What does it mean to be a healthcare provider? The definition of health care, as stated in Wikipedia free encyclopedia, “is the prevention, treatment, and management of illness and the preservation of mental and physical well being through the services offered by the medical, nursing, and allied health professions. This definition does not come close to touching those intangibles that patient care truly embodies. No text book could have provided me with the education on how to build key relationships with patients, the types of relationships that are built on mutual trust, respect, and understanding. There is an unspoken atmosphere that can be generated between two people working together fervently towards a common goal.

While I was practicing my clinical skills at my two inpatient affiliations, I had no idea of the types of ups and downs that I would end up experiencing. There are no words in any encyclopedia or dictionary to describe the internal feelings you exude, and the intimate bonds you form with a patient when you are present day by day participating in their epic journey. Together you battle side by side a pathology that rooted them in their hospital bed while they claw and scratch all the way to their first steps in the parallel bars or with a rolling walker. Nothing is more rewarding and at the same time stressing as being part of such a scuffle for the ability to go home to the ones you love. Having worked with such devastating conditions as strokes, multiple sclerosis, and MRSA I was able to be apart of several such endeavors.
In my short experiences there are two similar patients’ stories that standout boldly in my mind. Both of which were devastated with severe MCA strokes and were left with immense hemiparesis, but most of all were struck with severe global aphasia (expressive and receptive). As I honed my therapeutic skills with these patients, I began to simultaneously learn the crucial skill of how to be more in tune and pick up on a patient’s feelings through other inconspicuous means of communication rather than conversing, such as physical gestures.

On one occasion, emotions of frustration and feelings of being overwhelmed by the obstacles facing them one of these particular patients started sobbing uncontrollably. I remember we stopped treatment took her into the peaceful surroundings of the chapel down the hall and sat in front of the fish tank with her comforting her. I remember how strongly I felt for her, wanted to help her, and be a better therapist for her. Then on the opposite side of the spectrum, I can remember the first steps with the Gait Lite Assisted Walking Harness, and when she was able to take some assisted steps she glowed from the inside out. Towards the end of both of their recoveries as they developed some aspects of expression and reception to varying degrees, I recollect those deep ties and feelings I developed with both of these patients. Even though they could not fully put together in words what they were truly feeling as they were leaving therapy, I knew they appreciated the aide we had the honor to give them. They were able to rejoin their families and their lives, even if they were still somewhat impaired. I was ecstatic I could truly impact their and their families’ lives, and most of all become their friend not just their therapist.

No one could have taught me as clearly the tragic sides of rehab as well as the extremely rewarding sides as well as the patient’s from my affiliations. I thank them for
educating me and thereby making me the passionate healthcare provider I currently am today. They touched me, as I hope I touched them.