

# I Quit!

Category: Persevering

written by Joan Greland-Goldstein | November 6, 2018

I HATE nursing!

I was at Wernersville State Mental Hospital doing my three-month psychiatric rotation as part of my nursing program.

Deciding to leave school, I approached the phone with trepidation. I was nineteen years old, and I needed to convince my parents to let me quit.

“Hi, Mama.”

“Joanie? What’s wrong?”

“I can’t stand this place! Please come and get me – and bring boxes. I’m quitting school.”

“You can’t do that!”

“Yes, I can! Nursing is not for me.”

“But you’re over half-way through.”

“I don’t care. This was a mistake.”

We went back and forth for several minutes until my mother succumbed to my wheedling.

“All right. Daddy and I’ll be over tomorrow afternoon.”

True to their word, my parents were waiting outside the dorm when I came back from the wards the following day.

“Hi, do you have the boxes?”

“No,” said my father. “We need to talk about this.”

“I don’t want to talk. I’ve made up my mind.”

“We called Miss Lawrence,” said my mother. Miss Lawrence was the school’s Director of Nursing Education.

“Why did you do that?”

“Because we don’t think this is the right thing to do, and we wanted her advice. She agreed it would be a mistake to quit. She said you’re a good student and will be a fine nurse.”

“But I don’t want to be a nurse!”

"You always need to finish what you start," Daddy interjected.

"But it's not the right thing for me."

"That doesn't matter. You started it, you need to finish it."

After an hour of arguing, I realized I had lost. They were not going to take me home. I trudged to my room and threw myself on the bed, crying copious tears of frustration and rage. The next day I got up as usual, went to class and saw my assigned patient.

I finished nursing school as my parents requested. While many types of nursing were not for me, I found my niche in OB, first in the nursery, then labor and delivery. Over the years I reinvented myself from staff nurse to manager, then to health educator following a Master of Arts degree. When I retired after forty-two years in the medical field, I was proud to look back and say I finished what I started.

*Joan Greland-Goldstein  
Walnut Creek, California*