



Love and Responsibilities

Hsu Kai-Ting, Registered Nurse of Surgical Ward, Tzu Chi Taichung Hospital

Translator: Doris Shieh

Editors: Kit Ho, Charles Letizia

"It's getting late! I feel sorry for you. Thank you and good night." A patient spoke those words softly to me while opening her eyes and holding my hands as I was tucking her in for the night during my ward rounds.

Suddenly, it warmed my heart. Not so much for her appreciation of my three consecutive night shift rotations but for it reminded me of the passion I held when I first started the nursing profession.

People often forget the pleasure of being able to follow through with their decision. Even a simple gesture of reaching out to touch someone in pain or giving a smile to wish someone good night in the middle of an exhausting night, is simple but tangible temperament between humans.

Show Me Your Vulnerability Because I am a Nurse

After a year of entering the job market, facing with the unfavorable healthcare work environment's long working hours, endless training and report writing, and standing at the front line to witness the uncertainty of the every-changing life, I felt overwhelmed due to my lack of experience. Every work day felt like fighting a war. Sometimes, I also endured the outcry from patient's suffering or emotional stress from their family. These all challenged and started to dwindle my novel vision and enthusiasm for the nursing profession.

"My dearest Kai Ting." It was the last phrase spoke by the kind Grandma patient with her last breath. I will never forget your face when you passed away just barely fifteen minutes after you said your last words.

Grandma did not speak much but her silver hair and smile made her look like a kind woman. She was dependent on chemotherapy infusion every half a year to control the growth of cancer cells after diagnosed with intestinal cancer. After a year, her organs started to deteriorate. The last time she was hospitalized was due to fever and shortness of breath. The night before my vacation, I went into her room and touched her face as she spoke slowly: "I am exhausted and frustrated." My heart ached: "It had been rough on you. I feel your pain. Thank you for being a good patient all this time." She smiled. After I completed shift change when I returned from my three-day vacation, I added the last antibiotic medication for her. She incoherently managed her last words as I watched the lines of her heart monitor going flat...

Afterwards, my colleague from the night shift told me that the morning of her last day, she was repeatedly calling out "Kai Ting". I cried because I was touched. Thank you, Grandma, for every breath you took; thank goodness you are carefree; thank you for holding me in your heart even in your last few moments on earth. I love you, too, Grandma.

When we cleaned her remains, I gently tidied her appearance, using warm towel to wipe her body that had walked so many miles in so many years.

Realizing My Responsibilities from the Needs of Others

My sincere gratitude for cancer-battling patients who brought me my strength. My first few clinical experiences had mostly been with oncology patients. I felt the suffering





of my patients from their chemotherapy treatments. I was confronted with the hideous reality of the world. "My pain feels like a knife cutting through my muscle and my whole body is being torn apart. I don't want to live another second. I vomit until I was so drained that I could only crawl like a dog on the floor. You don't understand! You won't understand!". These are words from my patients' heart. Human beings warm-hearted; we have feelings. These elders and mentors used their lives to teach us how to learn to be a qualified nurse and to help us grow, surpassing case studies from text books.

In all hours of the day, many people are troubled by power, by relationship, by competing materialistically with others. Only a few can think of the profession that represents the lighting house that acts as protector of life. For the past year spent at the hospital dorm, I suddenly felt that no matter when you walk out of the hospital, there will always someone who will leave a light out and wait for you. To be honest, when I was standing outside of the hospital building looking up, I felt a sense of unexplained gratitude. Thank you for those white-robed angel who, regardless of day or night, warm or cold, or rain or shine, guard the health of the patients 24-7.

Master Cheng Yen once said: "The world is not hopeless. On the contrary, it is full of hope because we have a genuine heart." I believe to love is to realize your responsibilities from the needs of others.