

**Prompt:** Not being honest and authentic can hurt a relationship between two people. Describe a time when you had to deal with honesty or authenticity in a relationship. How did you balance being honest with being a kind, caring individual?

At the age of 17, I began my career in healthcare and worked as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) at Froedtert Hospital. From day one, I was driven to provide excellent care with dignity and respect to Covid positive patients, treating patients of all walks of life, backgrounds, and medical conditions. Giving back and caring for others has been so rewarding and it is crystal clear to me that I have found my calling and that my goal to pursue a career in healthcare was the right choice.

As the Covid pandemic hit our community, everything that revolves around daily life drastically changed. In the last year, I found myself balancing high school and college classes, working part-time as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), and most importantly dealing with the reality of a world pandemic and having to take extra precautions to keep my loved ones and those I interacted with daily safe. Every month, I faced new challenges that tested my resilience. Working with very sick patients, those that are difficult, and those that are going through a tough period of their life made a huge impact on the rhythm of my shift and how I maintained a work life balance.

Recently, I worked with a patient that didn't like me and would constantly put their anger on me and the assigned nurse. We approached this situation in a professional manner and remained calm and started to open the line of communication. As the patient yelled at us, we knew deep down that they were in pain. I approached this common situation with honesty and compassion and I remember telling the client that "We are here to help you, the only way that we can help you is if you work with us. I hope that you can talk to us in a calm manner and know that we are doing our best to help you." After I began to show that the verbal abuse was not tolerable - the situation began to calm down. The patient began to realize that she didn't mean to be rude - she was confused, in pain

and anxious about her situation. Being calm and honest goes a long way to opening communication and being effective with care as well as working with other like minded individuals that have the same beliefs and values. Completing small acts of kindness everyday allows those that I interact with to know that I care and that I am invested in developing a strong relationship or bond with them. Start small with these acts of kindness - help start a call or a Webex meeting for the patient so that they can communicate with loved ones, offer them a bottle of water, a warm blanket, carrying something heavy or offer to hold their hand. You will never know your potential in how impactful you can be unless you try. Being a public servant, a good listener and a leader has done so much for me in outreach and honing life long skills that will shape my future.

Front line workers are known to be heros, but in reality, we are human beings just like you. Deep down we need to take the time to take care of ourselves to refresh, take a step back to reflect, and recuperate. It is vital that you are honest with yourself and others around you about being burnt out, needing help, or just needing someone to talk to. It is important to balance your mental health, being a kind and compassionate individual, but it's also important to be authentic to ourselves. Before I leave the house everyday, I try to re-center myself. Not being honest with yourself about being burnt out can impact your mental and physical health. We must have a healthy relationship with ourselves in order to maintain a healthy lifestyle to be effective in caring for others, making a lasting impact with those that we interact with, and most importantly for being a good citizen in our community. In the end, I would like to share a quote that resonated with me from The Authenticity Project, "After I left, I learned to be my own sun." Be positive and honest with yourself and those around you and be your "own sun".

