

# Dreamed about going back into nursing

written by Holly

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I put my registered nursing license in mothballs at the end of 1992, but this morning before I woke up, I dreamed about taking the steps needed to return to active duty.

Prior to this, I've occasionally dreamed of doing cardiac codes, working trauma from auto accidents or gunshot wounds or any of the other things I did as an RN. Would dream that I'd just got off a twelve, had dreamed all night of working in the unit, and was waking up to do another twelve, which happened a lot when I was doing it. Or of people dying, and then sitting there and talking to me, which I also dreamed about a lot while I was actually a nurse.

But this was the first time I can remember that I actually dreamed about taking the necessary steps to go back.

Which is, I think, my subconscious's way of commenting on the revision I'm doing, which has been and still is a miserable experience, rather than suggesting that I have any deep desire to go back to regular doses of blood and trauma and tragedy. I served for ten years, during the transition period when blood went from being something that was seen as sterile to something you knew could give you AIDS. I've had other people's blood up to my elbows, have gone home with blood caked on my shoes. While I was on duty, I saw early cases of necrotizing fasciitis, and pseudomonas becoming a major problem, and antibiotic-resistant strains of a whole lot of bad bugs. I did good things – there were people who were alive at the end of the day because of me. I birthed a couple of babies, too, and stood there for people who had just lost

everything in their world, after I'd been a part of losing the fight to save their everything, and gave what comfort I could. I did something that mattered, and I never for one moment doubted that it mattered. But I don't want to go back.

Maybe the subconscious is questioning the relevance of what I'm doing now. I do that sometimes when I'm awake, too, frankly – and it could be that. Writing is challenging, it's usually fun, it pays the bills, it lets me teach my kid at home and be the stay-at-home mother I wanted to be when the other two were little. But I'm not saving lives, and I know it.

Or maybe this dream was just telling me to quit bitching about the revision and get through it; that I've done harder things.

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