

Save the First Dance for You: The Complete Nurse's Guide to Serving Your Profession, Your Patients, and Yourself

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America's healthcare system is facing a serious shortage of nurses, and that problem is compounded by turnover and burnout. Current numbers suggest that one in five of the nation's 2 million nurses change jobs or leave the profession outright each year. Doris L. Young, a nurse with more than three decades of nursing experience, is determined to help cure burnout. Known as "The Nurse Doctor," this nurse, psychologist, and passionate advocate for nurses has written *Save the First Dance for You* to encourage nurses to take care of themselves and avoid becoming victims of burnout.

Young, an avocational ballroom dancer as well as a nurse, has chosen dance as the metaphor for her message. She frames the role of the nurse as that of a dancer who must build her own foundation and learn her own steps before she can dance proficiently with patients or with colleagues. This metaphor is surprisingly effective, evoking the image of nursing as a stately dance wherein the nurse changes partners, with the good of the patient being the outcome of the dance.

Young encourages nurses to above all put themselves first. Nursing, she says, seems to attract a large number of people who are compassionate and giving, often at the risk of ignoring their own needs. She offers concrete techniques for to help nurses acknowledge their needs, be honest with themselves and others, and give themselves time to relax, recharge, and heal.

After dealing with these basics, she pushes on to encourage nurses to make a thorough assessment of their gifts, values, and intentions. She urges nurses to be firm about their principles while remaining flexible with people—a combination that allows them to be authentic while serving others. Later chapters deal with setting goals and achieving them, assessing patterns of giving and taking in relationships, working as a team, and listening well.

Each chapter is written in short, easy-to-read segments interspersed with stories from real nurses. This format makes the book easy to pick up and put down, and ideal to keep at bedside for a little inspiration after a particularly difficult day.

Young has a gift for both metaphor and solace. While much of her advice will be familiar to those who have done self-discovery work, her own hard-won experience puts a new spin on these insights. The tone is uplifting and purposeful. *Save the First Dance for You* is a must-read for nurses, but caregivers of any kind will also find encouragement here.

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