

DESTINY

A Nurses Story

A Nurses Journey

1

We all have a life story and a starting point to reflect on I would like to share mine with you.

Reflecting over the past I feel many people become engrossed in the present and forget their own journey and just how far they have come, and forget to reward themselves on their achievements.

When I was at high school in the 1960's in country NSW town career guidance was not greatly explored, I remember a girl in my year ten class had wanted to do nursing and that was when I first thought about nursing as a career.

After finishing high school I drifted into being an office working, I then saw an advertisements for student nurses, one at a large Sydney hospital, I applied and was not successful, I then applied at a local country hospital advertising for student nurses, this time I was successful, there I started my preliminary training, my nursing career had started.

It was a 100 bed country hospital, a group school of nursing, with a matron, tutor, general practitioners, visiting specialist doctors and students at various years in their training, we were under an apprenticeship scheme, Matron took care of us academically, spiritually physically, socially and emotionally, caring guiding, promoting nursing and committed to our wellbeing in every aspect of our lives our seniority was defined by the colour of our buttons on our uniform aprons, which attached our aprons to our uniforms first year was maroon. We had the benefit of the guidance of senior nurses first year to year four, not always as supportive as perhaps they should be as training was a very practical and a hands on experience I did spend many hours scrubbing monumental pans in the utility room and the ward tidy took precedence.

Working and living in the area local to the hospital meant camaraderie, intense clinical and tutorial application. In our training we were exposed to very varied clinical situations, being close to a main highway, there were injuries and deaths from motor vehicle accidents and being in the country

there were farming accidents, our hospital had a maternity section, children's ward general surgery and medical and surgical wards in the Nightingale design, I remember the male ward was painted blue and the female ward pink. We did have a private wing. My learning was great personally and professionally, we were on call for operating theatre and often called out during the night, we had specialist clinics. Our tutor was exceptional and imparted so much knowledge to me and I still remember him telling me to read, read, and read and this advice I have followed for my entire life, I am an avid reader today and it is one of my greatest pleasures.

The training Years

2

There were many challenging times, physically and emotionally and academically nursing is a very physical and emotional activity and can be exhausting in every aspect, there was no formal debriefing or counselling sessions and one often struggled with dealing with ill patients of all ages their conditions and outcomes. Eventually after three years and nine months my general training was completed and I became registered as a general nurse. I graduated, at the ceremony we wore the mandatory starched uniforms and veils and held a burning candle.

During my training I had thought about my ongoing career, again there was not a lot of discussion or guidance relating to this, I thought I would like to work in the country, and midwifery seemed the right option and one needs to be versatile and to be able to have a very broad experience to work in a country hospital midwifery and emergency being great assets one needing to have all round general experience while working in a country hospital the hospitals being smaller housed maternity, children's ward, general surgical and medical and emergency to aged care.

I applied to a Sydney hospital to do midwifery and was accepted; again a group school of nursing involving another suburban hospital, twelve months, a tremendously intense and busy training, and one was required to witness one hundred births do twenty deliveries it was an expanding suburb with a large population of young mothers.

Return to country life

3.

After completing my midwifery training I returned to the country and worked in a ten bed maternity unit, as a midwife delivering babies, supporting breast feeding and attending to postnatal care.

At the time I did my midwifery training, I was mother of a small daughter and this made me aware of the issues of birth, maternity care and breast feeding and child development and child care , allowing me to be conscious of all things related to birth and child care and family life.

Midwifery graduation was again in a starched uniform and with a starched veil.

My personal life did have some challengers, and I married again and returned to the city, my nursing career continued, not only working in the public sector but working in private nursing homes and doing agency work I have been a preceptor a clinical nurse specialists and a consultant. During this time I travelled, nurses are very social people and great travellers and there were many rewarding times both personally and professionally. I have climbed Ayers rock, transversed Britain, swam in tropical waters off Fiji to mention some of my travels.

University

4

I then applied to a large Sydney hospital and worked in maternity completing the diploma of applied science nursing at university whilst working part time and attending university part time, then I changed hospitals did neonatal intensive care level two through university and worked in midwifery working in special care and intensive care nurseries and doing hospital based and domiciliary midwifery care, also doing a lactation course becoming a lactation consultant engaged in post natal and domiciliary maternity care. When I completed the Diploma of applied Science Nursing, I graduated in a gown.

I travelled on my journey through my nursing career, professional and personal development went hand in hand. I went from a pupil nurse an apprentice in nursing to student and attaining a professional status attending university, having intense clinical input, reflective practice, a movement from task orientated practise to a personal centred and inspired care mode and today technology plays an important role in our everyday nursing application and care.

Nursing has been fulfilling but professionally and personally. I have had a flexibility to learn work, travel and nurture a family. I have gone from small county hospital to major city hospital, from hospital based care to domiciliary care. I have done full cycle from birth to death, a midwife to dementia care and palliative care, from apprentice to university graduate and my career still progress's being a member of the NNWNWA since 1974, having an active interest in all things associated with nursing and professional development, now fulfilling professional requirement with continual professional development and registration with AHPRA.

On becoming a senior

5

I continue encouraging and promoting within my role as a senior registered nurse, and being older myself I have a compassion and a passion and a respect for the senior person and those who are aged and with all things related to the senior person and aging. There is privilege and Satisfaction in working with people of all ages both as clients and as work colleagues and work mates in my work place there are people from many different countries, as Australia is multicultural; there is a positive exchange of skills, learning, culture, spirituality and socialisation within my work place.

At a more passive level I continue my nursing career, maintain an active interest all things associated with nursing, nursing has allowed me to touch the lives of many people if only for a moment, I too have had hospitalisations having a fractured femur, carcinoma, naming a few of the medical problems I have encountered I also lost a child having a neonatal death, I was devastated to lose my baby and remember clearly those who cared for me. I look at all the rewarding and positive aspects of my nursing career and life experiences and want to pass my knowledge and career satisfaction on to others, motivating and supporting them on the career journeys. I always think although things can be at times very challenging and difficult, other people have the same experiences and we all need to be supported at these times and I cannot stress enough the importance of being aware of our presentation physical and verbal and our approach and manner when dealing with people and clients as these encounters remain in our memories.

As I now work in dementia care I have become aware of the end stage and spiritual side of life and I completed a palliative care course, I also completed an on line graduate cert in dementia care course

with university, graduated this time with cap and gown this course was a challenge but again apart of my continued professional career facilitating my work in dementia care and, in aged care. In aged care , there are the permanent stable staff and many of the working population are often transient, many people passing through as students working while establishing their own career paths, I see my role now as a mentor, and support person, encouraging people to continue and be fulfilled and to have work satisfaction and continued learning.

I wanted to share my story with you hoping it will motivate and encourage you to be a nurse, as being a registered nurse has been a life time commitment and fulfilment for me. Having a family a profession and many interests that are life fulfilling, travelling, studying, working, all positive and rewarding. I wish to remind you that we all have a starting point and I have been supported by many people in many ways over my forty years of nursing progressing from my starting point and I am still reading the lamp and hope to do so in retirement.

I have gone from student nurse with starched uniform and hat to starch uniform and veil to cap and gown; I have seen many changes from the medical model to practise development with ever changing technology and computerisation and I continue to travel all directions.