Nursing Graduates

Pinning Ceremony

speaker: Brian Pervis

**Hello, hello,….welcome everyone**, thank you all for joining us here today in this auditorium, for this very special ceremony.

**WOW,**………..the day is **finally here**, can you believe it? Well, it’s true, YOU MADE IT.

I know so many of you here with us today, and for those whom I have not had the pleasure of meeting, my name is Brian Pervis, and I am an RN,..a Registered Nurse,…..and guess what,…today **you are too**: **(applause).**

When I, you, or the public, thinks about high profile careers, there are many that come to mind. When we think about high profile jobs that are stimulating, adrenelein filled, stressful, critical, some that come to mind are: Law Enforcement, Armed Forces, Firefighter, Physician, Paramedic, Pilot, Search & Rescue, and others. One more at the top of that list, a very important lifetime job,…and job that means life, is the **NURSE**. I can not think of any other profession that is so connected to a patient, so hands-on, so 24/7, so engaged in the heeling process, than a NURSE. Each of these so very critical jobs I just mentioned above are very important in terms of skills, survival, recuperation, and safety. But when the dust settles, the person who is with the patient, with the victim, with the survivor, and with the families, is us, we the nurses. **WE,** who monitor vitals, dress wounds in the middle of chaos, remove stitches, dispense meds, start I Vs, draw blood, administer CPR, deliver newborns, apply tourniquets, and stabilize necks. **WE**, the **nurses**. **WE,** who sit with families, read stories to children, hold the hands of the elderly, the very sick, those in hospice. **WE**, who’s hands literally and figuratively touch hearts. **WE** who prep, assist, and close. **WE** who run down the corridor to shout out wonderful news, and **WE**, who quietly escort families into small rooms to deliver devastating news. That is who we are, and that is WHO **YOU** are TODAY.

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This is not a profession that requires only one set of skills, one set of talents, one set of abilities. This is a career that requires us to be so many things to so many people. I ask you,….in what other profession would you find someone at 6:00 a.m., in a cool operating room, starting an I V into the tiny vein of a eight month old infant, and then two hours later splinting a compound fracture for a 300 pound construction worker? I ask you,….in what other profession would you teach CPR to a group of police in the morning, then prepare hospital budget projections in the afternoon? I ask you,…..in what other profession would you find someone on vacation when they come upon the scene of a horrific accident, then jump out of their family’s car to stabilize a child at the bottom of a ravine while awaiting Help-Flight? Well, there are no other professions that do any of that combined, none. And who does all those tasks, duties, and jobs? Nurses do, I do,….and **now** you will too, because today, **you** are nurses.

Today is our traditional ‘pinning’ ceremony. This Pinning Ceremony can trace its history back to the 12th century, where a Maltese Cross was bestowed on newly knighted monks who were dedicated to helping the wounded and sick. Two centuries later the famous Florence Nightingale acknowledged her best students by presenting them with a medal of Excellence. Then into the 20th. Century where all nursing programs awarded pins to graduating students to identify them as having completed their credentials.

And no one shares this moment more dearly, with more pride, with more happiness, than your instructors. The teachers, the professors, who can see the results of their efforts. They know that the education they gave to you has been successful, you completed all your requirements, you have become a NURSE.

Today’s pinning ceremony has been envisioned for a very long time in your minds, and all your dreams. This means you did it, you crossed the goal line. A line that was so distant, so steep, so cherished. And now you’re stepping over it with nothing to block your way. You don’t have to pinch yourself, you don’t have to think this is only a dream that you will wake up from. This is real ladies and gentlemen, this is happening, you’re NURSES. Can you

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believe it? I sure can, your friends surely can, your teachers surely can, your family surely can, and most importantly when you look in the mirror, you can. Because when you pass that mirror, when you see your reflection in a window, or your silhouette in a stainless operating table, that is you, you the nurse.

So, who do you have to thank for this accomplishment? The answer is the number *‘TWO’*, there are *two people* who you should thank.

The *first person* of the two, is you. You who many years ago had a dream, a vision of becoming a nurse. You who applied, wrote admission letters, filled out questionnaires. Then you who sat in class after class, studied until your head fell onto the kitchen table, and then got up two hours later to go to a job. A job that fed your family, kept the furnace running, and put clothes on your back. You who stressed before exams, you who made mistakes in your practical work, but only once. You who took a short term second job instead of going to Mexico for Spring Break. You who used an outdated computer because you couldn’t afford a new one. And you who said to your significant other that you were just fine, when in reality you could hardly stand up. And that first person to thank is the you who is sitting here today, so proud, so tall, You the Nurse.

The *second person* of the *‘TWO’*, is *everybody else* in your life who helped you get here. The second person is your spouse, your significant other, your parents, your family, you counselors, your teachers, and all those who gave you the encouragement, the confidence, and their complete dedication for you to finish this monumental accomplishment. That second person is your kid who said: “Go study mom, I’ll clean up the kitchen”. Our, your significant other who said: “I’ll drive you to class today because of the snow”. Or your instructor who said: “Come by my office later, and we’ll go over these calculations until you better understand them.” So, when you look in the mirror and see a nurse, behind you in that mirror will be silhouettes of everyone else who made this possible. As you look in that mirror, see yourself, see all of them, say a soft: “THANK YOU”.

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I too have many to thank for where I am today in my profession. I am forever grateful to my mother who influenced me to go into nursing. Then I had so many instructors and administrators, such as Sheila Solemou, and Professor Levine to mention a few, who contributed to my educational accomplishments.

Then there are a group of individuals, whom I also need to thank, a group of my students, a group that made it possible for me to literally stand here today,…because that group saved my life. I was so focused on teaching my students, that I did not notice an abnormality in my own health. Those symptoms were brought to my attention by my students, who came to me and said: “There’s something going on you need to check out”. So, I did. That diagnosis resulted in my undergoing lifesaving surgery by our amazingly talented associates over at Yale. This is one example of the students, teaching the teacher, and I am forever thankful they did.

As you go out into this world of medicine I encourage you to never stop learning, never stop helping others, both patients as well as young nursing students. Whether you practice for five years or fifty years, you can always learn. Learn from new science, new procedures, and learn from people. Remember, you may see thirty patients in one day, but your patients only see one of you every day. Make them feel they are the most important person who you will talk to that whole day, because for that moment, that brief time, *they are* the most important person you will talk to *that day*. There is no more important patient than the one who is two feet away from you. The one who is listening to every single word that comes out of your mouth. So, speak calmly, speak gently, speak with encouragement, and speak with confidence. Confidence because you, ladies and gentlemen, today, are Nurses. **(pause**).

Enjoy the rest of the ceremony, the rest of your day, be careful on your way home, and until we meet again,….**Thank You**.