



# the essence of service

by Joan Fox

When I think of great servants, I think of Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King, Jr. and John F. Kennedy. These individuals are iconic because of their incredible desire to serve humanity and the sacrifices they made in the name of their convictions. They are the ultimate public servants.

“Truly extraordinary patient experiences occur when we resurrect the passion that led us to choose this work path and demonstrate our desire to serve – when we do what we are asked because we want to help.”

These legendary servants make me think about our interpretation of service in healthcare today. I think about the remarkable heart each of these individuals had, and wonder if it is possible for those who routinely serve patients today to tackle their jobs with the same heart and eagerness to serve and comfort.

When people believe in what they are doing, they bring passion to it. I believe that quality of service is felt on a continuum. *Willingness* to serve is on one end of the spectrum while the *desire* to serve is on the other. This difference may seem indistinguishable at first glance, but here is another way to look at it: If you were in

an automobile accident, would you rather be rescued by an EMT who was just well trained or an EMT who was well-trained *and* helped you with empathy, care, and unwavering compassion not necessarily required of them by their job description

No doubt, we show up for work and do what is asked of us every day. But truly extraordinary patient experiences occur when we resurrect the passion that led us to choose this work path and demonstrate our *desire* to serve – when we do what we are asked because we *want* to help.

We are not manufacturing cars, packaging goods or selling cell phones. Ours is the privilege of working with human beings at a very vulnerable time of their lives. So many individuals are searching for purpose and meaning in their lives and can't find it easily because what they do is not obviously meaningful. Working in healthcare, whether you have direct patient contact or support those who do, is obviously meaningful.

Reconnect with your passion. Celebrate the fact that what you do matters – every day.

