

Working the Spirit of Mary Seacole

Service to Spirit

We affirm and inspire each other to accomplish great deeds and achieve the unachievable. Thus the reciprocity of disporan spirituality is affirmed. Service to spirit is service to nurture growth, healing and development of each other. Service to spirit is service to the community and service to the community is service to spirit. In Mary Seacole was a dedication to work the spirit to empower, heal, comfort the sick and set an example to humankind.

Courage

Nothing splendid has ever been achieved except by those who dared to believe that something inside them was superior to circumstance.

Bruce Barton

Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors from black communities face many obstacles in their working lives. Obstacles with getting effective feedback, sometimes when black colleagues get empowering feedback white colleagues are ready to shaft them; the feeling of 'me too' is often present. On the other hand, many of us are engaged in quality work but get no recognition. So, we learn to write our own press releases and find ways of promoting ourselves. Obstacles with swimming upstream without being dragged out of the river. Here we need to develop the skill of the salmon rather than that of the trout. I could go on about obstacles but today is a day of celebration and recognition that:

Obstacles will look large or small to you according to whether you are large or small.

We win our battles in the playhouse of the mind. So it is important that we keep our mind and eyes on what we want to achieve and accomplish. 'What would you dear to dream if you knew that you could not fail?' 'What would you dear to dream if you knew that alignment with spirit is magical enough to shape your character?'

What I mean by character is to be big enough to take life on. It is not the situation that makes the woman/man but the woman/man who makes the situation. Relate to own life - Harrow experience. Getting to the United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting

Credo

I want to encourage every black nurse, midwife and health visitor to adopt a credo to guide her/ his life. I use nine to support my self. You may find them useful:

- (1) I will not settle for less than I am worth and I will promote my services and achievements with integrity.

- (2) I will create my own waves to glide me along the sea of life.
- (3) I will treat myself as a self improvement project, learning at least one new skill per year and spend no less than one percent of my salary on myself.
- (4) I will commit time to discover my areas of excellence and I will devote my life manifesting excellence.

A word about excellence:

It is not just the little difference between the good and the best that makes the difference between the artist and the artisan. It is just the little touches after the average woman would quit that makes the mistress's frame.

Relate to awards in 1996 and comments from others about how much I give - how I defend my integrity.

Just make up your mind that at the very onset that your work is going to stand for quality .. That you are going to stamp superior quality upon everything that is undertaken by your hands, that whatever is undertaken by your hands shall bear the hall of excellence.

- (5) I will not longer work for anyone, only for myself and in so doing I will exercise self leadership in my career, personal and social life. If I am working with a company, I will treat the job as if I am working for myself but remembering to be a team player.
- (6) I will welcome change as the rule but not as my ruler.
- (7) I will learn from my past mistakes, but not lean on my past successes.
- (8) I will exemplify knowledge and political skills in whatever I undertake knowing that the things I fear in life are the things I know least about. I will therefore, employ knowledge and action to conquer fear.
- (9) I will anchor and sail the shores with roots and wings. Roots to anchor my core values and feelings of self-worth. Wings to fly my sail from the position of acceptance of responsibility for my life. Say a few words about being response able.

Responsibility

Responsibility knows that I am in charge of my own life and even though I will encounter setbacks, racism and sexism; no one but no one will determine what I am capable of achieving.

I believe that in the last analysis the individual person is responsible for living her own life and for finding herself. If she persists in shifting responsibility to someone else, she fails to find out the meaning of her own existence.

Quote George Bernard Shaw: *? You have had the experience but miss the meaning.?*

Being Different

Mary Seacole had no distress with being different. She understood that if a responsible leader is to be valued and admired, that leader must be different. She demonstrated her difference in:

- ? Higher personal and professional standards of behaviour. For example, she healed the sick where doctors failed
- ? Putting more time and effort into healing and comforting the sick
- ? Taking calculated risks

Life's greatest risk is depending on others for security, which can come only by planning, acting and making choices that will give us independence in our journey and interdependence with our relationships. One has to abandon altogether the search for security, and reach out to the risks of living with both arms. One has to court doubt and darkness as the cost of knowing. One needs a will stubborn in conflict, but apt always to total acceptance of every consequence of living.

Creative Thinking

If someone has not told you lately that your ideas are crazy, you haven't been doing much independent thinking. Self leadership doesn't rest on playing it safe or on always doing things the same old ways. Leadership ideas that solve problems and create opportunity come from creative out of mind thinking. Thinking that challenge our assumptions, thinking outside previous boundaries and taking constant risks. Creative thinking demands sticking to your convictions, but be ready to abandon your assumptions.

Relate to work in mental health

We cannot expect that tomorrow that every black nurse, midwife and health visitor will achieve equality of opportunity at work and society. But what we must hold onto is the desire for that goal and if we are to achieve that goal, we must believe in ourselves, we must match our aspirations with the competence courage and determination to succeed.

Relate to Beacon Graduates - you know one when you see meet one.

