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Change of Career and Life

My four year old son and I were in the car listening to a children's song on a cassette tape (19 years ago). A song came on and part of the chorus was, "every job you will try should make your heart grow wings and fly." Tears welled up in my eyes as I knew my 50+ hour per week IT job, spending only late evenings and weekends with my husband and son, did not do a thing for my heart. I did not feel I was making a real impact in the world and I longed to do something different.

Layoffs were imminent in my company so I volunteered. On my 38th birthday I was laid off and began soul searching. I thought of nursing but could not stomach the idea of certain bodily functions. One afternoon my husband and I went to the movies and an advertisement appeared on the screen for Collin College's Respiratory Therapy program.

I had never heard anything about Respiratory Therapists. Did not even know such a profession existed. I had recently lost both of my parents to illnesses at least partially attributed to smoking/COPD. My niece and two nephews suffered with asthma. This Respiratory Therapist career sounded interesting. It was Christmas Eve and I began digging around on the college's website. I sent an email to the Director the Respiratory Program thinking I would hear from him after the holidays. I received a response the very same day. We made an appointment to get together and I was hooked! The thought of combining my IT experience (ventilators are computers too!) and my deep desire to help people and make a difference in their lives was perfect in my mind.

The years have flown by and I have been privileged to assist with many high risk births as well as countless last moments on Earth. Holding the hands of and saying goodbye to those who have no one else has been an unexpected blessing. The role of Respiratory Therapist has been a ministry as much as an occupation.

My time at the bedside has changed as I now volunteer a few times a month in staffing but primarily spend days performing pulmonary function tests. I see the lasting effects of COVID-19 and it is heartbreaking. This vicious virus is life altering at every level of society. I wonder if there is anyone who has not be affected on a personal level? My deepest prayer is that we will gain control of it soon and emerge a healthier, stronger, more united country.

Through it all, I am happy to report my heart has the wings of an eagle soaring almost daily. My son is grown, serving in the Air Force, and is proud to tell others that his mother is a Respiratory Therapist. It is my joy and privilege to serve.