

I wanted to share an experience I had after returning from the RSC Gathering. My grandmother (who I had shared with the group was not doing very well) remained in-patient the night I returned to work, after my week in Champaign. Before heading home that morning, I stopped in her room to check in on her. She was sleeping soundly but it was 10 am so I slowly awakened her for her breakfast. She was quite disoriented on the 12th day of her admission. She was glad to see me but was confused as to why she was a patient. I knew I had to stay by her side. I placed a warm wash cloth on her forehead and went to warm her breakfast. During this admission she had developed some swallowing difficulties and her meals were taking quite some time for her to get down. The event of meal time wears her out to the point of exhaustion. She has grown tired of the pureed meats that become cold before she can choke them down.

I was really feeling hopeless, not to mention fatigued after having worked all night. Just then, her nurse entered the room. She entered with true "heart intelligence". While she did acknowledge me sweetly, she practically blew past me to reach my grandma. She had not cared for my grandmother before. She knelt down at her bedside, embraced her hand, within her own hands, and looked her right in the eyes. She said, "Good morning, Miss Betty! How are you? My name is Cheryl, and I will be caring for you today". My grandma looked deeply into her eyes, connected and smiled. She remained confused but she was calm as she knew she was in good hands. My grandma told her that she wasn't feeling very well and her neck was really hurting. They exchanged a few sentences with one another and Cheryl remained **completely in attunement** with my grandma. I'm not sure I've consciously noticed this instant bond that the nurse was able to develop in a matter of seconds. The characteristics of the therapeutic relationship were unfolding in front of me. We worked together to get grandma ready for the day, cleaned her up and changed her bed. By the time we were done, she was no longer confused and was able to drink a supplemental vitamin shake.

I was quite worried about grandma's condition that day. I was able to leave and feel confident that Cheryl would give grandma the *very best care*. She was not thinking about her other patients or work that needed to get done (or at least I wasn't aware of it). She was focused in on grandma for that 20 or so minutes... that easily seemed like an hour as I studied their connection so intently. As a nurse, it was simply beautiful to watch her connect with her patient. As a granddaughter, Cheryl's care meant the world.