

I got the opportunity to meet with Racheal McKee four years ago when she was introduced to me through a family friend. You could tell she was the most gentle person you would ever meet. At the time, four years ago, she was starting nursing school at UAB college. When I met Racheal, I was still confused about what I wanted my career path to be. And I knew she was going to school for nursing, and I thought, wow, that's a lot of work. So I wondered how she got into nursing in the first place and how she faced all the struggles that come with nursing.

I recently got to get in touch with Racheal McKee and sit with her. I had multiple questions to ask her, and I wanted to get to the root of her nursing goals and her views on certain aspects of life. Here are the questions I asked.

What are your current or intended professional positions and any other jobs you have held? What also got you into your current profession?

-I am currently a registered Nurse, working towards becoming a Nurse practitioner. I learned about nursing in the medical terms class I took in 10th grade, which instantly attracted me. I love to understand how the body works, and to know I have an impact on people's lives gives me a good feeling about my profession

What made you choose this profession, and what draws you to stay with it?

-I've always been fascinated with how our body works, and I love working with new people almost every day, and the pay and the schedules are a plus.

What is her current pay?

I'm making thirty-eight dollars an hour while working three twelve-hour shifts weekly.

Who in your life has served as a mentor or support?

-my mom and my cousin are both nurses.

If you have any recommendations, what would those recommendations be for your younger self if you were to look back?

-don't stress so much about where you are going in life. It all works out.

How do you navigate balancing work, family life, and mental health?

-It can be hard sometimes because, as a nurse, you can be exposed to some pretty graphic things; you must remember to leave work at work. And I also get a lot of time with my family with my schedule, and I only work three twelve-hour shifts a week.

What experiences from school have helped you in your field?

-school is a huge part of nursing. It wasn't easy, but I made it through, and I'd say it was worth it. The school covers just about every situation I've been a part of. Those nights when I would stay up late to study for a test have helped because there are some days in my nursing career when I am so tired at work. But I just pushed through because I've learned to do that.

When was a time that you experienced a roadblock or failure, and how did you navigate it?

-my most memorable roadblock was in school. The program was challenging and made me question nursing a couple of times. I just stuck with it, and it all worked out.

How has your life as a nurse shaped who you are today?

-I feel the whole nursing process has shaped me into a better person overall. Because when you're in this career, you are forced to talk and interact with new people and meet new people, it has made me come out of my shell a little more, so now I'm not afraid to talk or meet new people.

Lastly, how would you define or describe what it is to live a life of significance?

Be proud of what you've done and leave people's lives better than you found them.