Lollipop Moments

Many of us who are educators do not understand, appreciate, or acknowledge the impact we can have on the learners we work with in our courses. We seldom take credit for the difference that we make in the lives of these same learners.

Last month, we received an e-mail from a participant in our Spring Clinical Scholar Workshop in which she told us how valuable the class had been for her. She had received a letter of appreciation from one of her clinical students thanking her for making the experience so positive and filled with learning even though it was a subject in which she had no interest. This was a spontaneous letter of appreciation, separate from the formal course evaluation.

This amazing nursing instructor shared the letter with us and told us she realized that she owed a:

debt of gratitude to those of you who passed along your wonderful knowledge and wisdom to me. I took so many of your suggestions and comments back to my students, and as it turns out...you guys know what you’re talking about!!!

She wanted to be sure that we realized how much she had learned and used the skills and tools provided in the course.

This e-mail from the clinical instructor made me think of a YouTube video (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hVCBrkrFrBE) in which Drew Dudley talks about a moment when someone said or did something that changed our lives. He calls these “Lollipop Moments” and questions whether we told the person about the impact he or she had on our lives. We rarely think about the impact we have on others. We may not realize that we made someone’s life better by what we said, what we taught, or the small act of random kindness we showed another human being.

Many nurses think that leaders change the world. In other words, they do something really big or really important. Oftentimes, true leaders change the world, one person at a time. At the same time, we do not take credit or even consciously understand the difference we make in people’s lives, nor are we always aware of the role modeling we provide for others. Just as the new clinical faculty member shared her Lollipop Moment, we each have the opportunity to tell someone what an important acknowledgement they gave us and how they made a difference in our lives.

Most nurses entered the profession because they wanted to make a difference for people. I would challenge all of you who teach to think about the difference you make for the profession through the people you teach. I would wish for each of you a Lollipop Moment when you realize how important you are to the profession, to the nurses, and to the patients for whom they provide care. When someone makes a difference for you, give them a Lollipop Moment in which you acknowledge the gift they gave you.

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