

# My story!!

---

I started my career as a nurse for the wrong reasons; I wanted to be a physiotherapist but I didn't have the required grades. After gaining my Nursing Diploma, I undertook a degree in Management of the Critical Care Patient and then worked in various very busy A&E's around Barcelona. Work was intermittent, so I decided to pursue my career in England. I landed in Sheffield on Bonfire night in 2000 and I was quite impressed by the reception and all the fireworks illuminating the sky!

Unfortunately, my English was not good enough to be working in A&E, primarily because, in my opinion, they speak another language in Yorkshire! I therefore worked in the intensive therapy unit (ITU), where the ventilators, pumps and gadgets played to my interests. However, my primary focus was technology; I became very 'Competent' but Care, Compassion, Communication, Courage and Commitment were not my priority.

All that changed one weekend when I was allocated to take care of a young lad who had been in a car accident. He was being nursed in a cubicle; his body was battered red, with multiple fractures. He was ventilated and had various drains and pumps in situ. At the time, he was the ideal patient for me as my nurse vision was primarily performing tasks. But towards the end of the shift he asked me what was outside the little window at the end of the cubicle. The following day he again asked me what I could see from the window, and if I could move his bed close to it. Initially I thought he was joking, but he was dead serious. I told him it would be physically impossible.

That night I went home and I couldn't stop thinking about his request. The next day I asked to nurse him again, and I asked him if he wanted to see the view. I still remember his face; it lit up with a big smile from ear to ear. It took me nearly two hours to manoeuvre all the equipment safely around the room, but I was determined! We finally made it, and like a miracle, a ray of sunshine came through the window and illuminated his face. He asked me to sit on his bed next to him, and for the next half an hour we were sat in silence holding hands. It was a powerful moment and we both ended up with tears rolling down our cheeks.

For the first time I understood what Care and Compassion meant. On that day I fell in love with nursing; my job became my passion. I still remember that immense feeling inside me that on that day - I made a difference to somebody. For the first time I was proud of being a nurse.

Unfortunately, it didn't last - the following day I was called to the Matron's office and reprimanded for 'breaking all health and safety rules' and 'putting my patient at risk'

I always had 100 of ideas, most of them useless but occasionally one of them is brilliant but unfortunately I felt constricted by the hierarchic system that was task orientated and I felt I couldn't be myself or express my ideas properly. I went back to my safe mode of performing tasks, but I was constantly looking for ways to experience the same feeling again but I became frustrated. I went home at the end of every shift demoralised, deflated and sad. My nursing career began to drift and I ended up working on the nurse bank, where I became even more detached and

unappreciated. I was feeling undervalued and unable to make the difference. Because of that, I felt emotionally drained and I started to develop negative attitudes and feelings towards patients, and a growing devaluation of my own competence. I could say that my care was compromised. It was like a marriage going sour.

In May 2012 I decided that Nursing was not for me anymore, but I decided to give it one last chance before filing for divorce. I applied to be a community Nurse, That day I hit the jack pot. I found my perfect role. Then towards the beginning of 2013 something magic happens. A combination of 3 factors that together changed my life forever:

## **1.- The 6cs.**

One day a copy of the Compassion in Practice document appear at work. I start reading it and I immediately felt hooked. That day, I went home smiling. Suddenly there were a change in culture and I fell in love with the vision and the idea of person centered care. The 6Cs reminded me of my marriage vows, and from that day I try to live and breathe the 6Cs.

I was so inspired by the 6Cs I decided to join the Care Makers programme and I am now an ambassador for the 6Cs, spreading the word, enthusing others and embedding the 6Cs in my daily role.

It's a privilege and an honour being a nurse, but with that privilege comes professional responsibility. The 6Cs can renew our professionalism and public confidence in our professions. The 6Cs are not just the business of nurses, midwives and care staff. They are the business of all health and care staff: from doctors, to porters, to physiotherapists, to care workers and managers.

## **2.- NHS Change Day**

I came across with NHS Change Day by chance in February 2013 when the comms team sent out an email to all the staff asking for ideas to put forward. Immediately the project got my attention and together with the rest of my colleagues we did a pledge for NHS Change Day 2013. Who would have thought that would be the catalyst of my transformation.

The Rectory Road Project was born and transformed the way that the team interacted with patients. Because of the success Jackie Lynton invited me to the launch of NHS Change day 2014 in London to present our project in front of an audience. Beforehand I had never spoken in public and I was terrified.

The day was electrifying. I felt overwhelmed and at one point I went to a quiet corner and began to cry. It was a cry of happiness for the first time I felt I belong somewhere. For the first time I was told that it was ok to be yourself and try to change things. I wanted to get involved and suddenly I found myself volunteering to lead the NHS Change Day in East Midlands. I became a hubbie (Change Day

volunteer) for the chance to encourage other frontline staff to make a difference and to convince them that you don't need permission to initiate change. As a hubbie I try to transfer my passion and ignite other people's hearts, and hopefully inspire courage for others to take the first step to try to improve the place they work.

### **3.- Twitter**

Would you be surprised if I told you that I only joined twitter in June 2013? But from that moment I have never look back - it has transformed my career. One of the main issues that the NHS faces today is lack of engagement and low morale from its frontline staff. For me, the solution is easy: TWITTER!

Social media allows NHS organizations, patients and staff to engage directly with each other without hierarchy. It is the most effective way to share information including news, events and public health messages.

With Twitter, the world is in the palm of your hands. It used to be difficult to keep up-to-date with what was happening outside of your own place of work, but Twitter has changed all that.

If you want to announce something publicly to the world, Twitter is usually the quickest, easiest and cheapest way to do it. Meaning anybody with an interest in what you're doing can have instant access to that information.

On a more personal note, Twitter has brought me opportunities that I could only dream of and has enabled me to work on amazing projects and to reach out to new people. It has empowered me and helped me become a better nurse.

But Twitter alone can't do anything for you so don't just sign up and expect miracles to happen. There has to be a purpose behind the tweets; this isn't the Wizard of Oz! What has transformed me is not Twitter itself, it's the people behind it, the amazing people who have supported and encouraged me on a daily basis. The power of Twitter lies in the community behind it.

We are constantly reminded that we need to work more efficiently and effectively, to do more with less. Unless frontline staff feel supported and engaged, the organizations will fail to achieve this.

When you ask frontline staff how they feel, a common word keeps repeating: stressed! When stress goes up, passion automatically goes down and the ability to go the extra mile disappears. Organisations need to realize that the answer is not far and is available to everyone for free on their mobile phone. When you surround yourself with people who believe what you believe then something magic happens. Trust emerges and when we have trust we become more confident, we are able to take more risks and experiment and explore knowing that somebody in our Twitter community will watch our back, help when we fall and be there for us. That is the true power of twitter and I am a clear example.

Before Twitter I thought I was alone trying to change the world. I was on my crusade and for a lot of years I didn't manage to make any progress. That's now changed.

***My mission** is to enable people to reach their potential and live well in their community by enabling patients to be empowered through information, advice and support: patient centred care at its best.*

*I became a hubbie (Change Day volunteer) for the chance to encourage other frontline staff to make a difference and to convince them that you don't need permission to initiate change. As a hubbie I try to transfer my passion and ignite other people's hearts, and hopefully inspire courage for others to take the first step to try to improve the place they work.*

## **In conclusion**

I have been a Nurse for nearly 20 years but it's only been for last 3 years where I have managed to make a difference. The 6cs gave me my values back that somehow I lost on my way, NHS Change Day gave me the license and approval to peruse my ideas and try to change things for the better and finally Twitter have given me a voice. Twitter have connected me with amazing people and given me fantastic opportunities.

The last three years have been absolutely amazing. I never work harder but also I never been as happy as now. People sometimes ask me what is my purpose, what I am trying to achieve and to be honest I don't know. I just keep walking one step at a time. I don't have a final destination; I just make my journey as I go along. I'm a proud Nurse who loves to make a difference and roar about it.