

# SIT AND STAY.... the hidden message in **DOG** ©

“ I don’t know why I’m crying” .....

...A reasonable statement from a patient; a fairly common behavior.

An enlightened and intuitive nurse will pull up a chair and **sit** for awhile.

Compassion will make her **stay**.

In this case, commitment compelled her to ask the physician for a “ridiculous” order.

A magnet culture empowered and supported her efforts.

In “Dog”, we know that the man is crying.....

We see how the nurse attempts to solve the problem....

“Dog” is about SBAR, advocacy, diplomatic perseverance, success and gains.

***What we do not see is what happened between the nurse and the man before the phone call.***

***We do not see the magical exchange that occurred when the nurse lingered at the bedside.***

She **sat** and talked to the man in low whispers.

She **stayed** and listened to his story and discovered the secret details of his tears:

He unburdens his heart: he knows why he is crying; he wants to see his dog.

The nurse learns that his wife had died 6 months earlier.

The dog had been his wife’s companion, not his.

Both are still grieving their loss. Both have found comfort in each other.

The man confides that he fears his stay in the hospital might make the dog feel abandoned again.

The man imagines what a second abandonment would feel like; it breaks the man’s heart.

He needs to reassure the dog; he needs to reassure himself.

Feeling powerless and sad he weeps.

Who knew a dog existed? Who knew that these tears were more than tears for a pet?

The nurse who **sat** and **stayed** knew.

An intimate nurse patient moment uncovered the nature and complexity of the man’s sadness.

This short investment in time guided the nurse toward an obvious solution.

In a busy hospital we may not always feel we have the time to **sit** and **stay**.

What is learned in these private moments may redirect our care approach resulting in improved outcomes.

When we prioritize this behavior the rewards can be amazing.

It is good to **sit** and **stay**.

Enjoying “Dog” requires a little imagination.....

If you are a nurse you have a sense of what the other side of the conversation sounded like.

I smile when I remember how apprehensive I was to make the call.

I smile when I remember the incredulous tenor of the physician’s voice as he responded to my request.

I smile when I remember the peaceful scene of the man with his dog.

In a nurse’s world, “**Reaching for the Stars**” is a daily occurrence.

On that day, it required reaching out to the patient,

.....then reaching for the phone.



Another Magnet Moment  
Linda Harrington RNC