

## The Sweetest Smile in the World

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation  
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The sweetest smile in the world is the smile of a sick person. That is what volunteer Wu Jin-zhu learned during her service at Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital in southwest Taiwan.

“I could not experience the pain of Grandmother,” she said. “But I could be at her side and encourage her to go on.

“In March this year, I was serving in the hospital’s emergency unit. I saw an elderly woman coughing large amounts of blood. The doctor asked her if he could do a gastroscopic examination; but she firmly refused. The family asked me to help them persuade her to change her mind. Just as I was about to speak, the lady said to me angrily: ‘I am the person who has the pain. It is not you. Of course you cannot feel it. If you want the examination, you do it!’

“Her words made me feel deep regret. I thought for a long time that there must be a better way to talk to patients and make them believe that we volunteers are sharing their pain.

“In April, I returned to the hospital as a volunteer and, in the emergency unit, came across another Grandmother. She was spitting blood and phlegm from her stomach. The doctor wanted to do a detailed examination of her stomach. Her husband was at her side and trying to persuade her; but she was not willing. I remembered my last experience. Although I was afraid of making the same mistake, my heart told me ‘do it!’

“I said to Grandma: ‘if you have an examination, then the doctor will be able to make an accurate judgement and give you better treatment. Although I cannot feel your pain, I deeply wish to bear it with you. Let us get through this together. Is that all right?’ She thought about it for a while and said finally: ‘all right’. I stayed with her at her side to help and encourage her until the procedure was completed.

“At the end, I saw on her face how exhausted she was and my heart was uneasy. Then she said: ‘thank you very much’. When I saw her kind smile, I thought of what Master Cheng Yen said: ‘the most beautiful smile in the world is the smile of a sick person.’

“I said to Grandmother: ‘you have given me the most beautiful smile in the world. I must thank you very much.’ She smiled back and was very happy. My heart was full of happiness. Gratitude and failure are both a force to help us grow!”

Story shared by Tzu Chi volunteer Wu Jin-Zhu in Morning Volunteer's Assembly on August 25  
Edited by Lin Shu-huai