

Life at Nuance, Professional development

At the end of the day...everyone walks a different path

Brenda Hodge | Chief Marketing Officer

May 9, 2019



My daughter, a recent college graduate, reflects back on what she's learned through her service work: I learned in order to meet someone where they are, we have to realize where we are.

My youngest daughter is graduating from the University of North Carolina (UNC), Chapel Hill this weekend. I am very proud of the fact that she's been a great student, graduating as a business major from Kenan-Flager business school, as well as a political science double major. She will graduate as a [Buckley Public Service Scholar \(BPSS\)](#), and already has a great job lined-up in Austin, TX after graduation.

My daughter chose as a freshman to become a BPSS. She chose to do 300 hours of public service during her 4 years at UNC, as well as attend a variety of awareness and skills training classes in her free time. To complete her BPSS work, she wrote a reflections paper. I am so proud of what she has learned about herself, and the person she has become.

Her reflections are worth sharing. Below are some excerpts from my daughter's reflections:

Public service should be actions that are taken with the understanding that everyone walks a different path. Service should meet someone on their life journey, helping them in the way that they need, and in a way that focuses on their path.

I realized that the reason I was the one volunteering at the food pantry and not the one needing its services, had little to do with me.

I will always remember volunteering at Heavenly Groceries during first semester of sophomore year. It was November and the cold had hit, and I was working one of the tables at the food pantry. A guy came up wearing a Vanderbilt sweatshirt, my mom's college and my childhood dream college, and I asked him if he was a Commodores fan. He looked down not even realizing what the sweatshirt said and stated, "I am a fan of being warm." I was born a white woman, to a financially able family, in a nice neighborhood, to parents that gave me every tool they could to ensure my education. I started a mile ahead of the pack and had to merely keep up, not catch up.

My journey with BPSS is somewhat of a love story. I came to UNC with an idealized version of service. But during my time and continued education, I realized that I was doing it wrong. I realized that if I was creating change, I should not leave happy. The problem was not immediately solved from one meal. I felt pain, I felt guilt, I felt an inadequacy. I would go to the food pantry and hate the small amount I could do. I would go to Relay for Life meetings and hate the band-aid we were putting on things without even attempting systemic change. Part of my four years was falling out of love with service.

One of the speakers we had said, "A charity doing their job right should be working themselves out of a job." The goal should never be a band-aid or a short-term solution that focuses on the symptoms and not the problem. That makes your service about you and not about them. We were not realizing the road that they walked and meeting them on their road.

That semester I fell out of love with service because it wasn't fun anymore. But I think that is because in order to meet someone where they are, we have to realize where we are. My parents have paid for my college education and comfortable housing. I have had to focus on nothing but my school experience. I am a white woman living in the south. My community was well off, so the public schools offered a good education. There was guilt and frustration. I wanted to think that I got to where I am because I was a hard worker. If I was given an upper hand, then how did I not feel guilty about that? I will experience less adversity in my life because I was born with things that our system has decided to allow me. I didn't know how to handle that. But I always remembered one thing my professor said, "We are most blind where our privilege is greatest." I realized that I had to accept where I stood and understand that every journey is different.

My experience with BPSS helped me establish where I stand in the world and accept that for what it is. I learned where I stand to help myself better understand where others are standing. I will forever be grateful for the worldview it helped me develop.

Congratulations to all 2019 grads!

At the end of the day... is an expression meaning an assessment of essential facts and truths. It's a summation of the pros and cons of any situation and a straightforward statement of what really matters. It's also the title of this blog series by [Brenda Hodge](#), Nuance Healthcare's Chief Marketing Officer, with insights about leadership, empathetic customer relationships, and marketing techniques.

Tags: [Leadership principles](#)



About Brenda Hodge

Brenda leads all aspects of Nuance's marketing function working to develop the go-to-market approach, building the Nuance brand to drive growth, and expanding client relationships to increase loyalty. She joined Nuance from Optum where she most recently served as Chief Marketing Officer for the Provider Market segment. Brenda's career spans multinational sales and marketing leadership roles at companies such as GloStream, Allscripts/Misys Healthcare Systems, and SAS Institute.

[View all posts by Brenda Hodge](#)

