



What nursing means to me...

HEALTH-CARE COLLEAGUES AND PATIENTS ALWAYS ASK ME: “HOW CAN YOU work on people’s feet all day?” I have a simple answer for them. “Feet are attached to some very nice people.”

I think I have one of the best jobs in nursing. I help people, often in pain, often unable to care for their own feet because they suffer from arthritis, vision loss, diabetes, COPD or congestive heart failure. As people age, they also may need help because they are simply no longer able to properly care for their feet. While I am tending to their needs, I have the opportunity to teach, answer questions, and make suggestions for keeping one of our most

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under-appreciated appendages safe and comfortable.

I’m a sounding board for their illnesses and problems (my background in psychiatry helps), and a liaison to their doctor and other health-care professionals. I feel rewarded that clients often leave my office feeling better than when they arrived. This is what nursing means to me.

My mother was a nurse, and I always wavered when it came to deciding what my career would be. I thought about being a teacher, but that meant more years of university than I was willing to take on. I also questioned my academic and financial ability to follow that path. But the more I thought about it, the more I realized the link between becoming an RN and teaching.

Growing up, I learned about nutrition, fitness, cleanliness and compassion from my mother, the neighborhood nurse. Mom was called upon frequently to teach others about these and other health issues. I took her knowledge for granted as a child. Today, as a nurse, I see why this knowledge is so vital. I embrace the opportunity for practical teaching during hands-on care.

I studied nursing at both St. Joseph’s School of Nursing and Sir Sanford Fleming College in Peterborough. Upon graduation in 1974, I received an award for being the graduate who showed the most proficiency in helping patients develop the best frame of mind for healing. Receiving this award reinforced that I was gifted with many of the same attributes that made my mother such a good nurse. I made the right choice to follow in her footsteps.

Until nine years ago, I spent the majority of my nursing career in psychiatry. I retired in 2004, only to realize I couldn’t stay away from the profession I love. In psychiatry, I always made sure my patients had good foot care. In retirement, I decided to take some courses on the subject, and returned to nursing in 2006. Working part time, I feel connected to the profession I love, but have a little more time for myself and my husband.

Now, people ask me: “Why did you give up nursing to do foot care?” My simple reply: “I’m still a nurse.” And I smile. **RN**

ELIZABETH WARREN LIVES AND WORKS IN BROCKVILLE, ONTARIO.



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