

There is a saying that people may not remember what you said or did, but they will always remember how you made them feel. I would like to tell you about a time in my nursing career when a patient and his family made this a truth for me. I honestly do not remember the young man's name or the name of his family, but they had an impact on me that I will never forget. I will always remember how their situation made me feel.

I was new to the Intensive Care Unit, and being a nurse of two years, I was sure that I had seen everything and knew it all. How humbled was I after what this patient and family taught me.

This particular young man had suffered a horrible head injury after an accident. He was just entering his young adult life, and a bad decision made about driving changed his life forever.

His ICU course started as you would expect – get him settled in the room, monitor all the important vitals and assessments, treat what we can to help save this young man's life. Through the next couple of days, we realized that his injuries were just too severe and he would not be able to survive his injuries.

We did not have a formal Organ Donation Coordinator program at that time, but we did have some awesome nurses who had experience in this. The young man's mother was approached about the possibility of organ donation. This young man had "the dot" on his driver's license that indicated he wanted to be an organ donor. The generous decision this young man made helped his mother to make the step towards making the gift of life with consenting to organ donation for her son.

I will never forget what happened next. As another nurse was making phone calls to Madison for the organ donation procedure, myself and another nurse were able to

spend time with the mother and the patient in his room. We listened to her tell stories of joy from his childhood. We cried with her when she talked about how much she will miss him. Then, I did the best thing I have ever done in my nursing career – I and the other nurse I was working with asked her if she would like to lay down in the bed with her son and tell him good bye. She was so happy for that opportunity and said yes.

We pulled her son to one side of the bed and she lay down on the other side. She was able to hold him, hug him and kiss him good bye. I watched, through my own tears, a mother's tears fall while she was saying her final good bye to her son. She was so grateful that she had been able to lay with him and hold him while she said good bye.

I have been able to be a part of some pretty amazing things so far in my career, but this will be something that will forever be in my heart as a great reason to be a nurse.

Because of this wonderful experience, when our hospital developed an official Organ Donation Coordinator program, I was immediately volunteering to be part of this! Becoming an Organ Donation Coordinator has really added to my experiences with organ donation. I have had the honor to care for organ donation patients directly, and as an organ donation coordinator I have had the honor of being a support person for the family while they are going through the organ donation process.