

My most memorable experience in which the nursing care made the difference was in the fall of 1997. I was eighteen years old and my life felt like a bad dream from which I could not wake. My brother had died tragically three months earlier in an auto accident. He was only fifteen years old.

It was June ninth 1997 and I had just graduated from high school three days earlier. I was driving in to town and was the first to pull up on the accident. The car my brother was a passenger in had been struck broadside crossing an intersection and then crashed into the side of an abandoned house. The traumatic events of the next few days will stay with me as long as I live.

I attempted to ignore the pain, as I knew my brother would want me to go on and live a happy and full life, but I felt like a bad actor. None the less, I went thru the motions of everyday life. That fall I started at the local community college and got a job at a pet store. I began to think that maybe I was getting better at this “acting” thing.

That was until I got a call at work telling me that my sister had gotten in to an auto accident and was being taken to the hospital. As I frantically left work and headed for the hospital I didn't know in what state I would find my sister. All the suppressed pain and agony about my brother surfaced and the thought of losing my sister was unbearable.

When I found her in the emergency room she was pretty banged up and still confused as to what had happened. But she was alive and being taken care of by an attentive and compassionate nurse named Tom. He had addressed my sister's medical needs and took the extra time to comfort her. As I stood there I heard an attendant say that her car had been hit broadside and flipped. I realized how close I had come to losing her and I began to cry. Tom took my hand and reassured me that my sister would make a full recovery.

I remember telling him how scared I felt that I would lose her and how bad I still hurt from losing Tovah. As I spoke I can remember the empathy in his eyes and the relief I felt by telling him about all these feelings I had suppressed for so long. After I calmed down and dried my eyes, Tom asked if I might be interested in attending grief counseling. It opened my eyes to an option that I had never considered.

Tom helped improved the quality of my life by caring and listening as an educated caregiver. He was very knowledgeable about resources available to help me cope with my situation. As a nurse I hope to help improve my patients lives just as Tom helped improved mine.