

June 22, 2011

Dear Sir or Madam,

I recently had the privilege of attending a stirring performance of "A Finished Heart" by Elliott Cherry. In my 35 years as a nurse, nurse practitioner, and educator, I have never experienced any performance that so clearly and eloquently describes the process of living through the death of a loved one.

In the varying roles I have had as a nurse, none generates more emotion than caring for the dying patient. As caregivers, nurses often have the unique privilege of helping a person and their family make the dying process a rich and fulfilling experience for all.

Teaching other nurses however about the nurse's role and the anticipated events surrounding a prolonged death is a challenge. In particular, younger nurses who have not perhaps yet experienced the death of a loved one, the thought of assisting a family through this process is a daunting one. Our society has "sanitized" the process to a point that it is rare that a young nurse would have such experience. In my years as a nursing professor, I struggled with a creative way to impart this age old wisdom to my charges.

A performance such as Mr. Cherry has created not only is a true work of artistic merit, but is rich with the intimate details of a dying person's reality. As such, the performance could form a springboard for an excellent and useful discussion for students in the health care arena as they learn the ways of helping families with the dying process.

I would whole heartedly recommend Elliott Cherry's "A Finished Heart" as a mainstay in any healthcare profession's curriculum.

Sincerely,



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