

ANNIE MOORE

b. 1954
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This one nurse who always worked in the burn unit said with a sick smile, "I'm so bored, I wish we'd get in an emergency. I love to take care of an emergency". I told her I would really rather be bored.

My life was what I would call a big bore. My father was a minister and a counselor and my mother a busy-body housewife. From childhood up to junior high school, I was what I would call "protected" although my parents were liberals and open to the rights of all, despite their race, creed, or color, whether prisoners, homosexuals or mentally ill. It took me until the eighth grade to start really realizing what the world was all about. This was when I began to really think and notice how unhappy much of the world was. I began to question the actions of those adults that I had looked up to. There were different people I knew who had committed suicide and others who were killed in car accidents. I knew there was a war going on in Vietnam and I was involved in war protests and fights with the "cowboys" at school over this. By the ninth grade, I was totally confused, lonely, bored, and I began experimenting with drugs, although my parents never knew about it. I lacked self-confidence so much, and had such a poor self-image that I thought about different ways to commit suicide. I put on an act through most of high school pretending I was crazy, doing outrageous things like making faces at teachers and following different people I disliked acting like a chimpanzee. I did anything to cut the boredom and the only way I could handle it was by making a joke out of life.

At age 16, I worked in a burn unit at Children's Hospital in Washington, D.C. for the summer. The children needed someone to play with since their parents worked or didn't care to come and visit them. There was so much pain in their faces from the hell they went through! One 12 yr old, Tyrone, had gasoline poured on him and a match lit to him on July 4th. His arms and hands were burnt-- a human firework-- and the medicine that was applied caused most children to scream with pain for hours at a time. Tyrone never screamed though and for all the pain and rejection he had gone through in life, he had a sweet disposition. After working with him, I was never the same. I returned to high school the next year. More than anything, I wanted to do something with my life that would be helping people like Tyrone, but after mixing with the same bunch of friends--some of whom were shooting heroin, and others who were involved in various crimes-- I selfishly planned to commit suicide at some time. I had no one I could express what I really felt about anything to and I was upset that the boys at school who liked me were always the creepiest creeps you could find.

Finishing my high school years in a university town, I had grown to hate "intellectuals" because they were all a lot of hot air and no action. This is why. Whenever I was on a project to care for prisoners' children while the wives visited their husbands, or when I was tutoring minority children in their school work, the "intellectuals" could always find a reason why they could not help. But they always had plenty of time to talk about the world's problems and sermonize about what should be done.

So, due to my eccentric hate for intellectuals and school, I refused to go on to college. My mother wanted me to be an artist or musician but I hated them too. I thought they were all so phoney and egotistical. So I had no plans was totally confused, and poured an entire bottle of codeine pills in my mouth preparing to swallow them. I don't know why I stopped but I did--and spit them all out into the toilet. Days later, my sister who was in Peoples Temple invited me to visit. I found people who were friendly, mixing all races together, working in a cooperative setting. The people were not phoney and seemed for real. They took no drugs and still seemed to enjoy themselves. So, not having anything else to do with myself, I came. Jim told me that I could be helpful in the group, that I was talented and could teach others or even go to school and make something of myself. He convinced me it was not right to commit suicide and that I could be useful and gain happiness by helping others. It was he and the support of Temple members that helped me through nurses' training, which I had adamantly refused to attempt at first. I found that even though I hated intellectuals and didn't like the schools I'd been to, I had nothing against learning.

Now I've been an R.N. for three years and my life is fulfilling. I know that I am helping others. The hospital burn unit in which I worked before coming to Guyana taught me a lot. Our entire shift of nurses, I thought, must have been inherently evil. They refused to give pain shots to people, many of whom had their entire bodies burned, stating "You should be able to take the pain." They ripped off dressings quickly and bragged about how they could finish everyone's dressings within an hour, when with some patients they should have taken an hour each.

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Pg 3

ANNIE MOORE

the patients.

Nursing here in out Jonestown coopertaive is much different from nursing in US hospitals. If there is a problem of any kind it is brought up for discussion. No one could get away with all the hell they did there, out no one attempts it either. The medical staff is excellent; a caring group of people determined to give the best care to those who need it.

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