



A Day in the Life of a Holistic Nurse, Writer, and Guest Speaker

by GALE LYMAN, RN, BSN, HNB-BC

What Do I Do?

At first glance, you would see me in my home office, with my little dog Ruby snoozing nearby. I'm a holistic nurse, writer, and guest speaker specializing in self-help topics for healthcare professionals and family caregivers. I write at my computer, offer programs online via Zoom, and starting in 2023, I will be happily resuming in-person workshops. I write and teach about mindful stress management in articles, books, online courses, and workshops. I offer a website filled with free resources, such as stress solutions and "Calm and Centered" blogs.

Self-Care is Essential to Work

But of course, there is more to being a writer and guest speaker, holistically. My day starts and ends with self-care. This is my sacred time to set my intentions of peace, compassion, and lovingkindness, followed by more specific intentions and gratitude.

My morning self-care routine is a fluid combination of self-assessment, prayer, mindful exercise, and meditation. Depending on my needs, EFT (emotional freedom technique), journaling, using a tuning fork, and/or aromatherapy might be included. Before bedtime, my self-care interlude includes reflecting on the day with gratitude and energy clearing, meditation, restorative yoga, physical therapy stretches, and prayer followed by a guided meditation for sleep.

I treasure these self-care interludes, knowing I am more centered and resilient enough to be intentional and compassionately present.

Holistically Writing/Speaking

Even though I am simply sitting at a computer, each day is different. There may be a blog to write, a guest speaker proposal to prepare for a client, sections to write for my next book, newly published research to consider, or a PowerPoint to create for an upcoming presentation. There is always email and social media "correspondence." Attending to correspondence isn't a chore; as a home-

based nurse, it is my vehicle to connect with others. As I move from one thing to another, I seek to be intentional about my work and to be present with my readers or program attendees.

Writing is brain-intensive, and public speaking is empathy-intensive, so breaks are essential to keep my mind and body resilient. I often walk midday, allowing my writing ideas to percolate. I rest as needed. When I am busy meeting a deadline or out for speaking engagements, my rest break might simply be looking out the conference center window and breathing deeply.

One of the blessings of working from home is being able to create the physical environment in which I work. I am more centered and better able to compassionately connect with others when I am connected with nature. I like to be able to see outside and fill my space with flowers and plants. I am always close to nature, aware of where it is, and aware of when it is out of sight.

Self-Reflection

When perplexed by an assignment or when needing to discern how best to express a topic, quiet time for reflection is essential. “How can I serve?” is always the question to answer when beginning an article or new presentation. Other questions include, “What problem do my readers or audience want to solve?” and “How can I guide my readers or audience to find their answer to this problem?” My intention is inspired by Jean Watson’s 7th Caritas Process®, “Engaging in transpersonal teaching and learning within context of caring relationship; staying within other’s frame of reference; shift toward coaching model for expanded health/wellness” (Watson, 2022).

Allowing for Mysteries

An important aspect of being self-employed is business planning and promotion. Jean Watson’s holistic nursing theory as well as traditional business principles guide me. At a recent Caring Science Consortium Conference, I heard Jean describe her Caritas Processes® as the universal language of human caring, a language that takes nursing from doing to being. Her 10th Caritas Process® is “Opening to spiritual, mystery, unknowns – allowing for miracles” (Watson, 2022). I’ve learned to intuitively plan, but not too much, allowing for



Ruby practicing self-care

mysteries and the unexpected. Truly, God laughs when I plan too much. When I allow space for the unexpected yet “meant to be” experiences, they happen more often.

Being holistic 24/7

To me, holistic nursing is about intention and presence, integrative modalities used as needed, and a solid foundation of self-care. While attending the Integrative Healing Arts Program through BirchTree many years ago, I embraced the idea of being a holistic nurse 24/7. I strive to keep the light of holistic nursing on, always.

REFERENCE

Watson, J. (2022, Oct. 20). *The philosophy and practice of Caring Science: Sustaining healing-caring relationships with self and others in health care* [Conference session]. Massachusetts Regional Caring Science Consortium.

Gale Lyman, RN, BSN, HNB-BC, loves to connect with other nurses and family caregivers. You can email her at gale@galelyman.com, or subscribe to her *Calm and Centered* blog online at www.galelyman.com.



Note: Readers seeking more information about Caritas Processes® can visit the Watson Caring Science Institute: www.watsoncaringscience.org

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