

Interpretive Reflection

Starting the RN-BSN program was a big challenge for me. I had to find time to study, write papers, be a father and husband, and manage a very busy work schedule. One of the major themes of school was change and how we deal with it. One of the landmark assignments was our reflective journal. Our nursing praxis is always changing based on new protocols, ideas, and evidence-based practices. This is evident in the fact that today I do things at the bedside that I didn't do even a year ago. This artifact helped me tremendously find ways to cope with change in an effective way using the techniques of neuroscience and the wisdom traditions. I learned that a major source of human suffering occurs when we don't deal well with change. Dr. Perlmutter's book *Brain Maker* also helped me understand our microbiome and how to eat in a healthy manner.

Reflective writing was new to me and creating this artifact was not easy. The objective was to assist me in integrating the various nursing science concepts into my nursing praxis. I would have to examine an issue of concern, triggered by an experience I had, which creates and clarifies meaning in terms of self, existing knowledge, and experience. This would often result in a changed conceptual practice. Part of this artifact included a self-compassion quiz, ways to transform my self-criticism into self-compassion, understanding our default mode of thinking, and strategies to help me with changing bad habits. I also learned about our microbiome, the bacteria that live inside and outside our bodies. The important role they play in inflammation and our gut's health.

The reflective journal at first was difficult to create. It was not intuitive at all and challenging as I had never written such a journal before. By the third week I started to catch on and really started to enjoy the process. It helped me learn how to cope with change in a positive way. It reminded me of all the lessons I learned in my MBSR class. Most importantly it gave me valuable tools to help me deal with change and the stress it can bring. From the lessons I learned in the classroom to my own experiences, I was starting to see the big picture. It helped me to be a more caring nurse and create a healing environment both for myself and my patients.

As I write this reflection, I am going through one of the biggest changes in my professional career. The pandemic of the Corona virus has caused lots of fear not only in the hospital but in the real world. Major changes have occurred in how we are donning and doffing PPE. Our patients aren't allowed any visitors at all. When we enter their rooms, we look like aliens with all of our PPE. It has been very stressful as often abrupt changes can be. The journal has helped me cope with these changes better than most. I ditched bad habits for good ones, I practice meditation and diaphragmatic breathing, I've shaped my default mode of thinking. These vital tools and many more I've learned from the readings have been added to my toolbox that will transform me into a more caring and authentic nurse and human being.