

Stories from Chicken Soup for the Nurse's Soul

Sharing our stories

By LeAnn Thieman, LPN

HOW MANY TIMES over the years have nurses exclaimed, "I could write a book!?" Well now, together, we have. Nurses from all over the world contributed their stories to *Chicken Soup for the Nurse's Soul* and the recently released *Chicken Soup for the Nurse's Soul, Second Dose*. In this new department, I'll share some of these stories about the challenges and joys of being a nurse.

Forever, nurses have been sharing their stories at bed-sides, break rooms, and nurses' stations to inspire and uphold each other. Stories from students help us recall why we entered this profession in the first place. Stories from seasoned nurses reveal why we stay. Some stories reflect on the "good old days"—many of which didn't seem all that good at the time! But all of them give us hope.



Recently I visited my first nursing supervisor from back in those "good old days," when I was a young, naive nurse. Mrs. Stallman encouraged and believed in me when I doubted myself. I remember the first night she assigned me to be charge nurse. She said, "You can do this." And I could.

To see her now, her right side crippled with a stroke, the injustice of the circumstances filled my eyes with tears. Half of her face smiled when she saw me. "Remember back when...?" she asked, and our trip down memory lane began.

"I'd been Mercy Hospital's 3-to-11 nursing supervisor for 40 years." Her slurred speech became animated. "I'd experienced just about every medical emergency there ever was. I loved being a nurse." Her voice trailed off as she tapped her weak hand with her strong one. "Late one night I was paged from the understaffed ED. A mom was about to deliver her third child on the way to the hospital. I hustled down to the driveway just as a car sped up

to the door. The frantic husband jumped out screaming, 'The baby is coming! It's coming!'

"I opened the door on the passenger's side to find a young woman leaning back in the seat, groaning and pushing—with two little boys gawking over her shoulder from the backseat." Mrs. Stallman's eyes sparkled as

she imitated the look on their faces. "I raised her skirt. There was the baby's head! With one more groan and push, she delivered the baby into my hands.

"As the ED staff raced to the car with emergency supplies, I heard one little boy gasp, 'Now I know where babies come from!' His little brother said, 'Yeah! From under the car seat!'"

Mrs. Stallman slapped her thigh with her left hand and tossed her head back, laughing.

As I held her hand and we shared more stories, I realized that my mentor and role model from 30 years ago was still teaching me about the joys of being a nurse.

We need to spend more time recalling nurses from our "good old days." Which of them helped you discover your strengths? Find them. Thank them. I promise that in doing so, you'll learn more than ever. ✧

LeAnn Thieman, a certified speaking professional, is a motivational speaker and the coauthor of *Chicken Soup for the Nurse's Soul* and *Chicken Soup for the Nurse's Soul, Second Dose*. To learn more about her books or presentations, visit <http://www.NurseRecruitmentandRetention.com> or call 1-877-THIEMAN.