

A Chat With the Chaplain of the NSMC

- Lily Frontero

Jane Korins is the director of spiritual care services of the North Shore Medical Center. She's been the Clinical Chaplain there for seventeen years and has developed the department. Jane didn't choose to be a Clinical Chaplain, but her college experience at 38 years old led her there.

"When I started my studies my interests were in Psychology and Philosophy. When I graduated, I became interested in Theology," Jane says.

After graduating from Salem State she later received her Master's Degree in Theological studies at the Harvard Divinity School. When Jane began her studies at Divinity School, she didn't know where studying theology would take her. She knew that she wanted her career to be somewhat related to theology, but she didn't know what she would do after graduating. However, in her last year in school, Korins hit a turning point when she did Field Placement Studies at a Hospice in Brookline.

She explains, "It was then that I realized how much I loved being with those who are ill and are dying and how much I enjoyed providing spiritual and emotional support to them."

One of Jane's favorite parts of being a Clinical Chaplain is working with kids. Even though there is a Chaplain that is assigned to North Shore Children's Hospital, she has many opportunities to go over there to work with the kids. She also works in many other pediatric parts of the hospital. Jane regularly does spirituality groups with the kids.

I then asked Korins if spirituality is always about religion.

"Absolutely not," Jane responds. She also said that she has met so many spiritual people that don't follow any particular religion and that many people find meaning in religion, but many others that she's met find spirituality through nature and relationships.

"Spirituality is more about the core essence of who you authentically are and how you find meaning in life," she explained.

I wondered that if being so courageous all day to help ones who suffered ever affected Jane. After I asked her she clarified,

"There are times that I have been deeply affected through the deep suffering and trauma that I have witnessed. But the silent retreats that I go on throughout the year and the spiritual director that I see on a monthly basis to process things helps quite a bit. However, my experience with those who are suffering has been an incredible gift to me. People who are facing challenges have an authenticity that has created me. And has shown me the fragility and the preciousness of life."

To end the discussion I asked her a difficult question, "If you had to sum up your entire experience and perspective you have taken from this what would it be?"

Jane answered, “By working with the sick, suffering, and dying people, I am always amazed at the incredible strength and power of the human spirit.”

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