

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 in touch with Racheal McKee and sat 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.

Firstly I wanted to know her current or intended professional positions or if there are other jobs, she may have held. What also got her into her current profession? She's currently a registered Nurse, working towards becoming a Nurse practitioner. She learned about nursing in the medical terms class she took in 10th grade, which instantly attracted her. She loves to understand how the body works, and knowing she may impact people's lives gives her a good feeling about her profession.

I wanted to know What made her choose this profession and what drew her to stay with it, which was a mentally draining job. She has always been fascinated with how our body works and loves working with new people almost daily. She also stated that she loves how she can be a positive impact on people's lives every day. Her job doesn't feel like work to her because she loves anatomy. She also mentioned jokingly that the pay and the schedules are a plus.

I instantly wanted to know how much she could make in nursing. Does the pay make up for all the intense classes it takes to become a nurse? She laughed and then said she makes thirty-

eight dollars an hour while working three twelve-hour shifts weekly. When she said that, I knew this was the profession for me!

With Nursing having such hard schooling, I asked if she has any support system and, if so, who has served as a mentor or support in her life. She said that her mom, a registered nurse, gives her tips and does an excellent job reassuring her that everything will be fine and that there will not be too much stress. Her mom is a Registered Nurse that works in Birmingham, Alabama, and my cousin is a physician assistant that travels all around the country for work.

So she has a pretty good support system behind her, 'd says. Did I ask what kind of benefits come with being in a medical background family? She said she goes to her mom with many things that she's struggling in, and if her mom isn't sure, then her cousin will probably know. With such a sound support system, it made me think she might know some tips or tricks passed down to her, so I wanted to see If she had any recommendations. What would those recommendations be for her younger self if she were to look back? She responded with don't stress so much about where you are going. It all works out.

Many things can happen during a day in the hospital, and if I let every little setback bother me, I won't be able to take care of my next patient to the best of my abilities. She has recently started a family, and with that new responsibility, she needs to find time for family and try not to get caught up with work all the time, I asked. How do you navigate balancing work, family life, and mental health? She thought for a minute, and I could tell that maybe she's been struggling with this. After a minute, she said 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.

I was so happy to hear that, considering I am going into nursing. Hearing that nurses get a reasonable amount of time off was an enormous weight. Knowing that I am about to start my nursing school process in a couple of years, I'm still fascinated with the schooling aspect of nursing. And if they apply what they learn in the hospital. I asked if nursing school was like high school. Something you go through and never really use 75 percent of the information I learned. She said the school is a huge part of nursing. It wasn't easy, but she made it through and said it was worth it. The school covers just about every situation she has been a part of. Those nights when she would stay up late to study for a test have helped because there are some days in my nursing career when she is so tired at work. But she just pushed through because she learned to do that. I've heard horror stories about what Racheal has seen, and it made me think How has her life as a nurse shaped who she is today?

She feels the whole nursing process has shaped her 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 her come out of her shell a little more, so now she is not afraid to talk or meet new people.

Lastly, I asked what she would define or describe what it is to live a life of significance. She gave a simple response saying. Be proud of what you've done and leave people's lives better than you found them. If I can leave people's lives better than I found them by being a positive person at work, I will have a successful life. Because if they are at the hospital, they are most likely having a bad day.

Worked cited:

McKee, Racheal. Personal interview. 9 Oct 2022.

