

When I first came to the United States, I was so determined to pursue Law School because that is all I know when I was in the Philippines. That is what I started and was eager to finish it when my Mom brought me the news that we were moving to the US. At first, I told my Mom that if given the chance, I would like to continue it here but then because of personal reasons and limited resources, I could not get into the law school here. My Mom then persuaded me to try nursing school because she assured me that I would never run out of job opportunities even if I plan to move to different places. I agreed and apparently, I was able to slowly move forward and is about to be finished with the RN program. At first, I had trouble concentrating on things that were taught in class. Everything seemed pointless to me because I hadn't convinced myself to like the profession. To make it worse, I was terrified of blood, so it was not helping at all. Then clinical days came and to my surprise, I enjoyed the small talks with patients, their families, and the people in the health care team. I told myself, it was not that bad at all. I slowly convinced myself that if I would engage in this career, I should learn how to be a "nurse". To be honest, the idea of becoming a nurse never came to me, not until I experienced it. Putting the best interest of others was never easy because I have always liked the idea of self-preservation. "Me first, before others." These are the words that I have always embraced, but when I went into nursing school, everything that I adhered to in life changed. In nursing school, we always look forward to caring for others. We always prioritize the needs of the patients. Everything is about the safety of the patients, and frankly, it was not hard for me to adjust because I have always been expectant to changes. I can easily adapt to my environment and to the people around me. I guess that is one of the best qualities that I have which I have carried me all this time.

The past clinical days of my preceptorship at South 4 have been an ongoing struggle for me as I continue to transition from being merely a helper to my nurses before to being in-charge of direct care to the patients. Luckily, I have one of the best preceptors that I could ask for. I was lucky enough to ask for the things I could try, and she would gladly look for opportunities including asking other nurses if they got things for me to try and do. I really appreciate my preceptor and the other nurses on the floor because they were willing to let me enforce the things that we learn in class but were not offered to me on my clinical days in the lower modules. I have attempted inserting NG tube on one of the patients that is not specifically under the care of my nurse. Another patient who is being taken care of by another nurse had a dislodged catheter, so I got to try re-inserting a new one. I also got to witness blood transfusion and learned what are the things to watch out for during the initial transfusion. I got to monitor a patient who is on Cardizem drips and to be honest, she is not one of the kindest and calmest patients because she also had dementia which made it hard for us to connect the vital machine and the ECG monitors since she would take them off every now and then. It was never easy being a nurse because of the possible risk of harming your patients even if there was no intention. However, it was the most rewarding profession I have ever seen so far knowing that at the end of your shift, your patients will remember you for your kindness and the quality of care you have provided for them. I remember one patient of another nurse on the floor who would call out for that's nurse complete name. The nurse said that none of her patients had ever called her by her complete name but to that patient, she is the only nurse she knows and remembers even if there were other nurses who had taken care of her. I asked the patient how she only knows the name of that particular nurse even if there were other nurses who have taken care of her on other shifts, and she said, "she was the only one who had invested time to fully clean me and make sure that I am comfortable most of the time." This statement of the patient

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struck me the most because every single patient who will be under your care will always remember you for the simplest things that you do for them. Sometimes, I focus on the things that matter to me in regard to fulfilling the duties required of me as an Aide or as a Nurse Tech that I forget to do the things our patients asked of me like simply bringing them water, asking for an extra blanket, helping them brush their teeth, and giving them the toiletries they need to care for themselves. These simple things that these patients asked of us bring them comfort, recognition, and importance. Sometimes, we would go to our usual routine and look forward to completing the responsibilities and other obligations required of us as nurses and oftentimes we miss the importance of spending a little time with our patients. To some patients, the small chit-chats and small chuckles help them remember that they are still worthy of being treated as a person, as a human being. Recognizing them and reminding them makes them feel that we are there to help them get through this disease that they have. Validating their feelings, answering their questions, appreciating them for following education and training, and interacting with them for a single moment are the other obligations of a nurse towards his/her patients.

One of the patients we had in South 4 was a 35-year-old male who had liver problem and had ascites. When I and my nurse went inside his room, he was with his father and mother having dinner. I could see that the patient was very accepting, very cooperative, and very welcoming. The same is true with his family. His eyes were beaming with hope and assurance that he would get better and feel better as soon as they start the paracentesis on him. He did not look like someone who's in pain, under so much struggle, or at least, that was how he presented himself to us. However, when I went early in the morning to give him a bed bath and change his linens, he showed me one of his weaknesses. He was alone in his room when I first got in. He looked sad, hurting, and uncomfortable when I started wiping him down. He then started sharing how much his appearance had changed in just two months. He went from being buff to almost bone and skin at all. He told me how much he appreciated all the things we did for him because we made him feel that he is worthy of our time. He shared how much he became a trouble in the family yet he always had his dad and his mom by his side. He said that he felt more alive than ever because he knew he had his family and the good nurses who give him the hope, the drive, the motivation, and the smiles to continue living. He was planning to travel the world once he gets a new liver transplant and told me that he would volunteer to St. Jude Children's Hospital. He shared how much suffering he had gone through and that he would like to provide the help needed to support the children. I listened to him for an hour because I could see how he feared the many possibilities that could happen to him. I tried to be there for him and just listened to him as he continued to laugh and giggle with me while we waited for his dad to arrive at the hospital. I was moved by how optimistic he was and had this thought to myself. If I could do these things to most of my patients, then I would surely be one of the best nurses they would ever have. I bid my goodbye to him and I told him that I would be praying for his continuous healing and told him that I would see him outside the hospital soon and play sports with him. I went home feeling contented on that day knowing that I was able to give something for my patient.