

Savannah Gomes  
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It's always, using a catalyst makes a reactant start more quickly. In the novel One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest by Ken Kesey, the main character, Randle Patrick McMurphy, arrived at a mental hospital and automatically took to spicing things up for the other patients. Before McMurphy, the lives of those on his ward were controlled by the head nurse, Nurse Ratched; they had no say in anything because they were all too afraid of her to speak up. McMurphy was able to change this for them. A little push to get started can be a big help.

McMurphy was just the push the ward needed to realize what a bad position they had been in. <sup>Eventually</sup> the patients on the ward fed off McMurphy's enthusiasm like starving wolves. <sup>His</sup> <sup>demeanor</sup> cleared them of the fog so much so that <sup>the narrator, another patient,</sup> commented that he, "figured the fog machine had broke down in the walls." <sup>(114)</sup> The fog had stopped the patients from being able to think for themselves. They hid in it, not wanting to face the reality of how miserable they were. Of course the fog wasn't literal. It represented the nurse putting them down, it represented their inability to think through the medication, and it represented a huge obstacle. When <sup>the machine</sup> broke, it was their first step towards better lives. Still, with the patients feeding off of him, McMurphy was bound to deplete his well of power.

Even when the ward's catalyst was used up, they kept going. They knew what they had to do to live up to what they began to expect of themselves. They already got their push and were

then able to continue on. Some left the hospital in hopes of finding their old selves again. Others switched hospitals as to get away from what had been portrayed as their biggest problem - Nurse Ratched. In all, the message of the book was that a push to start can make a cube roll down a mountain. With that push, no options can be ruled out - no matter how unlikely - because it's up to those who are strapped in for the ride to decide where it goes once it's started.