



## Introduction

I want to start out by saying this right up front. In no way, shape or form is this book about getting nurses to leave their clinical roles. I actually went back and forth a *LOT* on how to write it; whether I should; or if I even *could* write this book.

The reason I struggled so much is simple: I never want to encourage nurses to leave the bedside. That is not what my work is all about. In fact, when I started out as a nurse entrepreneur and was developing my ‘elevator pitch’ to my ‘target market’ (things my coaches made me do to get clear on what my business was all about), I used to say something like this:

*“I help nurses feel happier and healthier so that they don’t have to leave the bedside.”*

Why was I so adamant about this? Well, to be honest with you, I really did not want to leave my clinical role. In *‘Nursing from Within: A Fresh Alternative to Putting Out Fires and Self-Care Workarounds’*, I wrote about my journey from ‘hell to health’. In my keynote speeches, workshops and webinars I always introduce myself with ‘my journey to well-being’.

Yes, I left psychiatric nursing. Yes, I had to do it for my own sanity and self-care. No, I really *did not* want to leave patient care. And yes, I do miss it all of the time. In fact, so much so, that at the time of this writing I often thought about going back and still even search out job openings in psychiatry from time-to-time.

So, I want to be really, really clear about this right up front. My intention has never been (and will never be) to sway nurses away from roles in direct patient care. There is no way that each and every one of us can leave our jobs and become entrepreneurs. Trust me, it is not for everyone. (I even question what the heck I am doing now and then!)

OK, phew. Just wanted to get that off of my chest. Now, moving onto bigger and better things... Introducing you to what this book is all about.



## **A Special Place in My Heart**

As I mentioned above, I was a psychiatric nurse and if this is the first time you are finding me, then you may or may not know all about my history of leaving that job to go work part-time at a wellness center, running a physician referred exercise program. Well I did that.

In 2009, I made a very difficult decision. I left my safe and secure full-time job to go monitor beginning, out of habit, or those exercisers who needed special assistance. Trust me; this was a huge risk. So much so, that when I called my parents, I literally left a voicemail: “*I’m leaving my job. Bye!*” Not only was this decision dicey, terrifying and fun all at the same time, but it was hard.

Guess what I loved most about my psych job? You got it. The patients. Before I became a nurse, I actually graduated with a degree in psychology and a minor in sociology. I don’t know what it is about me, but people with mental illness just have a special place in my heart. Maybe it is my family history of alcoholism and depression. Maybe it’s all of those criminal type shows I enjoy. Or, maybe the fact that I love to do jigsaw puzzles, frame them and hang them all around my house. Who knows? But, I loved being on the psych floor.

## **Don’t Do What I Did**

So, in 2010, I was out of there. That winter, during one of Baltimore’s biggest back-to-back blizzards of all time, I worked my last weekend shift (yes!) and after a lovely two week vacation, I reported to my new job at the gym.

You might be wondering (if you don’t know me at all, yet) - how come you left the psych job if you loved the patients so much? Great question!

This answer is sort of lengthy, so I’ll do my best to be succinct (not one of my bigger strengths). The reason back then (in 2009) was: I was miserable. Inside and out; I was a wreck. I took no care of my own well-being and I was sick and tired of being... well, sick and tired. I also had a very nasty perspective on life. I blamed *everyone* else but me for all of my pain.



It was my manager's fault and the assistant manager for not assisting her. The staff on my unit was to blame. Heck, the entire organization was at fault. I pointed fingers, spread gossip and was an all out Bi-otch (excuse my language).

The second part of this answer comes in the here-and-now. Because of all of the materials I am about to share with you in this book (ooh, a reason to keep on reading!), I have since let all of those harsh feelings, judgments and negativity go. In fact, I have visited my old unit and really enjoyed it. I have taught Reiki and shared Reiki with several of my ex-coworkers. I feel absolutely no ill will to the staff, unit or department.

And here's why: it was all me.

It was my perspective of how things were. It was my own lack of self-care. It was the fact that I had no coping skills, took part in absolutely no spiritual practice and did nothing to better myself or my mindset. So, I did what I don't want any of you to do.

I ran.

I left the job on the psych floor, even though I loved the patients, because I was running away from a job I no longer enjoyed. While I do encourage you to work in a career you love; leaving a job because you don't like it without any thought of what you *do* want to do with your life instead is no way to change your circumstances.

### **The Fork in Your Road**

OK, so I bet we need some clarity here. You might be reading and thinking to yourself, *'On the one hand she wants me to enjoy my work; on the other, she is telling me not to leave my job. I'm confused. What the heck is she talking about?'*

Awesome question (and great insight into the fact that I am sort of contradicting myself here). So, let me clear this up for you. I present on this topic in one of my webinars entitled, *'Create Career Resilience for Self'*, and so I am getting a visual from one of the Power Point slides in my head as I type these words.

The way I see it is, with respect to your career, you can come to a fork in the road. You may totally enjoy your career and think to yourself, *'This book is not for me. I am*



*happy with where I am.* On the other hand, you may know that you are unhappy and at the same time know that there is nothing else you want to do in terms of your work (think about my above example of loving my psych patients). In this case, you feel stuck. As if nothing will ever change or get better. That is an uncomfortable place to be; I hear you.

The final place you may reside (well, there are tons of options, but for today's sake let's just look at these three) is totally unhappy and ready to make a change. Woo hoo! I love it. Now, here is where I caution you: make a change based on what you *do* want instead of what you don't want. (No worries about fully understanding this concept; more on it later in the pages to follow.)

All I am suggesting is this: you can find yourself in any old place in terms of your nursing career and there is always room for growth. Hence, the nature of this book: moving ourselves from adequate to awesome in the way we think, feel and experience our job. This may mean becoming a nurse entrepreneur. Or, it may not. It's whatever you decide. The best thing is that the information and resources laid out in this book can help you wherever you are at.

Not sure you trust me? Let me lay out an overview of what we'll cover in '*Your Next Shift*'.

### **Why this Book?**

There are some really great books out there on a whole host of topics that might be similar to this book. Trust me, I did the research. There are books teaching nurses how to enjoy their careers, books on becoming nurse entrepreneurs, and books on career strategies in nursing. Books on interviewing, resumes and what to do when you are fresh out of nursing school. Gosh, if you want to find a book on any certain topic- in today's day and age- I bet you can. (See the appendix for books I recommend.)

So, what does '*Your Next Shift*' offer that others don't? A lot. Here are several of the key highlights that make this book an awesome choice for those of you looking to level-up your careers:



### ***1. Entrepreneurial Techniques***

As I mentioned in previous pages, this book adds to our nursing backgrounds. Sure, we have the clinical skills and specialty knowledge, but what about that added boost that you're looking for in your career? Continuing to learn more 'nursing' skills may or may not be the way to enhance your particular career. I guess that keeping up with technology and learning about the new machines on your unit is important, but what about those of us who are looking to be cutting edge?

In this book, I will touch on some key concepts that every successful solo-preneur applies. Things like knowing your numbers to being consistent with your follow up. From your unique selling position to serving with solutions. Again, those of you reading who may not have any interest in being a nurse entrepreneur; that's totally cool! You can absolutely apply what you will read in this book to your nursing career, without leaving patient care.

### ***2. Learn from Example***

I don't know about you, but I like to learn by modeling what I read and hear. I learn from example. Actually, getting my hands on the material and doing it in action.

Well, that's how I am going to teach you in this book. When we get to the section that teaches the ten entrepreneurial action items, I am literally going to be sharing from my own lessons learned.

In fact, I went back to my old coaching groups (I had my coach give me access to pages from years ago) and re-read all of my posts. I then took clips of my process (the good, bad and the ugly) and will be sharing them here with you, word-for-word so that you can get a feel for how I learned these lessons in that very moment. Then, you can learn from example as we go through the contents of this book together.

### ***3. A Focus on Process and Outcome***

Many books focus on the process- how to do the steps being taught to the reader. While I enjoy that and agree that we need process to move us forward, let's be honest;



we want results! And if you're reading this book, then part of me can assume that you are looking for some outcomes related to your nursing career.

Building upon what I said in number two, I know that what I am sharing with you delivers outcomes. How do I know that? I do these exercises, especially the ones I will teach you in the ten step system (see bonus chapter), on a daily basis. Trust me; if I miss several days of doing these exercises in a row- I feel it. I notice I don't experience the same 'results' in my business when I am out of practice. More on this later...

#### **4. A Really, Really Fun Book**

Those of you who are reading may or may not know that my number one value is FUN. In my previous book, *'Nursing from Within'*, I covered a four-step process to uncovering your true heart's desires. Your values, in essence. So since 'fun' is my absolute number one- the thing I hold in the highest regard (and don't judge me, we all have our unique value system) - you can definitely count on this also being a really fun book.

There will be no stuffy, academic writing here. In fact, when I get my books edited I have to find a proof-reader who will let me keep my own 'voice' since I know I am breaking every single grammar rule known to man and that's what makes this (and all of my) book(s) fun. I hope that you find the reading easy, conversational and upbeat. The point is to actually get through the entire book, right?

#### **5. An Innovative Solution**

I like to think of myself as a pioneer, a visionary really. What I am doing with this book (and most of my work, really) is applying concepts from other arenas to the nursing landscape. So again, to borrow from *'Nursing from Within'* one more time, that book pulled theories from universal law, energy principles and spiritual practice to teach concepts that nurses could use to make those inner shifts so that they could more fully enjoy their external environments.

This book is no different. I am taking ideas from the entrepreneurial environment and applying them to our nursing careers in hopes of teaching concepts that will allow



for more joy, satisfaction and resilience in nursing practice. In fact, I'll go out on a limb here and boldly say: my intention is that this book offers you solutions to your nursing career problems. So much so, that after you read this book (and implement the processes), you're job will never feel like work again.

It's true. We can all live our passion in our work (see the Appendix for more resources on this). And through some entrepreneur mindset shifts, we can totally rock our nursing practice. So who's with me? Let's do this...