

## ESSAY—LORI KIRK

If I were asked to lead a seminar on promoting nursing as a career, the three aspects of nursing that I would choose to highlight would be: the flexibility of the nursing profession, the capacity of nurses to give dignity and respect to the human race, and the overall ability of the nurse to influence individuals, families, and communities with improved health education.

Foremost, I find that nursing is a uniquely adaptable profession in which you can train initially as an obstetric nurse and within a few years determine to succeed as a critical care nurse and subsequently ten years later choose to work as a nurse manager or perhaps to train other nurses on infection control. This is one aspect of the nursing profession that I find extremely engaging and I look forward to benefiting from a vocation that has the capability of allowing an individual to “wear many different hats”.

Secondly, I feel that the nursing profession offers the opportunity to impart dignity and respect to other humans particularly to those who have acute and life threatening illnesses. Nurses are there for every hour and every day; there to care for those who are dying; there to bring solace and a strong shoulder to lean on in rough times; there during the healing and the pain; there during the nights and the days; there to give comfort and care; nurses are there. Nursing is after all, a career of compassion and trust. A nurse should be an advocate that the patient can count on for their greatest needs during their illness. We have a duty to provide all possible pathways to guide our patient to healing of body, mind, and spirit to the best of our abilities.

Ultimately, nursing brings about influence over individuals, families, and communities as a whole by the nurses’ personal and professional example. We should be

open to educate our society at large with any health education topic and to give our time and knowledge to those within our communities. We should also be approachable to assist with education of individuals and families and to offer our help to those who have need.

Being a nurse is not about good pay or great health insurance, it is instead a profession full of opportunities for us to reach out and give help to our fellow humans, regardless of race, color, ethnicity, or religion. Nursing isn't just a profession, it is a lifestyle; one that I look forward to embracing as I work towards my nursing degree and licensure.