

## Reflective Reflection

I look back on the last 20 months with a sense of satisfaction at the personal and professional growth that has taken place in my life. There were some signs along the way. While taking MBSR I had a patient that was suffering from anxiety. When I walked in her room, I saw she was reading *Meditation Is Not What You Think* by author Jon Kabat-Zin. I told her I was reading *Full Catastrophe Living* and her face lit up, she had already read it. The class summoned in me the courage to ask her if we could hold hands, close our eyes, and just focus on our breathing. Not the alarms, the parade of care givers going in and out of her room, just the breath. It gave us both immense satisfaction and at the same time demonstrated the importance of being authentically present with my patients.

This is the great thing about the RN-BSN program, it empowered me to try new things in my nursing praxis and allowed me to grow as a human being as well. Caritas and the Unitary Caring Science theory also shaped how I do my job. I tend to be more focused on my patients, make connections, listen to their there. Realizing that this is how we shape and transform the nursing environment through communication. This theory which guides my nursing praxis has shown me that no matter how busy I am or stressed out there is always time to be authentically present with my patients. Learning more about Caring Science in our classes has empowered me to advocate for my patients, be authentically present and share lovingkindness. Now more than ever, in the age of the Corona virus pandemic, these qualities are needed.

For three semesters we did reflective journaling. This was my first experience using reflection to process my thoughts and emotions. It allowed me to draw out valuable insights and focus on areas that need changes or improvements. I learned that introspection could help increase self-confidence, creativity and the joy of learning in an environment that is open, honest and nonjudgmental. The power of journaling goes beyond anything I could have imagined, not only does it fill us with knowledge it propagates it. One day while driving home I was thinking about the last chapter I had read in *The Science of Compassion*. On the radio, the host was asking the guest Dr. Richard Friedman about how we should react to the Coronavirus. His recommendation was to act with altruism and not panic. When he mentioned that a huge smile lit up my face. I was studying that very topic, altruism, reacting with kindness for others in the face of danger. After listening to him speak, hearing his perspective, everything connected. I had this huge sense of knowing, I could actually feel things line up in my brain. That's what is great about this program, everything I learned was relevant and could be used to improve my nursing praxis and make me a better human as well.