

The Call

Chapter 1

from *10 Years of Strong Black Coffee and Strong-Willed Patients*

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One morning, I woke from a dream with a big grin on my face. The sun was warming my body, and I had goosebumps everywhere, floating in a peaceful bliss. I heard a soft voice from behind me say, “*Derek.*”

I jumped from my supine position to grab the person who was somehow in my room, watching me sleep. The realization hit me—I was the only person in the room, and now very much wide awake. The softest voice said my name, yet somehow it was loud as a trumpet. I pondered what this all meant, as I was not hallucinating and I certainly heard my name. It gave me this funny feeling that was strange, yet familiar.

A week later, to the very day, I woke from another dream and was smiling so big my face was hurting. I felt completely peaceful as if floating up from my dream. I then heard the word, “*Nursing.*”

Awakened with a start, I said in my mind, “Here I am Lord. Okay. I will become a nurse.”

That is exactly how I knew my calling was laid out for me, and that was the first of a few times in life where the Lord spoke to me in my spirit and simply stated what I was to do next. I was so scared in knowing this was real—but so excited—as my life up to this point finally started making sense.

That very day, I contacted Columbus State Community College to enroll in a pre-medicine curriculum pathway to change from a general education pathway, and the story you are about to read is a result of becoming fully engaged in my calling, giving everything I had to give to make the most of my calling, and finally walking away from a system that is broken to then embark on a new calling. This book is a part of sharing my life’s testimony as a nurse, along with the people I cared for. The purpose is to help others who might not be so informed, intense, isolated, crazy, fearless, and skeptical of a system designed to sustain itself in any way possible while promulgating peace, knowledge and unity as buzzwords to hide a flawed, greedy, and corrupt healthcare system.

These stories are raw. No censorship will be attempted, as life is raw, real, and needs nothing to diminish it from its harsh and simultaneously beautiful truths. I will

share the most vulnerable parts of me along the way, to hopefully set free the many years of containing experiences that would break the souls of many people not called to endure such things.

I will be sharing stories of patients I have cared for, patients who have cared for me, stories of good, bad, dark, light, fright, joy.

Life is complex, it is amazing, and there are forces at work both good and evil that we cannot see but truly do exist, as you will read in many of these stories. I will be objective, I will share everything as I saw, felt, and experienced without filtering anything. So be informed that there will be graphic stories of real people in real situations whom I had the pleasure to share their journeys with, and I would not change a thing about what life has taught me!

May God bless you, keep you, and bring peace to your soul and I thank you for sharing my most personal moments of my life that must come out of me, as they are too much to keep in any longer.