

"To Thine Own Self Be True"

By Bobbie Stone

The purpose of National Nurses Week is to raise awareness of the value of nursing; to help educate the public about the important role nurses play in meeting the needs of the American people and to honor Florence Nightingale, the founder of nursing as a modern profession.

I want to address this year's theme, "Nurses: Lifting Spirits, Touching Lives," from a different perspective—the professional development of nurses. "To thine own self be true," a famous quote from Shakespeare's play Hamlet, speaks profoundly to the need for nurses to examine their professional goals and assess if they are, in fact, being true to their heart's desire.

Why not take a moment to ask yourself these assessment questions:

- What have I done to "lift my own spirit and touch my own life" regarding my job?
- Am I having a difficult time being true to myself about where I want to be in my own career?
- Have I developed a career track and do I need to continue with my education?
- Have I positioned myself for promotion or advancement into the highest ranks of leadership if I am a mature, experienced nurse with a proven track record of administration and management nursing skills?
- Do I have interests in new arenas of nursing beyond bedside care?
- Am I in the "it's just another day and this job is just a paycheck" mode?
- Have I "maxed out," been passed over for a promotion, work in an organization with philosophical differences or "just waiting for the shoe to drop," working in a facility that is going through the process of re-engineering and/or layoff?
- Have I surrounded myself with mentors and mentorship opportunities?
- Has my current employer lived up to THEIR promises and MY expectations from the time I was hired, and are my needs being met?
- Am I missing out on job opportunities because I choose to "live in a bubble?"
- What do I like about my current position, and what would I change if I had the power to do so?

From a recruiting perspective, the nursing profession—over my 18 years of experience as a consultant and "headhuntress"—has

changed tremendously. Experience has shown that many nurses have an identity issue when it comes to speaking up for themselves and their needs, writing their resumes and knowing what it takes to find and land a new job. It's important that nurses move beyond this hurdle and take charge of their careers.

Today's nursing reality is all about choices. Solid clinical and management skills, continuing education and employee retention are hot issues facing both hospitals and candidates. The days of a candidate solely reading the Help Wanted/Classified Section of the newspaper or trade journal and networking with other colleagues has been greatly reduced in the job search process. Organizations in Florida and nationally are recruiting candidates who bring energy, vision, leadership qualities and excitement to the facility, and who are highly skilled in both patient care and business. Moreover, nursing candidates are more selective about where they choose to work, and seek to ensure that the position being discussed offers valid career possibilities, upward mobility, mentorship, lucrative compensation and relocation packages, flexible hours and continuing education options. Indeed, hospitals and candidates are "actively romancing each other in today's times and everyone is looking for the best deal."

I have a framed quotation that is hanging on a wall in my office and, in closing, I'd like to share it with all of you:

"Life isn't a destination—it's a journey.

We all come upon unexpected curves and turning points, Mountaintops and valleys.

Everything that happens to us shapes who we are becoming...

And in the adventure of each day, We discover the best in ourselves...

TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE. VS

About the Author

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