

# Our Task is Much Bigger than That

*by Nathan Welsh*

“Just a little more”

“Hang in there”

“Almost done”

I've heard these and many other sayings like this a lot over the last year. It's been nearly constant. Every new twist, new turn, new restriction comes with these, but there is a problem. All of these statements assume that there is a definite end and that the end is close. It's an implicit promise that if you will just expend the last reserve of your Self, you will reach the goal and...what? What happens at the end? The other side of that promise is supposed to be rest, peace, and healing. It's a short-term strategy for a short time problem.

The truth is not nearly so clear. We all know this. Even with the very real hope that is promised with new vaccines, there's no telling when this is going to really be over. What does the end even look like? Will the world ever be just as it was before COVID 19? No one can say.

What I can say for certain is that this is no time for “just a little more.” The people who use it almost always have the very best intentions, but I say they are using the wrong tool for this job. This isn't a sprint, it's not even a marathon. It's a journey. Long days, short nights, and the only goal we can set our sights on is the horizon. We don't know what's over the next hill. We can't tell what tomorrow will require from us. All we can be sure of is that we are on a journey to whatever life is after this and we must not fail. We will reach that journey's end and see the new world that lies beyond.

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The world needs our strength, and it needs us to last.**

So what's the alternative to "hang on"? Think bigger. Don't try to make it through the next shift, try to make it through the next month or year. Spend a little time on yourself today so you can come back to work tomorrow. Eat now so you don't crash later. Don't pick up that extra shift when you're already at the end of your rope. Don't give until it hurts. Those are the product of just trying to get through the day. Our task is much bigger than that.

The message of this collection is "Stay Strong For Us." Take some time for yourselves as soon as you can to think about what strength means for you. What does your strength allow you to do? What do your gifts cost you, and how is your strength renewed? I implore you, my colleagues, to think bigger. The world needs our strength, and it needs us to last. Nurture yourself so you can truly stay strong.



Nathan Welsh, BSN, RN, Carle Foundation Hospital, Urbana, Illinois. He is a DAISY Award Nurse.

[Website](#)

Be sure to read the beautiful and touching article [The Voice of a Nurse: Reflecting on the International Year of the Nurse and Beyond](#) by Bonnie Barnes, Mark Barnes, and Nathan Welsh from the December 2020 edition of Nurse Leader.