



What nursing means to me ...

He's "V-FIB" A NURSE YELLS OUT! OUR HEARTS POUNDED AS WE SHOCKED the 29-year-old police officer, John, for the third time. He'd been in a motor vehicle accident a week ago, and on our unit (ICU) ever since. The staff had become quite close to the recent newlywed and his family. Yesterday, it appeared he was making progress: opening eyes, squeezing hands, still unable to talk because he was intubated. His nurse this particular night had a "funny feeling" something was wrong, and called the intensive care resident to evaluate him. Upon the resident's arrival, the patient started to bleed from the

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mouth, and then went into ventricular fibrillation. I spiked the fifth unit of blood to be infused, another nurse performed chest compressions, another administered multiple

epinephrines, the fourth nurse, was recording, and the fifth, circulating the room.

A silence fell, and we all knew our efforts were futile – John was dead. We fought back the tears. It was time to stop. The physician pronounced the young man dead. No one said a word, but quietly we prepared the body to be viewed by the family. Our energy could no longer be focused on the deceased, but rather the grieving family. Our tears were genuine; our hugs were that of comfort; and

our apologies sincere. We were nurses.

Florence Nightingale had a calling to do God's work. She stated, "The highest honor is to be God's servant and fellow worker." She entered the profession at a time when nursing was viewed unworthy by her family and society. Similar stereotypes and innuendos surround men entering the profession even today. I often think back to the night of that horrific code: four out of the five nurses were men, a triumph for men in nursing who've been plagued by stereotypes that males are unable to provide care in a caring nurturing manner.

I wish I could say I originally had a calling similar to Florence, but the truth is I became a nurse through the encouragement of my mother after dropping out of university. In nursing school, as one of only two men in the program, I often felt isolated. It wasn't until I started practicing that I discovered I had a deep-rooted passion to make a difference in peoples' lives every day, which can only be achieved through *caring* for them. And after many years of practice, I can say with complete confidence that this is a universal desire in all nurses, regardless of ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender. **RN**

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