

PASSION: The Secret Ingredient of a Fulfilled Life as a Nurse!

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Several years ago, I caught myself watching reruns of Gordon Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares, a reality cooking show of a very animated, award-winning chef who went around Great Britain, France, and the US attempting to salvage restaurants from the brink of bankruptcy or closure. It appeared that Ramsay had been successful in his efforts for the majority of the series. But the most important thing that I had always come away with after each episode was not the fact that the "F" word flies out of his mouth at every third sentence, but how much he stressed the importance of having passion in one's work or endeavor. Without passion, chefs in every failing restaurant served pathetic, unappetizing, and bland dishes that sometimes were even unsanitary to serve.

Passion. The dictionary defines passion as an intense, driving, or overmastering feeling or conviction. Having passion is so powerful that it can be the difference between watching your dreams flourish in prosperity or crumble in despair. Large sums of time and money can go down the drain as a result of passionless work ethic. Passion is what makes our senses come alive. It is an invincible force that can drive anyone to greater heights. It makes colors more vibrant, experiences more memorable, and achievements more gratifying. However, passion can also make us lose our minds and commit unthinkable acts. Without passion, even lovemaking becomes unexciting, mechanical and robotic.

There exists an exotic yellow or purple fruit called passionfruit. Although by history it was named after the passion of Christ, it can easily be mistaken to have been named after the emotion. Passionfruit - the name conjures great promise of orgasmic proportions. It is not fair to put so much expectation and responsibility on one ordinary looking fruit to deliver. Because of its tart and aromatic flavor, the passionfruit is very popular in gourmet cooking. And synonymous to the popularity of the passionfruit to sophisticated chefs, passionate people are valued and sought after in life. Including the chefs who create inspiring dishes, people with passion strive to attain a common success - to make a difference!

Nursing is one profession that demands passion. As a nurse myself, I recall my enthusiasm and the excitement I felt telling my parents that I got accepted into nursing school. Owning my age with this confession, I, even as a young girl, always pictured myself wearing those glossy heavily starched crisp white apron and cap comforting the sick. I felt proud each time I was told how noble the nursing profession is and as a result, grateful that I belong to it. That is when my passion for nursing started.

Now, how about you? Is your passion for nursing still burning? Who or what was your inspiration to become a nurse? Perhaps it was a loved one who exemplified qualities of a nurse - someone who is caring, compassionate, and altruistic. Sometimes, even hearing something small in passing can stir one's passion as much as a life changing event. Whatever your motivation was or still is, have you ever felt gratified after a hard day's work, knowing you have touched a life? Whether it is listening to a lonely elderly's story, soothing a crying baby, relieving a patient's pain, helping save someone's life, or simply holding a worried mother's hand, your experiences make a difference. The spirit of a nurse is akin to selfless devotion to service. It is the nurse who may be the first to care for a newborn and may be the last to care for a dying person. How has being a nurse made you a better person? Do you feel the passion and pride in your work? The same passion inspired me to give back to the profession that has been kind to me, and thus, I am actively involved in a professional organization that promotes the positive image of the nurse. To overcome apathy, think back on what made you decide to become a nurse in the first place.

Decades later, sans apron and cap, my feelings towards nursing have evolved and widened. In this ever changing landscape of healthcare delivery, I not only focus on my immediate relationship with the patient, but also now consider the larger forces that affect the patient's welfare. In Optum, I am drawn to uphold the values of the company while applying these same values of compassion, empathy, and trust building in my relationships with others even in my daily life. At work, we are encouraged to actively engage in the community to fulfill our social responsibilities through volunteerism and participation in causes that promote health and wellbeing. We are supported in our pursuit of higher learning, career advancements, and in the attainment of the highest standards of nursing. We are inspired to be a part of a successful innovative company. Above all these, we take pride in our mission of helping people improve the quality of their lives.

The German philosopher Hegel said, "Nothing great in the world has ever been accomplished without passion." Cultivate your passion any way you can at work and at home. Immerse yourself in your craft and in the things you believe in. Wherever life takes you, if you put passion in what you do, yours will be a life fulfilled.