

PERSON ORIENTED OR WORK ORIENTED?

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In my Nursing career as a student, Staff Nurse, Head Nurse, Departmental Nurse, Tutor and Nursing Supdt., with the additional responsibility of a part of the hospital administration, I had to face very many nursing problems which are inevitable. Many a times solutions were brought forward through discussions by those involved. During these encounters, much thought-provoking points were brought forward. When one stresses on human-worth and its uniqueness, one wonders if we are "work oriented or person oriented". But when it comes in the context of Nursing, one begins to reflect more deeply as our work is to deal with lives. Then, what is PERSON oriented. In this context, while developing and maintaining the standards of Nursing, the reflections that were shared **by** or **with** my nurses in one hospital, I wish to share with all my colleagues in nursing as I am certain many experience the same.

Such beautiful philosophical statements would come forth.

"Of Course Person Oriented",

"We should not forget the human element",

"Mechanical work will make persons as machines",

"Human worth is not measured by the Professional worth",

"Human beings are prone to errors",

"All the fingers will not be the same",

"No one will err deliberately", then why not overlook" etc. etc.

Will be the litany that will be obtained from many groups of nurses. Yet, let us look at it squarely. All these statements are made only to excuse oneself for selfish motives, and accepted only as long as SELF is not made to take the consequences. When it is OTHERS, all these are fundamental, philosophical truths. But let that individual be ME on whom the error is made, the angle of the story turns.

I would say All of us are like that as long as I AM NOT TOUCHED by its less good consequences. Now, let us take these statements one by one.

1. Of course, Person oriented

In a Hospital, WHO is the PERSON? This is a big question. Is it the PERSON who lies flat-helpless and hopeless or the relative who hangs on to every word that might be said by a doctor, a nurse or any one of the workers in that ward which gives them the ultimatum if they would have their beloved back healthy or as a vegetable, ALIVE and yet not LIVING, or will they lose his/her for ever, leaving a void in their lives which no man on earth can ever fill or the friends for whom he/she has been a sunshine in their lives and anxiously working to get back to their normal life or the student who depends solely on this training which will

make her either a VERY GOOD NURSE OR LUKIEWARM—a nurse with all capital letters, or just a nurse who does just enough not to get caught, or negligent but shrewd enough not to be noticed and await the day to be over, looking at the clock or await the end of the month looking at the dates of calendar just to receive the salary or a nurse who has made the life's choice of service once and for all when she decided to become a nurse and confirmed it further with the pledge she made at the Capping Ceremony when she learned the meaning of the uniform and the words as 'Nurse' 'Selfless Service' 'Duty' 'Punctuality' etc. and when with such enthusiasm and fervour she went through the graduation ceremony.

WHO is a person? All are persons of equal importance. But there will be times in our lives when we will have to make a choice as to whom will one give the priority. A hospital or a nurse for whom patient is not the centre, cannot be a true-nurse in all its sense, whatever implications are brought forth.

2. We should not forget the Human Element

Yes if we do it seriously, we will use this statement for the most deserving at that moment and do our utmost for our patients, we will never think of protecting ourselves or covering up our deeds by it, as a means of escapism.

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3. Mechanical work will make persons as machines

Why that word 'mechanical'? Can we turn our service into mechanical work if we see God's image in those whom we serve? To make it more clear, as some one said 'I do not know how God's image is'. I would picture my own kith and kin in those whom I serve. When I see my mother, my father, my brother, my sister, my uncle, my aunt, my nephew, my niece, my husband, my wife, my baby, my grand father, my grand mother, my grand child etc. can I really do mechanical work and become machine that needs only be switched on and off? Will my work ever become a routine, when each individual is a person like me who has the right to the best, scientific and efficient human care? Who can ever get to the very depth of a human being? Then, will we not see the reactions and growth of each individual?

4. Human worth is not measured by the professional worth

Is completely true. But can a human being ever overlook the professional efficiency if she takes life seriously? Professional efficiency if she takes life seriously? Professional efficiency without human feelings is not to be thought of. At the same time one cannot imagine a very friendly and a very good natured nurse who cannot foresee a complication and prevent it or does not take her work seriously and thus prolong the illness and stay in the hospital to be measures of her worth as a human being.

5. Learn by Trial and Error

Only by mistakes one learns. Every mistake is a stepping stone to perfection, and so on... Let us do an introspection. Will this statement be accepted if that error is on me? Well, a nurse cannot afford to learn by 'Trial and Error' method, though we are prone to error, precau-

tions are to be taken to prevent a calamity, and complications are not to be overlooked. We should never forget that we can never replace a human life. Forgetfulness can be avoided by the use of a pocket-book, proper use of assignment books by ticking off what is done and also writing out the assignment properly and not just mark out something.

6. All the fingers will not be the same

If we value life, just as all the fingers are not put into same use, we will not make each and everyone a nurse, when her vocation is something else. Nursing is a vocation and not just a job. Job seekers cannot become good nurses. They can be busy only with whatever chances one can get to make money; though a just remuneration to live decently and provide for the family, sickness and old age is quite essential and vital to all. In fact, a good nurse should never accept a post where just remuneration is not possible unless she takes it up on voluntary basis. This will avoid seeking various money making opportunities which lowers individual dignity and the nobility of the profession.

7. No one will err deliberately, then why not over look?

There is ignorance which is to be condoned and a culpable ignorance which cannot and should not be condoned very easily as it is life, we are dealing with. Every nurse should reflect and see once in a while and if possible, even oftener, about the consequences that might be encountered by the patient or his/her family for every mistakes we see or hear about in the wards and in the hospitals at large. Another method is to have a good system of Reporting and Control. Repara-tion of mistakes committed should never be as a punishment, if it is understood in the proper light. Even in the mea-

sures that is taken to repair the mistakes, if the authorities take time to evaluate impartially without negative support from various other quarters, very good result can be obtained.

If these points are understood clearly we will never go in search of philosophical truths to reduce our guilt, but make an earnest effort to take all the means to avoid any sort of negligence and the authorities will make it their bounden duty to train their nurses according to these principles and those who do not come up to this level will be guided and directed where they are suited best.

Even very good nurses may not be fitting into every institutions and departments, for example, a nurse may be quite good in practicals, but too slow and too quiet to be able to explain anything to the student nurses or even do the work methodically and scientifically, or another type that can never work in a team but quite good when working alone, should not be kept in an Educational Institution if our aim is to produce good nurses and to guarantee good patient care.

Periodical evaluation with a very good Organisation and Administration together with good spirited team who will co-operate to achieve these goals are the essential requirements for any hospital.

Let us all, in unison work out as best as it lies in our power to uphold the dignity of our profession by standing up to the required standard and thus awakening the public to the nobility of nursing. Only by examples which can be experienced by the patients and their relatives can we ever hope to reach our goal and not through strikes and other such revolutionary measures. Let 'Shine Forth' be our motto and may God be our Guiding Spirit in all that we do.