My Journey Into Nursing

Every child has a dream. Irrespective of race, creed, or nation of origin, each child has aspirations that they hope one day will be materialized.

Born on the island of Jamaica, my childhood dream was to become a Nurse. Through my childhood, I would always seek opportunities to help people in any way that I can. The third of six children, I demonstrated a level of maturity that was beyond my actual age.

My parents recognized this willingness in me and encouraged me to get involved in various activities within the community; lend a helping hand as needed by doing chores and errands for the older folks. This gave me a sense of pride and accomplishment because I knew that the assistance I gave to them really mattered, and made a difference in their lives.

I was also actively involved in assisting my parents with my siblings, even the two older ones.

As I grew older and traveled outside my community, I would see Nurses going to and from work dressed in white, and I would look on with longing eyes, hoping to be a Nurse like them one day. When I was old enough to go to college, I applied to the nursing program and was placed on a waiting list. I was very disappointed, but wasn’t going to give up on my dream. While I awaited my opportunity to enroll in nursing school, I decided to visit the United States for my summer vacation.

I arrived in the United States still holding on to my values and my dream of becoming a Nurse. I soon decided to stay in the United States and fulfill my dream. I quickly found out that this would not be as easy as I initially thought. This was my first prolonged trip from home; having to deal with the cultural differences, as well as the climate changes. Work goes on regardless of rain, sleet, snow or sunshine. Adjusting to the climate changes proved to be quite difficult. I was however non-deterred from my dream of becoming a Nurse. I enquired what it would take for me to enroll in school and what the necessary qualifications would be. I was now faced with the challenge of not having the necessary “landing” documents that would qualify me to enroll in school.

I set out to find what I need to do in order to get the necessary documents. Armed with this information, I journeyed along not losing or having any doubts that my dream would be realized. This proved to be quite difficult but I was determined not to give up.

I started working during the day and as soon as I could, I started taking classes at night. I understood that this would take some time, but, I was determined and motivated that I was on the right track. Certainly I encountered obstacles and challenges along the way but, with my determination and drive they were not insurmountable. Failing was not an option for me.

Working full time and attending classes at nights, and week-ends were extremely stressful. There were many sleepless nights; staying up late at night and then going to work in the morning. Weekends were reserved for “skills lab” and later “clinical”. Work was a must because I needed the income in order to survive. I pressed on knowing that a obtaining a college degree would put me in a better standing to fulfill my financial obligations.

Living in a foreign land meant financial stability. Most of my family and friends were still back home. Not being able to survive was very scary.

As I later reflected, it was my steadfast belief that anything is possible. This gave me the strength and the desire to stay the course. Certainly I wanted the “American Dream” too. There were other things that I wanted to do as well, but I was constantly reminded to keep my eyes on the prize understanding that sacrifices need to be made.

I finally saw the day that I would graduate from Nursing School and finally become a Nurse. I felt a sense of accomplishment and pride because I worked really hard to reach this milestone. Obtaining a degree in “nursing” was important to me, but I also needed to obtain a license to practice. Failing the nursing boards was not an option for me either. My goal was to pass the first round and I did.

I am now finally able to practice as a Registered Professional Nurse.

At this point I was determined to be the best Nurse that I could be. I started working and took great pride in helping my patients, making sure that they received the best care.

I found myself motivating my colleagues and building reams, where regardless of title, everyone brought something of value to the team. Nurses were encouraged to seek opportunities for self-development. The tone of the unit was changed and the Nurses became engaged, and we all felt a sense of purpose. Our patients were very happy and satisfied as well. Nursing leadership recognized the difference I made to the unit and as a result, I was rewarded with a promotion to Head Nurse.

My current position on my job is quite fulfilling. I am still in the patient’s eye area and I can still interact with patients, lifting their spirits and touching their lives every day. I often reflect on the journey that led me to this place.

I still aspire to move on and explore other avenues in the nursing profession. The next chapter has already begun as I am now enrolled in school as I prepare for my next step as a Registered Professional Nurse. This perhaps will be my final chapter, but I expect it to be as rewarding as the first chapter.

There is no expected reward or accolades for providing service to humanity. Every day provides new opportunities to learn and grow regardless of how long one is doing a job that they know. There are no regrets for this chosen path. Nurses continue to lead the way as they stay committed to care.