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Male Head Nurse, an Uneasy Job

“Tighten your fist, you think you grasped a lot, but you aren’t even grasping any air! Open your arms, you feel like your hands are empty, in fact, the whole world is in your grasp!” These are the words in my favorite Snoopy cartoon. They accompany me in many dark days of my life. Whenever I feel down and helpless, I just turn on my cell phone, gazing at this picture, and reciting these words. This way, my tightened fists, tense nerves and tangling eyebrows all slowly loosen up and a relaxing feeling arise.

Tough to be Head of Household - the Challenge of Mixing the New and Old

Five years ago, I stepped onto the crossroad of my life. I stepped out of my earlier career track and started to head a group of female professionals. In the seemingly only green spot among a sea of red blossoms, there is no room for romance. Is it sweet or is it bitter in return to my mental and physical hardship? Only I myself can tell.

It is ironic that the old is displaced by the new, just like water flowing in a river. However, in the work place of the nursing profession, the transition is never smooth. Once I remembered that a senior staff member came to see me and expressed her trouble getting along with her junior partner. She indicated that her rookie partner had very limited ability in handling her demanding job. This placed tremendous amount of pressure on her, as well as on the ones following her shift. I listened to her complain quietly. But, I could not stop my internal struggle. How could the senior forget so easily that she was in the same situation when she first started her job? Why can’t she share her experience with the newcomer? We should



A loyal Snoopy fan, Jen-Che Kuo(right), found hardship as head of household after he took the position of Head Nurse.

all work as one team and hold the hands of the beginners to guide them through this difficult stage of their career.

I first calmed down her emotion by not disagreeing with her thinking. Then, I started to redirect her thinking by putting her in the junior nurse's position. I further let her figure out an approach so that she could relieve her own pressure and meanwhile provide ways to help the junior grow professionally. For the majority, the answer is to let the head nurse handle the situation. However, my philosophy is that it is not just the supervisor's responsibility to help the newcomers. It takes the entire team to nurture the skill of a new hand. If the newcomer fits well in the team we treasure her association. If it is difficult to get along, she deserves our blessing. In addition, a mere three months of probation period does not allow ones talent to fully

develop. The old saying of "Rome wasn't built in one day" applies to the development of all professionals. Management should layout the framework for the young professionals, so that they can grow under the supervision and guidance of a team of established experts.

The Man Behind a Group of Fortunate Women

Maybe it was my mistake! At the age of thirty-five, after thirty-five years of peaceful life, I decided to switch gears, and step into the land of "Women Only". As the head of the household, I always encountered happy news. Year in and year out, I heard the announcement of weddings; more than that, requests for maternity leave came at least two or three times a year. As a result, the "womanpower" crisis is a constant



threat of my administration. Sisters in my household like to joke around by saying that there are goddesses of marriage and pregnancy hidden in my office. Fortunately, although we didn't have many vacation days off, we were able to get by without much overtime. And for me, I "squeezed by" the crisis year after year. With these experiences, I gradually realized the hardship of pregnancy, delivery, and child caring. How fortunate are these women of my household, to have a caring man behind them.

Because I am still a bachelor, and I also spend long hours in the office, and I

always find carefully prepared refreshment in my office. They are all made from the grateful hearts of my "sisters" in return of the caring I tendered.

From Tightened Fist to Open Arms

I am a perfectionist. I never imagined that I would go into the nursing profession. I never expected to be appreciated as a department head, never thought...

Whether my decision was good or bad, right or wrong?

At the beginning, I seriously stared

at my tightened fists. But one day, suddenly a voice sounded in my heart. It says, no matter how tight you grasp your fist, your five fingers would not guide you to the right direction. Your heart is just like your fists. So, I told myself just do my best to help those who need my help. Let those who suffered share the sunshine and beauty of this world. With confidence, courage and hard work, you will find success. In Snoopy's words: just do it, things will go your way.

To be a leader, not only have to improve one's technical ability but also have to care for quality of life. The humorous Male Head Nurse Jen-Che calls himself the "Head of Household."

