

Passion is defined by Merriam-Webster as “a strong liking or desire for or devotion to some activity, object, or concept.” For me, that devotion has always been to use my knowledge and personal experiences to help improve the overall health and lives of others. Specifically, I aspire to use health promotion and education in the medical field to inspire and inform patients of healthy behaviors, risk factors, prevention strategies, and general ways to improve quality of life. Throughout my childhood, I enjoyed “playing doctor” with my friends and family, and always dreamt of using my passion for medicine to help those in need. Today, by pursuing a career in nursing and a degree in health promotion, I have successfully expanded that passion, allowing it to fuel both my beliefs and my actions.

I believe that I have this motivation because of my personal experiences with the healthcare system as well as the nature of my home and family life. Growing up, I participated in many sports and suffered many injuries, which allowed me to come into contact with various physicians and healthcare professionals. For the most part, the doctors were efficient and helpful, providing all of the important information surrounding my injuries. However, my family and I recently experienced a month-long battle with our insurance company and two orthopedic clinics, which involved numerous instances of miscommunication and improper transfers of medical information. The professionals that we came into contact were impolite, impatient, and almost incompetent; I had a limited timespan for surgery, and they were extremely uncooperative. I was forced to switch doctors due to issues with insurance coverage, there were problems with the transfer of my medical records, and I was required to pay for an MRI that the doctor assured the insurance company was not necessary. Although the issues were eventually resolved, this experience opened my eyes to the serious need for improvements to our healthcare system. People should not be forced to fight with insurance companies for proper coverage of

necessary procedures, pay for unnecessary tests, and worry that medical information is being properly transferred and provided.

Luckily, I have been blessed with an extremely supportive and knowledgeable family, with parents who work in educational and administrative settings. Throughout my life, my parents have always taught me that the key to being successful is having the proper knowledge, understanding of, and respect for everyone I come into contact with and work with. Additionally, they emphasize the importance of education, and how informing others – specifically my future patients and peers – is vital to helping improve their quality of life.

While education and respect for others are fundamental aspects of my own beliefs and actions, they are not always the foundation for the beliefs and actions of healthcare professionals – and they should be. In 2016, my grandfather passed away from violent kidney disease. He was in and out of the hospital for five months, and almost all of his doctors and nurses were disrespectful to both him and our family. My grandfather's original doctor failed to inform him that his kidneys were failing, so when he suddenly became sick, we were all in a state of shock. Various doctors and nurses told him that he needed to make diet, exercise, and medication changes, before they even knew what was wrong with him. The nurses in the hospitals talked to him as if he were a toddler, and did not respect him when he requested to be alone or did not feel like eating. Although my grandfather was very stubborn, the medical professionals failed to work with him or us to try and make his life easier and more comfortable.

After seeing first-hand how older adults were treated at the hospitals, I became even more motivated to pursue a career in nursing. I believe that the combination of my previously-mentioned involvement with the healthcare system and the morals taught to me by my family are responsible for my current healthcare philosophy: a combination of freeing-functioning and

cognitive-based. Since I was raised to believe that knowledge and education are important in success and making a difference, I am a strong advocate for making patient education a priority. However, providing an excessive amount of information and suggestions can be overwhelming, and could quickly turn into doctors trying to make decisions for the patients. People may not understand all of the treatment options provided, so the professional advocates for the treatment they believe is best; unfortunately, the best treatment for one patient may not be the best for every patient, or society as a whole.

As previously mentioned, my dream is to pursue a career in nursing; specifically, I hope to become an orthopedic nurse practitioner. In this occupation, I expect to encounter patients of all ages, beliefs, and socioeconomic statuses, as well as various educational and language barriers. These people will be coming to me for professional medical advice and assistance, so it is my job to provide that advice and assistance in an appropriate, respectful fashion. Since my ultimate goal is to improve the quality of life of those I come into contact with, I strongly believe that providing patients with all relevant information and then allowing them to make their own decisions is the best way to accomplish this. By giving patients numerous options instead of simply *telling* them what they have to do, we can allow them to make the decision that is best for themselves. Although sometimes the patients might not take the “best” advice, it will be the best for what they personally need, which will in turn improve their quality of life. When people are forced to do things that they do not want to do, or things that may be or seem unnecessary, they can become stressed and unhappy, decreasing their quality of life.

I believe that both the freeing-functioning and cognitive-based philosophies will help me accomplish my ultimate goal of improving the lives of others. By providing important health-related information but then allowing people to make their own choices, I can show patients that

their knowledge and well-being is my top priority. It is extremely vital that patients are properly educated on their condition, illness, or injury, so that they can choose the best course of action for their current situation. Health education specialists have a duty to inform their patients of every relevant detail, but they do not have a duty to force patients into making decisions.

Therefore, I am looking forward to incorporating my passion for helping others and my duty to improving quality of life, to promote an education-based, freeing-functioning healthcare system.