

Philosophy of Nursing

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There is no other field like nursing. While a lot of professions require a set of skills, a particular knowledge base, a set of values and a certain ethical standard, nursing requires a purpose, a calling, a philosophy. In this paper, I am hoping to investigate the ideas that lay the foundation for my personal nursing philosophy and come up with a statement that would ring true as I become a professional nurse. This job requires a lot more than just a pair of hands ready to work. It is a tandem consisting of physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social elements that strive to achieve a state of wellness in an individual, families or communities that we come in contact with.

What I thought nursing was before starting nursing school ended up being very different from what I have learned in school. I am sure that my definition of nursing will change again once I start wearing scrubs and a badge with my name on it. I remember being puzzled by the definition of nursing that was given to me at the very first lectures in school: nursing is a treatment of a human condition in response to illness. It seemed so vague and mysterious. It also was a surprise to me that nurses do not make any medical diagnoses even though they are the largest healthcare workforce. After three years of my nursing education, I think of nursing as an essential part of a healthcare experience. Nursing is a bridge that connects medical science and treatments to the person, family or community that is seeking wellness, improved health, or a peaceful death. As the biggest healthcare workforce in the nation, nurses are on the forefront of the battle, delivering care to the poor and the rich, to the very young, even unborn, to the very old and dying. Without nurses that act according to the principle of justice, there might have been no care for those who need it the most. I've chosen nursing because there is always going to be a need for quality healthcare that improves people's lives. I want to be a part of that

challenging but exciting journey and see where it takes me. I never considered nursing to be my calling, but I think I can make a good nurse, based on personal traits that I have. I care about what I do, no matter how big or small the job might be, and nursing seems to have a lot of meaning and depth behind it. We pour our souls in the job and strive to make the people in our care comfortable; we sympathize with their suffering; we advocate for those who are vulnerable or those who have a vision about how they want their care to unfold. In my opinion, the purpose of nursing is to integrate to incorporate the patient's decisions in the care plan as much as possible. Doing so will ensure that the patient's voice and preferences are heard; that they learn how to manage their condition and how to prevent reoccurrence whenever possible.

Another big part of my life that translates to nursing is education and teaching others to make better health choices. Having an informed decision and making health choices go hand in hand. In my opinion, in order to effectively care for others, one needs to be good at taking care of oneself first. Everyone knows that, in case of an airplane emergency, you need to put an oxygen mask on yourself first, then on somebody else. This is a perfect metaphor that translates into nursing. Because it is such a physically and mentally demanding job, it is of utmost importance to nourish your own body, exercise, eat well, socialize, have a hobby that brings joy and manage stress properly. As the Healthy Nurse, Health Nation initiative by the American Nurses Association (ANA) states, "nurses support patients to live life to the fullest, and they deserve the same privilege" (ANA, n.d.). Frankly, I think that living life to the fullest should not be a privilege but a right. I find that the best way to influence someone in a positive way is to be an effective role model. As nurses are equipped with the knowledge that is necessary to promote and integrate a healthy lifestyle. There is a saying in Russian that says, "Take care of your clothes when they are new and take care of your dignity when you are young." It is so much

easier to manage health when you are healthy than to let it spiral down and try to bring it back to normal. This is where the primary prevention comes in as the main strategy. I love being able to use the information I have been given, share it with other people, be a positive example for them and see how they implement these little steps towards a big goal of being healthy and thriving.

Nurses play a pivotal role in the health of individuals, families, and communities. We come from diverse backgrounds and make a difference in patients' lives. Nursing requires you to keep your mind open and be flexible so that you can accommodate certain cultural needs. Unfortunately, the rural hospitals that I had a chance to practice at were lacking cultural diversity. However, for me as a foreigner, this is a culturally different scene, so I tried to be as accommodating as I can. I was once asked for a tea and when I replied, "Hot or iced?", I was told, "Honey, this is the South, of course it is iced." That made me chuckle and learn that iced tea is just as endemic to the region as country music. While in nursing school, we briefly studied various health, birth, and death related customs of certain ethnic and religious groups, so I look forward to experiencing that aspect of nursing with respect and open mind.

When it comes to the relationship between nurses and communities, I find it to be even more important, because this relationship has a broader reach and impact. It encompasses education, health promotion, advocacy and addressing social determinants of health, just to name a few. I like to think of nurses as the bright and caring members of healthcare that live next door and have your back when you need to find out about a vaccination schedule or healthy eating habits when managing diabetes.

Jean Watson's theory of caring seems to fit my nursing philosophy the most. It emphasized the interconnectedness of humans and looking at individual beyond their physique and connecting to them on the deeper spiritual level. Watson's theory states that in order to

connect and provide care, the nurse must have the ability to take care of oneself, have intentionality, the ability to be present and open minded (Gunawan & Watson, 2022). I have discussed some these qualities previously as they shape my vision of nursing, and I am pleased to have them be in integral part of Watson's theory.

Respect for patient's autonomy and self-determination is of a great importance to me. While my professional experience is limited, I would like to mention a personal example that shaped my vision of nursing. When my father was diagnosed with colon cancer, he made a decision to delay a surgical intervention. In his mind, having a colostomy bag would make him a disabled person. Despite the many desperate pleas from his family, he was adamant about trying various alternative medicine approaches and stayed that course for about a year. After that, not seeing a result that he wanted, he agreed to the procedure. Unfortunately, it was too late: the cancer had spread to his liver. I have a strong belief that, had he had the surgery and chemotherapy upon the diagnoses, he would still be with us today. But no, he was stubborn, he was determined, and I respected that decision, even though he lost his life and I lost a father. I strongly believed and still believe that you cannot make a person do what they do not want to do, especially when it concerns big things like health. As Provision 1.3 of the ANA Code of Ethic goes, a good quality of life is subjective (ANA, 2015). It was a big lesson in autonomy for me. When my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer a few years later, she saw what the disease had done to her husband, she did not hesitate to follow the medical advice to the fullest. This was her decision and respected it too. Thankfully, my mother is in remission.

Another ethical principle that guides my nursing practice is beneficence. Everything we do as nurses comes with the intention of doing good to the people we take care of. I remember shadowing a nurse at a catheterization lab holding unit and, after learning that I was checked off

for doing an intravenous catheter, he briefly handed me the supplies, told me place the IV on one patient, and ran off. I didn't feel comfortable doing that on a live patient for the first time without supervision, so I tracked down the nurse and asked for his guidance. He appeared slightly inconvenienced, but I wanted to do what was right for the patient and a baby nurse like me.

As I get older, I keep thinking about how important health is and, if you are in good health, you can achieve anything. I am glad I have chosen a career that has a deep meaning and strong ethical values, the career that blends hard sciences with the art of caring for another human, the career that respects inherent dignity and choices of every individual. Completing this assignment gave me a better understanding of my motifs and gave me a clearer picture of what my nursing philosophy is. I was not sure I had one when I was preparing for this assignment but turns out that I do. I just never thought so deeply about it.

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