



Understand Blessings After Seeing Suffering

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After graduation from an associate college, I always thought, “Is this really what I want to do for the future”? So I applied for and received a secondary major to study. However after graduation, I chose to engage in bedside clinical work. By this time, nursing felt foreign, so I had to learn from scratch and work extra hard. The first year was difficult and at times, I wanted to resign. However, I enjoyed my interactions with patients, caring for their feelings, and seeing their smiles... In short, I persisted and continued.

Completing the Desire to Study in Australia and Finding a New Goal

It's been 5 years working at the bedside. Having experienced a full workforce; lack of staff; high turnaround; clinical pressure; and demands of continuing advanced education, I begun to feel physically and mentally exhausted. In addition with the dream of studying abroad, I applied for a sabbatical. With the support from the Director of Nursing and mostly important my colleagues, I was able to achieve my dream of study and work in Australia for near a year.

In Australia, I faced a different working environment. I always wanted to experience life on the farm. However during the first week of picking tomatoes, I almost could not take it anymore. I had to bend over for a long period of time and in addition, colleagues on the farm often worked independently. So my mind often wondered, “Why did I leave a work, where I enjoyed air conditioning, patients’ love and respect, and accumulation of a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment, and come to this place, where it is hot with no air conditioner (Electricity in Australia is very expensive, and so we had only ceiling fans.) which caused my allergies to occur frequently Furthermore, salary from the farm work was paid accordingly to the amount of produce picked. Therefore I must work fast and hard in order to get paid more. My one month salary as a nurse was better than working on the farm.” Now reminiscing, I still felt it was difficult. However, only ones self may achieve one’s dream. After all, it was my idea; therefore, I must complete it, and I believe I can.



Increase Report Writing; Accepting Additional Challenges to Advance

During my time in Australia, I would think, “What will be my future? What else do I want to try?” So thereafter my return, I especially cherished my opportunity to continue my work as a nurse. Thus I decided to advance to N3, where, must write case reports.

I shared my thoughts with my Director of Nursing, and used this opportunity to further understand my patients. First case study was A-Fu, a 51 years old male, homeless, and lived under bridges. Earlier this year, he had a second to third degree burn on his 65% body surface, due to I fire hazard. He was transferred from the Burn ICU unit to our plastic surgery department after medical stabilization.

In the surgical ward, we must have had at least 8 hours course on trauma care. During one class, I chatted with Dr. Wang Chien-Hsin and promised to share my round experience on stage, not knowing at the time that this was only the beginning of my meeting with A-Fu. I remembered it was one day after the Chinese New Year Holiday, my head nurse



Lu I-Yen work diligently on the endless farm in Australia.

informed me that I have a chance to accomplish my promise. There would be an upcoming trauma workshop and the theme was to discuss experiences with caring for patients with burntrauma. After the evaluation from the Director of Nursing, the Burn ICU had only two patients, and one of them would be transferred to the hospital floor soon. Thus after discussion, it was decided that I would complete the case report, which was „A-Fu“. The Director of Nursing perhaps thought I was apprehensive; thus, she provided me with a stack of literature, A-Fu's basic and medical history, and guidance for the case report. At the time, I had not felt troubled“ but instead I felt confident that I could succeed. However, as the the day for case report presentation approached and A-Fu was transferred to the floor, for multiple reasons, I had not had a chance to care for him, instead only observed and inquired on the side to understand, I felt a high level of anxiety. During the last two weeks, I was finally able to care for him for a long period of time. Given that I had left bedside clinical care for a year, the last time I had written a medical report was becoming a “history“. Furthermore intially I was busy building a rapport with patients, and had no idea how should I prepare for the seminar.



Upon Lu I-Yen's fulfillment of her dream to study abroad in Australia, she returned to appreciate her nursing career and accepted further challenges.

My Sincerity Touched the Homeless, Which Opened His Heart

Initially A-Fu was apprehensive toward me. When I asked, he always responded with simple comments; for example, when I asked, “Good morning, A-Fu! Did you sleep well last night,” he would respond, “ok.” Or when asked if he had any thoughts regarding his burns, he would respond, “It happened. What else can you do?” Until the second week, A-Fu said that he had felt my sincerity from the constant greetings to the explanations provided for every treatment. Given A-Fu is a homeless, I had thought about his future and rehabilitation; then, through the assistance of social workers, I contacted the Sunlight Foundation, and they responded that they will come and assess A-Fu's condition. No matter what treatment we did, I would explain it to him. Perhaps it was this that had him

felt my concern and sincerity. Slowly we talked about how he had felt about the burn and plans for the future during treatment. In fact, A-Fu had used the word, “remorse,” often. He was sorry that he was by the river, playing, or else this would not have happened. He also regretted drinking.

A-Fu gradually recounted his past. He said that after drinking, he would become temperamental. In addition to fighting with others, he would also harass his family, causing his family to alienate him. Furthermore, it was difficult for him to find a steady job, causing him to work odd jobs for several years, earning \$3000 NT or \$5000 NT each month (\$91-152 USD/month). Toward the end, A-Fu promised sobriety. When inquired why he became alcoholic, he responded it was because he was in a bad mood; he felt that lots of bad things had occurred around him, which resulted in complaints and anger. In fact, before becoming a homeless, A-Fu had a steady job; looking after (edible) orange daylily farms in Liushidan Mountain (meaning 60-stone Mountain in Chinese). Perhaps it was the loneliness up on the mountain, too boring and depressing, which resulted in depression and he gave up on the job.

My Gain from Relationship with A-Fu: Understanding the Interlocking Chains During Care of a Patient

During this time, our hospital’s diligent care, volunteers, social workers’ application to seek home health and assistance for the future, and Tzuchi Foundation and the Sunlight Foundation’s providence of social resources had provided warmth to A-Fu. Although he did not have to worry about medical expenses at this time, A-Fu wished to recover soon so he may begin working and make money to cover the medical expenses. This was his expectation. So during his acute care, he actively and seriously participated during rehabilitation.

Through this opportunity in the case study preparation, I grew to understand A-Fu. I learned that caring for a disease should not be seen as is. Everything is a part of the interlocking series of chains. Caring for a patient required a step by step breakthrough of obstacles. Caring for a burn victim required different levels of care, beginning from initial rescue on site, emergency intensive care, life support and wound care in the Intensive Care Unit, burn treatment and rehabilitation on the floor, to discharge plan, are all important part. For example, I once asked the Director of Nursing, why must rehabilitation begin at the ICU?” It was because if you don’t start now, the joints will become stiffened and the scars will contracture, which will result increase in difficulties and pain during movement.

And I, also pondered and reflected. Because I saw suffering, I learned blessings; because giving received more blessings. I understand that I have a lot. Because of A-Fu, I also expected of myself to be dedicated to assist more people.