

## Thank you Farley!

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Thank you Farley Sowards for believing in me and seeing my potential before I saw it in myself! Several years ago when I was living in Salt Lake City and my children were in elementary school, I was working as a nurse assistant at a large, local hospital. I worked the graveyard shift 3 nights per week which allowed me to spend time with my kids before and after school.

Diane, a nurse I worked with at the hospital had taken a job at FHP. There were several locations throughout the Salt Lake area. FHP was a healthcare organization that offered their patients general healthcare services, dental, optometry and other specialties. After Diane had been working at FHP for several months, a position opened in the materials management department. Diane called to ask if I would be interested in applying for a materials coordinator job. It would allow me to work day shift instead of nights and I could pick the hours that would work best for me, provided they also worked for the clinic. The job was 6 hours per day - Monday through Friday.

While the flexible, day time hours were extremely attractive, I knew nothing about materials management. In fact I didn't even really know what it meant or encompassed, so how could I possibly qualify for this position? Now granted, it wasn't a high paying or experienced position, but none the less, I knew nothing about it. To this point, the majority of my education and work experience was focused around patient care. After giving it a lot of thought and consideration, I decided to interview for the position and learn more about it. As it turned out, I was actually their second choice of all the applicants; no surprise there. But their first choice decided not to take the job after all so they took a chance on me. Miracles sometimes happen in unexpected ways, and looking back I thank god they did because it was the beginning of my career in Healthcare Supply Chain Management.

When I started the job, I was basically dropped into the position without formal training but with the help from others in similar positions at other FHP locations I managed to get settled in. I organized the storeroom and the process for ordering medical supplies and stocking floors. After a couple of years I began to feel a little bored and felt my job no longer provided the challenges I needed or wanted.

So who is Farley and what does all this have to do with him? Farley was the CEO of this FHP location and responsible for its operations. I remember watching his every move in meetings to see how he conducted them, how he answered questions, and listened intently to his advice and wisdom. He was such an inspiration to me and to others that worked with him.

He had an assistant that worked with him that was leaving her position and I knew he was looking for a replacement. I thought he might give me the opportunity to learn the skills I would need to be his assistant; after all he gave me the chance to learn materials management and that worked out well. So off I went to talk to Farley and apply to be his assistant in a somewhat informal interview. After he had interviewed other candidates he called me into his office to let me know he did not choose me, but instead had decided to hire someone else.

I was devastated and disappointed. I asked him why he did not choose me and I remember to this day so clearly his response. He said, “Angela, you are too good at what you do to change positions and work as an administrative assistant.” I couldn’t believe it. Too good at what I do? I didn’t understand that at the time, as I knew I was good at my job, but it wasn’t enough for me and changing positions would give me the challenge I was looking for.... or so I thought.

I resigned myself to Farley’s decision and continued working as the Materials Coordinator, a position held at each FHP location. A short time later one of the other Materials Coordinator’s quit which created an opening at a nearby facility. I knew I had things organized so well at my location that I could probably take on a second one by implementing the same efficient processes. I presented my idea to Farley who gave me the chance to manage both. I’ll just mention, I didn’t get a raise for taking on the additional responsibility. While the one time bonus was appreciated, I must say that a pay increase would have been welcomed because I was doing the job of two people. But more than money I really wanted to be challenged and to have additional responsibilities.

As expected, I was able to manage both locations by implementing efficient processes and keeping the storerooms organized. However, within in a short time, I once again needed additional challenges in my work, so off I went to Farley. At this time, he was now located at the largest FHP location and had an opening for a Materials Coordinator. I told him I would like to manage all three locations, realizing that this one, being the largest, would take most of my time. The other two were running smoothly and I was confident I could do the same at this location. He was a little hesitant as he knew it was a lot for one person to handle. I asked him to give me 90 days to get this location up to speed and still oversee the other two. If at the end of 90 days, either one of us felt it was too much for me to take on as an on-going responsibility, then he could hire someone else to cover it. He took me up on my offer and at the end of 90 days; I was managing the inventory at all three locations successfully.

So Farley, thank you for telling me I was too good at what I do and for not hiring me as your administrative assistant and for giving me the opportunities at FHP to learn and grow in my career. I’ve come along way since then and now hold a position as VP of Supply Chain in the healthcare industry. Neither one of us would have predicted I’d be here today (but who knows, maybe you did), but thankfully you knew what was best for me when I didn’t. With much gratitude and appreciation, I thank you for all your support, for believing in me and for giving me the chance to succeed. I have never forgotten you and will always be indebted to you.