

# Nursing Is Noble!

Category: Nursing

written by Neeta Nayak | January 19, 2026

Hardly anyone forgets a first.

As a medical student, the first nurse I worked with on a pediatric ward was the formidable Ms. Shanta, who left a lasting impression. She wasted no time correcting a few cocky students, efficiently and without ceremony. *"An old nurse is any day better than a new doctor,"* she would say. And she was right.

When I gave my first injection, I was just as terrified as the little four-year-old boy. Ms. Shanta whispered loudly, "He needs the medicine, you're not hurting him on purpose, just load up that syringe and do it." I felt bolder and braver that day.

Ms. Shanta managed medical students and rookie doctors, children and parents, fear and hope, anxieties and insecurities with an ease no textbook ever promised. A student's or patient's emotion was not a chapter heading. It was a living thing, and she handled these feelings with care.

Years later, when I started doing home visits on my elderly patients, I realized that nursing is more than a profession. Non-degree nurses abounded. They were mothers, fathers, grandparents, daughters, sons, grandchildren: caregivers who practiced nursing daily without a badge or written protocols. The idiom "nursing someone back to health" honors the nobility of their selflessness.

As a teen, I felt goosebumps seeing a picture of a young Florence Nightingale, blazing a trail as the Lady with the Lamp. Her words helped shape my moral perspective and posture: "I am convinced that the greatest heroes are those who do their duty in the daily grind of domestic affairs whilst the world whirls like a maddening dreidel." Her words have also fortified me in times of self-doubt: "How very little can be done under the spirit of fear." I've even wondered if her name was destiny lending a hand. After all, she made her rounds at *night* (lady with the lamp) and was a *gale* (a force of nature who revolutionized the nursing profession).

Ms. Shanta may not have had a lamp but she embodied those powerful qualities of fearlessness, discipline and compassion. She set a wonderfully high bar. I learned more from her than expected.

Every wise doctor understands that who they become is shaped in part by the nurses they train with and the nurses they work with. Caring for the sickest of the sick is a team sport, and nursing carries the weight with quiet dignity.

*Neeta Nayak  
Richardson, Texas*