

Keep the Original Ideal in the Heart

Chien-Hsin Wang, Plastic Surgeon of Hualien Tzu Chi Medical Center



As a plastic surgeon, my work is not only in the operation room but also in the wards and office. Since my time is divided and limited, it is a big plus for me when experienced nurses are around.

Luckily, in my workplace, this kind of experienced people are always around. In the ward, they know all about their patients' information, clinical response and are prompt when doctors ask for desired data. In the operation room, they prepare all the needed equipments before an operation and during the operation. In the doctor's office, they offer efficient and friendly service to comfort patients' emotion. Besides regular duties, whether it is in-hospital activities or visits to at-home patients, the nurses' professional skills and warm-heartedness are always experienced by patients and their family. These are the indispensable roles nurses play in the hospital.

Passing on the Experience - "Know the first step"

In medicine, it is very important to pass on one's experience, especially in the surgical field. The amount of time spent on the job is the key to gain myriad experience. It is impossible to reach it in one-step. From being an inexperienced newcomer to a seasoned professional, and then advancing to become an expert guiding the next generation. This cycle of inheritance happens in the hospital all

the time, both on physicians and nurses.

In the operation room, medical students are asked to try the first step – putting on the surgical outfit. Due to unfamiliarity and bewilderment, their hands would always be contaminated while putting on the operating ropes or gloves. Whenever I see a nurse asking them to do it again, it reminds me of my own experience. At that time, I was intimidated by the new environment. I was so afraid that I would contaminate the clean room and bring infection upon the patient. I messed up my first step. It was not much different from the situation I have just seen. Although I learned the procedure in school and practiced it during internship, mistakes still happen for my first time in the operation room. Luckily, under the nurse's patient guidance, I succeeded in putting on the operating rope and gloves correctly.

History always repeats itself. The

scenario described above occurs repeatedly. This is the beginning of inheritance. It is very different from my first impression of nurses while I was a student.

Veteran Nurses Accelerated My Experience Buildup

Compare to seven years of medical school, nursing program only takes four years. Although we started college at the same time, by the time we began practical training, the nursing students are already in internships or have started working.

When I was still an intern, a resident or an inexperienced physician working in the hospital through practical training, I have learned a great deal of the knowledge and experiences from veteran nurses. Especially when I was in my residency, I asked questions on



As a surgeon, Chien-Hsin Wang thinks that professional development for doctors and nurses takes time and experience.

how they dealt with similar situations in the past; their techniques and strategies accelerated the buildup of my experience.

In the course of witnessing how a teacher becomes a teacher, these experienced nurses are indeed playing a very essential mother-like role. Therefore, one can definitely harvest something by asking them questions. Not only does it satisfy one's quest for knowledge and experience, but he also learns about people's life stories.

In fact, experience itself is a very valuable treasure. An experienced senior nurse is a must-have asset for an organization's inheritance. When I was still a resident, there was a time that I could not make a decision due to a patient's complicated medical condition. I wanted the patient's attending physician to come to the I.C.U. However, I dared not to bother the physician, my teacher, to come just for that matter. Luckily, a senior nurse who knows the physician well was able to "trick" the attending physician to come with just a few words.

Even though he nagged at me for a bit, I was able to fulfill my goal – let the teacher examine the patient and resolve my questions about the patient's critical condition.

Grateful to the Excellent Nursing Team

In the current competitive environment, it is inevitable that nurses leave their position. This makes recruiting experienced nurses even more difficult. When I look at the newcomers, it is like looking at myself entering the medical field. They are anxious yet scared about the uncertain environment and the job. But luckily, big sister nurses take on the role of babysitters, giving them care and chances to learn.

Nurses' continuing education is very important. Although we are medical professionals, what we learn at school is different from performing our specialty at different work environment. Therefore, we should continue our education while cultivate work ethics, learn from diseases and treat patients as families. More importantly, maintain a humble and empathic attitude.

It is really a great pleasure to work with nurses who have the above qualities. It not only makes work smoother, but also provides better quality service to patients. It is such an extraordinary experience.

Due to my duty and personality, I have the opportunity to interact with

Dr. Chien-Hsin Wang always reminds interns, residents and nurses to take good care of patients.



nurses from different units. I shared with all the nursing staff my personal experience during routine meetings, and discussed their work reports from different perspective. Lately, I have shared my experience on how to search for information and the difficulty in finding what you want. I also mentioned my thoughts and experience in how to set up patient's treatment plan. Education is not limited in classrooms, at work, or in a meeting; it can be in the course of sharing ideas and thoughts that motivate others' discussions.

Physicians and Nurses Work with One Heart

It often happens in the hospital that a team works together on a patient whether it is in the wards, operation rooms or doctor offices. The units that I am familiar with like plastic surgery, ENT, and operation room have all accomplished many routines and difficult cases with the collaboration of head nurses and nursing staff. Although time may lead us to different positions, the changing of environment may make us grow further, but medical work cannot be accomplished by one person. The medical world is not a place for heroism.

Tzu Chi is a big family; it has given us tremendous support and guidance spiritually. We cannot find this resource at other institutions. Another feature we have is the hospital volunteers, who come to cultivate themselves with us;



Whether they play the role of a big sister or mother, senior nurses' devotion in passing down their experience is a good example for the newcomers to learn. The picture shows Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital's Head and Neck Cancer Team is visiting patients living in Yuli.

their words of care and humility always bring encouragement to our work.

When I recall my original inspiration of entering the medical field, whether it is to follow the example of Florence Nightingale or Albert Schweitzer, or to be the Kuan Yin Bodhisattva who answers all beings' suffering, or Kṣitigarbha who has deep compassion to sentient beings' affliction, I think we should ask ourselves that if our current work goal is still in accordance to our original ideals.

When doctors and nurses work together, we use our time and life to help an afflicted life so the patient can be on a direction of becoming a physically and mentally healthy person. At the same time, our spirit becomes healthier as well. Is it worth continuing this career? The answer is definitely positive. We should even be more devoted to it. I hope on the path of medicine, I can continue to collaborate with all the nurses and realize our goals together.