



*Putting heart
and soul into care*

Heart & Soul

The NurseLink
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Love – Gratitude

The agony is so great...
and yet I will stand it.
Had I not loved so very much
I would not hurt so much.
But goodness knows I would not
want to diminish that precious love
by one fraction of an ounce.
I will hurt.
And I will be grateful to the hurt
for it bears witness to
the depth of our meanings,
and for that I will be
eternally grateful.

Dr Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

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Why not the stiff upper lip?

By Joy Nugent RN Post Grad Cert in Palliative Care & Bereavement Counseling

Unfortunately there is no general map for grief—it would be like trying to map a flowing stream! Independent people generally don't like to ask for directions and are concerned about losing face, control or being overwhelmed by grief. The stiff upper lip approach has been the reason for much suppressed grief and stunted emotional growth.

Men in particular have not generally had training in dealing with emotion and have to a large extent relied on support and advice from their female partner or mother figure. In general, women are said to be more comfortable in expressing and releasing emotion and value the quality of their expression of feelings. Men on the other hand tend to value the courage to avoid expression of feelings. Both men and women need someone safe to hear their stories. Listening is a large part of grief work for both men and women and the stories may be told, and retold, as the person tries to make sense of the experience.

Women were traditionally 'the gatherers' who harvested edible grain, fruit and berries. This required communication and a broad view of their world. Men traditionally were 'the hunters' and as hunters they required action, courage, strength and a single focus. They provided for and protected the family unit but preferred practical and activity ways of dealing with feelings rather than one-to-one sharing. There is a danger of an activity being activated to avoid pain rather than to release pain. Literature and media generally give the impression that it is not 'manly' to be seen in tears or to share feelings. It may be better to ask men 'What is going on inside?' rather than 'What are you feeling?'



Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, the Swiss Psychiatrist who taught the world so much about death and dying, likened feelings to a pocket of pus which needed to be released before the healing could take place. When healing takes place the person can begin to feel good about him/ her self and look to the way forward. This may include setting new goals, finding new interests and friends, accepting new challenges or simply helping another person who is having a tough time.

It does mean accepting that events have occurred which cannot be changed. It does mean adapting to new circumstances.

If the grief was caused by death or separation memories can be kept alive by gathering mementos of the person who has died or gone away. Memories may be rekindled when you play their favourite music, speak about them to those who knew them and honour them in personal and individual ways. Ways may include writing the family history (by word or photograph), making a quilt or building a memorial to benefit the community.

It takes courage to shed accumulated unresolved feelings and to live a life in search of meaning. It may require Talk, Time and Tears.

Images from the Pot Pourri Concert

Top right: To quote Dr Frans de Zwart: ‘Margaret and I had a splendid night at the winery; everything came together on this occasion: the setting, the wine, the food under superb weather conditions once the sun had set and of course ‘the entertainment.’ The singers and the pianist were of high quality and I was very much impressed with the sound system... Congratulations to all, including the staff.’

Bottom right: NurseLink carers Elizabeth Scott (left) and Helen Tilley (right) are seen selling raffle tickets to Priscilla and John Fargher. The evening raffle raised \$1,750 and we wish to thank the following Patrons: Maria Kenda for the 1st prize, Mrs Patricia Wynn for the 2nd prize and Mrs Rosemary de Meyrick for the 3rd prize



Left: John and Kate Kain focused on the gourmet food provided by Lucia's Fine Foods and served with Bird in Hand wines at the Pot Pourri Concert in the bird in Hand vineyard.

More about Florence Nightingale: The inspiration behind the Foundation

By Joy Nugent

(continued from previous issue)

The Crimean War

Florence Nightingale met Sir Sydney Herbert when she was working with his wife, Liz on the Harley St hospital committee at the time of the Crimean War (1853-56). Sir Sydney was a prominent politician and when he was Secretary at War he initiated many reforms. He sent Florence to the Crimean War and afterwards he and Florence worked tirelessly on Army reform. Liz became a close friend of Florence's and a supporter of social reform.

Through her nursing in the Crimea Florence Nightingale became a legend and a powerful symbol of reform, caring and compassion. Mothers of dead soldiers wept over letters recording last words that she had written down and sent back to England. When Sir Sidney Herbert launched the Nightingale Fund in London, the adoring crowd heard of the soldiers' love and respect for her. They were told how she walked the long corridors of the hospital with her lamp, checking on her 'children' as she described the soldiers, before retiring for the night and after writing her reports.

The hospital at Scutari was on top of a hill near Constantinople and presented with appalling conditions. It was winter when some of the battles were fought. The sick and wounded soldiers were brought in overcrowded ships and had to struggle from the ships to the hospital. In the hospital there were four miles of beds or some 12,000 patients. A dead horse was found in the water supply, latrines were overflowing and there was no hot water, no clean clothes or bandages. There were no medical assistants, little by way of food and a system choked with red tape.

Florence was frustrated with the needless deaths—48% died in the hospital. Although it was hopeless, she stayed and did what she could. In a short account published at the time of the war it was stated that Florence was frequently known to stand for 20 hours on the arrival of fresh detachments of sick, arranging beds, distributing stores and directing the labours of her nurses. Following a visit to the Crimean hospitals, she succumbed to Crimean fever herself. Her health suffered by her long hours at work. She assisted at the most painful operations where her presence might soothe or support and she spent hours with men dying of cholera or fever.

Dr Hall who was Inspector General of Hospitals for the Crimean campaign was a constant thorn in Florence Nightingale's side. She had to work with prejudice and restrictions imposed on her by archaic systems until Mr Macdonald the distributor of the 'Times Fund' enabled her to obtain the stores and to bring comfort and order into her department. Dr Hall resisted the use of chloroform which Dr Simpson had recently introduced into medicine and it is reported in an audio tape from the Nightingale Museum to have said: 'It is better to hear a man yell lustily with a swipe of the knife than to see him sink into death.'

Florence Nightingale believed that if sanitation was improved the death rate would improve. During this period she kept statistics and was later to use them in her reports for reforms. It was noted that injured soldiers were seven times more likely to die of disease in hospital than on the battlefield. The floors were scrubbed, drinking water was decontaminated and the death rate by disease dropped from 60% to 2%. Contributing factors included the fruit, vegetables and hospital equipment Florence used her own funds to buy and the arrival of a London chef who volunteered his services to cook nourishing soups. There were approximately two hundred soldier's wives living in dreadful conditions under the hospital. The most suitable Florence employed to do the soldier's washing.

For the wounded soldiers there were many problems. There was nothing to do, so they drank bad alcohol and spent money on prostitutes. Because they distrusted the means of sending money home, Florence offered to be in her room for two afternoons a week to collect money which through her brother-in-law in England was sent to the soldiers' families. Games were organized, school masters ran classes, a library was opened. The library was successful and books were not stolen as was predicted. Queen Victoria sent newspapers and magazines. The drink shops were closed and by 1855/56 the picture of a soldier as a brute and cannon fodder changed.

Dr John Sutherland met Florence and worked with her at Scutari Hospital. He was a leading sanitary expert and inspector under the first Board of Health. Florence claimed that his work 'saved the British Army'. They remained close friends and colleagues, working on all aspects of her reforms. He was also her personal physician.

In 1858 for her contributions to army and hospital statistics, Florence Nightingale became the first woman to be elected as a Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society.

Return to London

Following the Crimean War Florence Nightingale slipped into London quietly and went to live at her parent's home at Lea Hurst. When her presence was discovered she was the recipient of much mail and expressions of adoration. Her sister, Parthenope, responded to the work of reply. Although Florence maintained a low profile she continued the fight to prevent needless illness and death. She shunned public life and again rejected an offer of marriage. Sir Harry Verney was a widower and Member of Parliament. She replied to his proposal that she was too busy! He married her sister but became involved in her reform work, chaired the Nightingale Fund until 1890 and remained a life long friend.

The following years were very productive. She pioneered life-saving hospital designs that became the blueprint for hospitals around the world. I remember visiting the hospital at Klang, West Malaysia and hearing the pride in the matron's voice as she told me that the hospital had been designed by Florence Nightingale. Florence prepared the way for the modern concept of care in the community, supporting health visiting and district nursing, and she wrote the timeless Notes on Nursing which give advice on nursing the sick. In the Nightingale Museum at St George's Hospital in London there is a quote attributed to Florence Nightingale from The Times, April 4th 1876: 'Hospitals are but an intermediate stage of civilization... the ultimate object is to nurse all sick at home.'

In her book, Suggestions for Thought we read that while Florence Nightingale lived to a very old age although the conflict between pleasing those she loved and fulfilling her vocation took a tremendous toll on her health. The exact nature of her illness is still uncertain. Sir George Pickering, in his study of creative individuals who suffered from ill health, identified it as a "psychoneurosis". The attacks of breathlessness, palpitation and giddiness seemed to be linked to unwanted events and visitors! In present time it has been suggested that she was suffering from chronic fatigue syndrome. Her ill health spurred her on to finish her projects as time remaining was uncertain.



Concept of God

Florence Nightingale's biographer, Sir Edward Cook records her description of Mysticism (Calabria & Macrae, 1994, p xiii):

'Where shall I find God? In myself. That is the true Mystical Doctrine. But then I myself must be in a state for Him to come and dwell in me. This is the whole aim of the Mystical Life, and all Mystical Rules in all times and countries have been laid down for putting the soul into such a state.'

Florence Nightingale wrote that heaven is neither a place nor a time. She had an evolutionary approach to mysticism which called

for human imperfection to move towards perfection.

She did not believe in eternal damnation because it was inconsistent with her theory of evolution and she regarded it as unjust to be punished for something that happened in a 'blink' of time. While she saw Jesus as demonstrating what we can all become, and as an incarnation of God, she did not believe that his death atoned for the sins of mankind. Rather, she believed that the universe is lawful and we must accept the consequences of our actions, for that is how we grow. Florence Nightingale believed Eastern philosophies provided the right growth for mysticism. In this view atonement is against universal law—no one can save us in a lawful universe. This is but a world of personal trial.

For Florence Nightingale spirituality is intrinsic to human nature and is our deepest and most potent resource for healing. In her view spirituality is a science. The laws are not superimposed but are the essence of divine intelligence. She gave the law of gravity as an example. She wrote that God does not take personal offence at anything we do. If someone does something with the intention of offending us, it is easier to see the action in context rather than take it personally if we are integrated and feeling good. Therefore God (the ultimate good) does not take personal offence at anything we do; and if there is no personal offence there is no need for forgiveness. She felt that the laws of spiritual development should be developing like science and we should be looking for what best facilitates the Divine.

Universal law was the cornerstone of Florence Nightingale's philosophy. She saw Statistics as a sacred science in which the thoughts of God could be read and through which God was revealed as the Divine Mind and Sustainer of the Universe. She wrote that science paved the way for the one God theory and universal laws and patterns suggested that we were not ruled by caprice. Power was in the hands of human beings to live in relationship with the Creator. She proposed that Cholera was due to poor sanitation and saw it as futile to pray to God to remove it when the sewers ran into the rivers. She did not believe in miracles and believed that we take the consequences of actions. Nor did she believe in supernatural interventions rather, we should ask to be at one with God consciousness.

While Florence Nightingale spoke of the Bible in Suggestions for Thought as containing "deep truths" she refuted the Scriptures as divine revelation and questioned that the 'word' could be pinned down to either one period or to one church. She wrote that all churches are only more or less unsuccessful attempts to represent the Unseen to the mind, to give form to intangible "things hoped for". For Florence a church arises because it has succeeded in doing this for a certain class of minds, at a certain period. It falls when another mind, or another period, requires another and different representation to give life to its Unseen. She wrote that a nation's progress or decay is dependent on how the nation seeks the laws of the universe. This included the environment.

Life Purpose and guiding principles

At 17 years Florence Nightingale felt herself to be called by God to some unnamed cause. She believed that people should live with a purpose, a purpose of moral improvement, which would be constantly realized till we were perfect - even as God is perfect. She believed this took more than one lifetime and along with others of her era such as William Wordsworth, Samuel Coleridge, Robert Browning, Alfred Tennyson, Matthew Arnold and her one-time suitor Richard Monckton Miles, she believed in reincarnation.

A belief that human behaviour is a function of circumstances led Florence to write that reform is needed and not punishment. She felt strongly that education and work opportunities provide the proper circumstances for the Divine Will to come forth. We need to create the circumstances. She wrote that happiness will be best promoted when a person works his/her true work according to his/her individual nature for the purpose common to all.

Florence practiced liberation theology which argues from the perspective of the oppressed. The oppressed needed to be empowered to seek their own liberation. Her attitude to prostitution was to improve the social situation, circumstances and opportunities for women and prostitution would disappear. These ideas were influenced by her experiences with the struggles of the poor and disadvantaged, including daughters in Victorian families, the village poor and the Crimean soldiers.

On death and beyond

Included in her wide circle of learned friends was Benjamin Jowett who was a faculty member at Oxford and whose major work was translations of Plato. After he read *Suggestions for Thought* he began a close friendship with Florence. In later years he requested that she revise his translation of the *Dialogues of Plato*. She found that Plato and medieval mystics such as Francis of Assisi and John of the Cross gave her a sense of beauty in the inward soul and wrote that this world is just a reflection of a greater reality. In Jowett's last years he expressed his love and thanks for her extraordinary kindness. Webb (2002 p 297) quotes his words:

'...You and I are agreed that the last years of life are in a sense the best and that the most may be made of them even at the time when health & strength seem to be failing.'

Florence's view of death and dying was consistent with her concept of God. She never seemed to have a morbid attitude towards death, always regarding it as an integral part of the divine plan. As a young woman of 26 she wrote (Calabria & Macrae, 1994, p 145):

'I cannot pretend to speak of death as a misfortune...Death is the arch of triumph under which the soul passes to live again in a purer and freer atmosphere...I have often thought there was much more evidence for a future world than there is for this. For the existence of this world we can only draw evidence from our perception... for the existence of another, we can draw evidence from our reason, our feeling, our consciousness...'



In *Suggestions for Thought* we learn not only of her health reforms and her efforts to relieve suffering, but also that death was relatively simple for Florence (Calabria & Macrae, 1994, p 146):

'As each individual embodies unique qualities that cannot be duplicated, it would not be consistent with God's benevolent nature to obliterate that being. Because it is God's plan to raise mankind from imperfection to perfection, death must initiate a different mode of existence, one that allows for continued development.'

Her earthly life was one of continued striving to bring hope to those who had rejected organized religion and to make reforms where she saw a need. In December 1907 Florence Nightingale's name was added to the small number of those deemed worthy of the high honour of the Order of Merit. And her influence and writings continue to inspire and provoke thought.

Florence Nightingale worked until she was 73. Then she retired to her bed. By 1901 she was blind and she died in her sleep nine years later. It is left to other nurses to carry the torch of a noble profession.

References

- Calabria, Michael D. & Macrae, Janet A. (1994). *Suggestions for Thoughts by Florence Nightingale Selections and Commentaries*. Philadelphia USA: University of Pennsylvania Press,
Webb, Val. (2002). *Florence Nightingale the Making of a Radical Theologian*. USA: Chalice Press.
World Wide Web



New membership application

A new membership application form is enclosed. Please give it to someone who may wish to join - someone who wishes to see nursing advance in the spirit of Florence Nightingale. Current members will receive a Tax Invoice for memberships to 30th June 2009 in July.

Members of the Foundation receive the **Heart&Soul** newsletter sent out in the mail on a quarterly basis.

Volunteers to assist with fundraising and public awareness welcome.

Works in progress for 2008

Update of the Website - www.nursehomecare.com

Packaging of software and manuals for a community nurse practice

Publication of 'Lily's Story' for Sandakan Hospice

Publication of 'Florence Nightingale in Today's World' for distribution to schools of nursing.

Sandakan Hospice, Malaysia

The NurseLink Foundation newsletter **Heart&Soul** will be published four times a year. The next edition will be released in Winter 2008. If you would like to receive our newsletter, or have something you would like to contribute, send us your details:

email

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The publishing of newsletter contributions is subject to consideration by the NurseLink Foundation Board.

This newsletter is printed on 100% recycled paper.



Joy Nugent is seen here presenting a token to one of the volunteers of the Sandakan Hospice in Sabah, East Malaysia. Joy is a Patron of the community based Hospice and has been involved in its establishment and growth over the past 10 years. The Foundation is publishing a new book about 'Lily's Story', which gives the reader insight about what lies at the heart of this remarkable Hospice project through the experience of founder Margaret Lieu and sister Lily.