

Cleveland Visiting Scholar shares lessons in nursing – and life

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Dr. Angela Barron McBride spoke to students and faculty at the WSU College of Nursing on Thursday, Sept. 14, 2017 as the 20th Annual Cleveland Visiting Scholar. Photo by Cori Kogan.

A “Living Legend” came to Spokane Thursday to share some of the wisdom earned over more than 50 years in nursing and academia. Angela Barron McBride, Ph.D., was the 20th annual Cleveland Visiting Scholar at the WSU College of Nursing, giving two addresses to students,

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faculty and the public.

McBride's message: you need to work at staying optimistic as you move through the different phases of your career.

"When I say 'career optimism' I don't mean happy-face pins," McBride said. "Crap happens every day. But an optimist looks at failures and setbacks as not personal, not permanent, and not pervasive."

The Cleveland Visiting Scholar is an annual lecture named in honor of the WSU College of Nursing's longest-serving dean, Thelma Cleveland. McBride is a nurse leader who has spent her career furthering the cause of nursing, and increasing knowledge and awareness of women's mental health. She is Dean Emerita of the Indiana School of Nursing and served as president of both the Sigma Theta Tau nursing honor society and the American Academy of Nursing, the latter of which named her a "Living Legend."

In her talk Tuesday morning at the College of Nursing, which was viewed by nursing students and faculty across the state via live video, McBride said there's ample evidence that how a person sees things can be a factor in what happens about 40 percent of the time.

"Monitor how you think about stuff," she said. "If you're good, don't think you lucked out. Think, 'Honey, you've got that talent.' Don't think, 'I'm not cut out to be a nurse.' It's better to say, 'On Monday at 4 p.m. I was not swift.'"

She called certain self-criticism "Normal Crazy," meaning the feelings are normal among workers, but when dissected, are pretty crazy. For instance, the feeling that if you don't have all the answers, you don't deserve to be in charge. Or that you should like everyone and everyone should like you.

"These Normal Crazy thoughts get in the way of a lot," she

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said. People should expect a certain amount of failure in their lives, so that they're not surprised by the fact they failed, or undone by it.

Her wide-ranging and entertaining talks included a sampler of life and career advice:

On finances: McBride said she wished she'd consulted a financial planner when she began her career. Nurses generally make a good salary and should be smart with it, she said, noting that for many years she saw her salary as "icing on the cake" of her enjoyable work.

On networking: "Don't expect to be fully appreciated where you work," she said. "That's why it's important to go to professional meetings, because colleagues elsewhere can be a major source of support and understanding."

On attitude: Make yourself think about the good in your life. Associate with optimists instead of pessimists. And don't compete to see who is more miserable.

On time management: Your to-do list should be guided by your priorities and values, not by busy work or someone else's priorities.

On working with others: Don't be quick to take offense and "don't go ballistic, choosing option No. 10 when you haven't tried options No. 1 through 9."

On improving: Moses is the only person granted a 10-point plan to live by, McBride noted. Living with ambiguity, being diplomatic and navigating workplace politics – these are all skills that can be developed.

Having a career isn't easy, she concluded; there are many instances where reality falls short of ideals. Said McBride, "Career optimism is the ability to stay hopeful and

energized about one's work, particularly in the face of adversity or failure."

Thank you to the sponsors of the 20th Annual

Cleveland Visiting Scholar: Empire Health Foundation, Kaiser Permanente, Providence Health Care, Sigma Theta Tau's local Delta Chi chapter, WSNA, and the Inland Empire Nurses Association.

View photos from the two Cleveland Visiting Scholar events by Cori Kogan: [Morning event](#) for students and faculty, and the [evening event](#) for the public.

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