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L.P.N. Graduation Speech presented by Jean K. Larsen for Class No. 47

Jean K. Larsen

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L.P.N. GRADUATION
Class No. 47
August, 1973

Bend Larsen

Board members, Mrs. Bjorklund, Dr. Hansen, Friends, and Graduates. My first reaction or feeling in accepting the invitation as a speaker tonight was with some foreboding. It reminds me a little of the husband who asked his wife for comments about his speech. Her reply was, "You didn't make the most of your opportunities." "What opportunities", he asked; to which the wife replied, "the several opportunities you had of sitting down." So I don't know at this point if I should just congratulate you graduates on your accomplishments for this past year and let it suffice at that and then sit down or if I should continue on with my prepared speech. I assume from your applause that you're anxious for me to continue with my speech -or- I assume from the lack of applause that you're anxious for me to continue on with my speech.

Seriously, I do truly deem it an honor to have this opportunity of sharing some of my ideas and feelings with you graduates at this important time in your life—the time when you have just completed a year of hard work and study and effort.

Eleanor Roosevelt once said, "To live through a period of stress and sorrow with another human being, creates a bond which nothing seems able to break-----." The activities of this past year have brought you together tonight in a common bond. Those of us who have lived through similar experiences can empathize with you tonight in your feelings and mixed emotions about this culmination of activities of the past year. I still recall fondly those happy times, sad times, anxious times when I was a student nurse.

Where love is... What a beautiful thought, rendered so well in song. I congratulate the group on this accomplishment. Tonight I have chosen to talk to you about love and what this means to us in the field of nursing. It has been said to love abundantly is to live abundantly and to love forever is to live forever. No worse fate could befall a man in this world than to live and grow old alone; unloving and unloved. Love

is something that you can lavish upon the poor very easily; especially upon the rich who often need it most; but most of all upon your equals, where it is very difficult, and for whom, perhaps, we each do least of all.

There is a difference between trying to please and giving pleasure. One of your instructors has this saying above her desk "I will pass through this world but once. Any good thing, therefore, that I can do; or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer it or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again." (end quote) Love suffers long; it understands and therefore waits. To have love is not to be in competition with others. Whenever you attempt a good work, and you find other men doing the same kind of work, they may be even doing it better--don't envy them. Then, after you have done your work, put a seal upon your lips and forget what you have done. After you have been kind, after love has stolen forth into the world and done its beautiful work, go back into the shade again and say nothing about it. Be gentle in your dealings with others. Learn that there is a time for sympathy as well as a time for empathy. Remember that there is no happiness in having or getting, but only in giving. Don't be easily provoked; in the venacular of the day keep your cool. Think good thoughts; don't try to expose weaknesses of others to cover weaknesses in yourself. Lastly, love is sincerity of purpose. Now I subscribe to you, then, that the spectrum of love includes these nine (9) ingredients as I have described them to you: patience, kindness, generosity, humility, courtesy, unselfishness, good temper, guilelessness, and sincerity.

Tonight you are embarking on a journey where you will find new experiences. The past year you have learned much, both by precept and by example. I disagree with Edward Newton when he said, and I quote, "I wish that someone would give a course in how to live. It cannot be taught in colleges, that's obvious, for college professors don't know any better than the rest of us." ^{in general} Your instructors have done a tremendous job in teaching you this past year. I'm certain that there have been times when you have not agreed with everything that they have taught you. There will be times, many times, that you won't agree with some directions and other ^{tasks} ~~things~~ that you will be asked to ^{perform} ~~do~~ in your job. Be tolerant-tolerance is the recognition that no two people hold

the same views on all questions; and we all have the right to think and act as we choose, as long as we do not infringe on the rights of others. I would ask you to consider seriously in any misunderstanding or any disagreement that you may have; consider the possibility that you may be mistaken. You may be right in your facts but wrong in your attitude.

Much of your learning has been based on principles. I'm sure that each of you has been asked at least once this year, "Miss Jones, what is the principle behind the procedure that you are doing?" This reminds me of the story of the man who suddenly died and the neighbors were shocked. One kindly woman trying to comfort his wife was describing some of his good points. "He was such a man of principle", said the neighbor. "And am I not the one to know it" said the bereaved woman, "Every Saturday night didn't he come home; place his pay envelope in front of me as regular as clock work? Not once, not one night did he miss as long as we were married. Of course, the envelope was always empty; but look at the principle of the thing"— don't get confused about your principles. "The vocation of every man and woman is to serve other people", said Tolstoi.

Graduates remember, as it has been said; "the secret of life is not to do what one likes but try to like that which one has to do." I listed nine (9) ingredients for love tonight. In some way your instructors have tried to help you incorporate these things, these ingredients that make up love, into your working life of nursing. I would admonish you at this time to follow the words of your pledge that read, "I will follow faithfully the teachings of my instructors." Again, may I add my congratulations to you on your achievements and wish you God speed as you embark on your various ways. In closing I would just like to leave with you these words from Robert Lewis Stevenson . . . "To be rich in admiration and free from envy, to rejoice greatly in the good of others, to love with such generosity of heart that your love is still a dear possession, in absence of unkindness—these are the gifts of fortune which money cannot buy; and without which money can buy nothing. He who has such a treasure of riches, being happy and valiant himself in his own nature, will enjoy the universe as if it were his own estate, and help the man to whom he lends a hand to enjoy it with him".....

Thank you