The Calling of Nursing

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The Quest:

What is at the core of nursing?
I – Nursing: A historical approach

- The advent of professional nursing is a recent phenomenon in the history of human civilization.

- The occupational prestige of nursing is of even more recent origin.
Once upon a—not too far away—time:

“Midwife & Nurse”
Mrs. Sarah Gamp
Images of the nurse, 19th century

(Notice the type of people depicted & symbols in the left hand corner of the images!)
I – Nursing: A historical approach

The Deaconess movement (since 1836) raised the prestige of the profession by paying attention to decorum, education, medical training, spiritual and personal formation, competent, socially accepted leadership.
I – Nursing: A historical approach

Florence Nightingale (1820-1910), the foundress of professional nursing, turned the task of attending upon sick people into a pro-active initiative of caring for recovery.
Global spread of Nightingale nursing schools
Warfare and the nursing image
I – Nursing: A historical approach

- War and armed conflicts made nursing become a patriotic virtue, leaving their mark on uniforms, the hierarchical structure, and the boot-camp like command of patients.
# Occupational prestige of nursing

## Harris Occupational Prestige Poll

(as of Aug. 4, 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Very Great Prestige</th>
<th>Considerable Prestige</th>
<th>Some Prestige</th>
<th>Hardly Any Prestige At All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Firefighter</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientist</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Military officer</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police officer</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priest/Minister/Clergy</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engineer</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Architect</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business executive</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Athlete</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Journalist</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>Union Leader</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entertainer</td>
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<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Banker</td>
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<td>43</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Actor</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stockbroker</td>
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<td>43</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accountant</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Real estate agent/broker</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Job satisfaction in the U.S. in 2009

### The Best
1. Mathematician
2. Attorney
3. Statistician
4. Biologist
5. Software Engineer
6. Computer Systems Analyst
7. Historian
8. Sociologist
9. Industrial Designer
10. Accountant
11. Economist
12. Philosopher
13. Pharmacist
14. Paralegal
15. Meteorologist
16. Medical Laboratory Technician
17. Paralegal Assistant
18. Computer Programmer
19. Motion Picture Editor
20. Arsonist

### The Worst
1. Longshoreman
2. Dairy Farmer
3. Taxi Driver
4. Seamstress
5. EMT
6. Roofer
7. Garbage Collector
8. Welder
9. Mail Carrier
10. Sheet Metal Worker
11. Nurse (LPN)
12. Painter
13. Child Care Worker
14. Nurse (RN)
15. Physician (General Practice)
16. Junior

*Source (data & picture): The Wall Street Journal, 01.26.2009*
Images of nurses, 20th century

The Advance of American Nursing

1978...

... and 1995!
Nurses in the 21st century

What once was an individual personal activity...

... has now become a professional team approach!
The actual situation of RNs today

There has been a 129% increase in the number of Registered Nurses (RNs) during the period 1980 to 2004.


(Compiled from data from The Registered Nurse Population, HRSA 2009)
The actual situation of RNs today

Qualification of registered nurses (RNs) 1980 & 2004

(Compiled from data from The Registered Nurse Population, HRSA 2009)
The actual situation of RNs today

Where RNs worked in 2004

- Hospitals: 57%
- Public/Community Health Programs: 15%
- Ambulatory Care: 12%
- Nursing Homes: 8%
- Nursing Education: 6%
- Other (Insurances, Politics, Correctional Facilities, etc.): 7%

Of the approximately 2.9 million RNs in 2004:

- 1,361,000 worked in hospitals
- 360,000 worked in public or community health programs
- 278,000 worked in ambulatory care
- 153,000 worked in nursing homes
- 63,000 work in nursing education
- 156,000 in other fields of work (like insurance companies, politics, correctional facilities, etc.)

NB: An amount of +/− 600,000 is not accounted for!
The actual situation of RNs today

Working places of Registered Nurses in 2004

Shift of places of work for RNs from 1980 to 2004

(Compiled from data from The Registered Nurse Population, HRSA 2009)
I – Nursing: A historical approach

Despite the truly remarkable achievements: why is there a continuous worrying about the professional image of nursing?
II – Nursing: A phenomenological approach

➢ The phenomenological approach, introduced into nursing more than thirty years ago, is a “qualitative” research approach.

➢ Phenomenology analyzes real life-world situations by engaged participant observation and transcripts of actual dialogues, not interviews.
II – Nursing: A phenomenological approach

The “nursing situation” or “nursing moment” consists in the personal encounter between non-equals where the patient is in vital need of support which the nurse is expected to provide, trusting that such help will be rendered faithfully.
The “nursing moment” - An artist’s perception

Quilt by Melodie Chenevert, 1992
On display at ΣΘΤ (Sigma Theta Tau) International Headquarters, Indianapolis

Nursing
a career not measured in years but in moments...
II – Nursing: A phenomenological approach

- Nurses protest *in action* against the attitude of not caring for strangers in vital need of help.
- The nobility of nursing rests in its committed caring for—and into—life.

("Nurse" from Latin "nutricia" (fem.), "nutricius" (masc.), meaning "someone who provides nourishment").
II – Nursing: A phenomenological approach

➤ The three constitutive elements of the nursing situation, - i.e. patient, nurse, and mutual trust -, get challenged in different degrees as long as the actual nursing process lasts.
II – Nursing: A phenomenological approach

Nursing assessment and care have to avoid patient humiliation as much as possible. They have to safeguard the personal integrity and dignity of the sick individuals cared for.
How RNs spend their time when on duty

II – Nursing: A phenomenological approach

- Concern for providing the “highest quality of evidence based care possible” may blind for what really matters in nursing.
- The nursing profession has to realize the paradoxical situation it is in today.
II – Nursing: A phenomenological approach

- The call for nursing is voiced by those who suffer the breaking-in of human frailty.
- Those who heed the call for nursing ought do it in “simplicity and singleness of heart” as God’s work. (Florence Nightingale, Notes on Nursing)
- Such devoted caring for the sick helps to keep the profession of nursing properly focused – even today.