been worse; I would receive the intravenous treatment. During moments like this, I would always use a sharp piercing cry with twists and turns to struggle with the nurse until she lost her patience. Then my grandmother, who used to work in the clinic, would take over and administer the needle on me. In my memory, Grandmother's hands were gentle and soft. Under her soothing comfort, the administration of the needle was quick and quiet. At that time, I often thought that when I grew up, I also wanted to be a nurse. I felt that doing the same work as my grandmother would be cool. However, later I went to a traditional high school and then on to a university, and thus, temporarily deviated from the nursing path.

Became a Social Worker and Then Rekindled a Childhood Nursing Dream

I studied in social work department at college. Although I longed to become a nurse, I felt that social work and nursing are similar as both serve and help people. After graduating from university, I entered the field of social work. Since most of my clienteles were teenagers, I needed to accompany them to hospitals. Every time I entered the hospital, the smell of hydrogen peroxide, medications, and disinfectants percolated in the air penetrate my every cell from the first breath, quietly awakened the forgotten memory. After my grandmother died, I once discussed the dream with my teenagers at work, and felt that I had been encouraging them to pursue their dreams. What about myself? With such an opportunity, I picked up books and got admitted by the nursing department of Tzu Chi University of Science and Technology. At the time, I was 36 years old.

Pursuing Nursing Profession and Fallen into a World of Unknown Difficulties

Although social work and Nursing are both studies with humanity, however, the development of education and practice differs greatly. Especially with nursing, there are many techniques required, and each technique requires a set of standardized operating procedures to be followed. However, when dealing with case studies in social work, despite having its own operating procedures, each step may

be modified accordingly to each individual case. There is no fixed standardized process. Thus in the very beginning in my nursing program, everything must be memorized step by step, regardless of practices or tests. The operations may appear to be discontinuing parts with no holistic views until a full comprehension of the processes. Throughout my nursing program, I often came across “I don’t understand” until I interned with Teacher Ms. Hsin Mong-Chuan. Using high blood pressure as an example, Ms. Hsin said that we might understand the possible causes but not the mechanisms. Two patients may have the same disease but different etiologies. Or like the requirement for ECG, we often do not know the purpose of monitoring. Therefore, teacher uses physiology to explain the various mechanisms and treatment processes that may cause high blood pressure, and then conducts an integrated analysis with the symptoms of the case and related treatments. The original care case depends on the entire interface, not just a single point. As I get more involved into nursing program, during my senior year, I became enlightened. May it be nursing or social work, despite the differences in application, but the essence is the same.

Frustrated with Setbacks During Internship; and Looking Back the Initial Resolve

The nine-stage internship program was a great challenge. In addition to the internship at the hospital during the day, the endless research of medications and diseases, along with reports and essays that I felt always missing some contents. I am not smart. I need repetitions to memorize along with the heavy load of homework, materials, and reports. Once I reached a break, the sun rose and I had to drag my tiresome self to continue my internship into morning. This never-ending routine continued throughout my internship. I once leaned on the window during another sleepless night, thinking if I was suitable for the job. The atmosphere of the internship, the way to get along with classmates/colleagues, and the pace of the work created a sense of frustration of not grasping the ideas. I am grateful for Teacher Mr. Lee Chung-Jen for helping me through my confusing time by clarifying the meaning and value of nursing work. Mr. Lee reminded me that if you pay too much attention to what others think, you will be tied to your feet when you do things; if you do it for others, you will lose the meaning of why you are doing it. The teacher helped me to clarify that the main purpose of the internship is not to be my classmates’ little helper, nor to please anyone. What the intern is to do is to learn

how to take care of, discover, establish relationships, and contrast with theories. As for the pace of the work, I will not really comprehend until I join the workforce.

Mr. Lee's advice awakened me and instantly pulled me out of the quicksand. I then began to adjust my mindset, removing irrational expectations and focused on what I should be doing during my internship. I eliminated the negative thoughts that bothered me. After such adjustments, I had different motivations which then allowed me to be freed from the uncomfortable quagmire and returned to my original intention wanting to become a nurse. All of a sudden, I felt what thought as important became trivial. "What are not supposed to exist could never let it be dusted."

Support and Encouragement from Teachers Provided Extraordinary Nursing Motivation

Fortunately, the teachers I met during the internship, in addition to education and practicum, were very professional, and they also gave me full support and encouragement, which provided warmth. Among the two memorable teachers were Ms. Chang Shu-Min with Pediatrics major and Ms. Peng Chih-Yin with Obstetrics major. The pediatric ward was always filled with screams from children daily, especially when the medicine is given or treatment is provided. Ms. Chang used different methods such as finger games for younger children or using homemade media for older children. She was always able to make the unwilling to cooperate and become obedient. Teachers often said that the great purpose of internship is to make us like this occupation, rather than to just complete the internship. We will then determine if we want to continue nursing





in the future. If one is interested in learning, it can go a long way in nursing. I was quite skeptical toward Obstetrics during my internship because I am a male nurse. I feel much entangled in the need to touch or observe the private parts of pregnant women. At the beginning of the internship, I always hoped that the mothers would reject me so that I could avoid situations that made me feel awkward. However, Ms. Peng always communicated with the pregnant women in good faith beforehand, hoping that the “male” intern can participate in the medical care. The teacher always led and accompanied me. After a few times, it seemed that the previous rejection and embarrassment no longer existed, instead, I was able to perform naturally.

Once on the path of nursing, I realized that nursing work is far more complicated and difficult than the idealistic dream. Once I hesitated between social work and nursing. However, after four years of cultivation, the original training of social work and nursing later made me unique, just like the fiction characters in Jin Yong’s Wuxia (Chinese fiction novels), who has two different types of martial art techniques. My nursing skills included my social work background. I believe that there will be many obstacles along my nursing path to overcome. However, I will always remind myself to remember my original intent because this will determine how far I will go. I am still new within the nursing profession; for the future, please continue to advise me.