



# ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

## Message from the President

### The Virtual World

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I am in the process of climbing Makalu, the fifth highest mountain in the world, on the Nepal and Tibet border. Actually, I have climbed 12,198 feet toward the massive peak of 27,766 feet, and will reach the summit within the next few weeks. Over the past 14 months, I climbed Mount Everest, K2, Kanchenjunga and Lhotse, the four tallest rock piles in the world!

In reality, I have never been to Nepal, Tibet or China. However, in my virtual world I witnessed snow covered peaks, felt the squeeze of lower atmospheric oxygen concentration in my lungs, and wished for more time to meet a native Sherpa. All of this activity happens only three miles from my home, dressed in gym shorts with an iPod blasting, in the comfort of my local fitness center. Sir Edmund Percival Hillary, a professional mountaineer and explorer from Auckland, New Zealand, is well-known as the first climber to reach the summit of Mount Everest. He died in 2008 at the age of 88, and is often quoted as saying: "It is not the mountain we conquer but ourselves."<sup>1</sup>

I found a wonderful definition of "virtual": having the power of acting or of invisible efficacy without the agency of the material or sensible part; potential; energizing.<sup>2</sup> Why have I created such an ambitious virtual journey? What stirred this quest to climb the ten tallest mountains? There were many reasons. Most importantly, a dear friend and her husband guide international high altitude treks and climbing expeditions. Their commitment to follow a passion for outdoor adventures is outstanding and inspiring. Unable to attend their real-life voyage, I decided to set a workout goal that would keep me motivated and fuel my desire to find adventure.

#### **Virtual Goals**

Most goals are virtually aimed at achieving a new state of being. The making of a Big Audacious Goal (BAG) is driven by passion, the desire to achieve, and a quest to create meaningful future impact. The goal can be accomplished and has a clear finish line, but will require bold effort and good fate. Generally, the result of achieving a BAG is immeasurable. The effects of the accomplishment are widespread and transformational, like ripples on water.

ASPAN embarked on a challenging BAG; its brazen goal is to be recognized by the healthcare community as the leading association for perianesthesia nursing education, practice, standards and research.<sup>3</sup> This goal, to be the premier resource for perianesthesia nurses, sets a direction for the progression of ASPAN's three to five-year strategic plans. Goal achievement requires: creative planning; increased grassroots and membership activity; renewed commitment; and contributions from beyond the elected leadership.

#### **When Virtual Becomes Real**

Every strategic direction for an organization requires mini-goals or smaller strategies that cumulatively reach the main target. Mini-strategies are also known as SMART goals.<sup>4</sup> A SMART goal is like a milestone. As these stepping stones to the bigger, more global goal are climbed, the process of transformation begins. SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely.<sup>4</sup>

To understand this concept, imagine that your goal is to work in a healthy, safe perianesthesia environment. While not an impossible goal, it is a bit vague. What does a healthy, safe workplace look

like? To achieve this goal, consider mini-goals that support the BAG. Solicit two or three unit members to review the literature to identify best practices related to healthy and safe work environments and report the findings at the next staff meeting. This mini-goal meets all of the SMART criteria: it is precise, clear, manageable, realistic, and has a defined time frame. Another mini-goal might be to provide incentives for every perianesthesia department clinical staff nurse to become certified in perianesthesia nursing as the testing eligibility criteria are met.

### **The Membership Mini-Goal**

ASPAN's core purpose is to advance the unique specialty of perianesthesia nursing. There is no other nursing organization focusing 100% on perianesthesia practice. As such, ASPAN is committed to providing one voice for diverse perianesthesia care settings and those comprising invasive and/or specialty procedures. The Member-Get-A-Member campaign is one strategy for keeping ASPAN strong. All nurses practicing in preadmission testing centers, preanesthesia care, postanesthesia care, ambulatory surgery centers and specialty procedure units are eligible for ASPAN membership. Current ASPAN membership is close to 13,500. Imagine if each member brought in a new member this year? That's double the voices, double the resources and double the power!

"It is not the mountain we conquer but ourselves."  
~ Sir Edmund Hillary

ASPAN's three primary missions are rooted in knowledge and include education, clinical practice and research. Combined, these missions provide exceptional educational opportunities, shared clinical expertise for practice support and grounded standards, and the tools for scientific and evidence based nursing research. Encourage your colleagues currently engaged in perianesthesia practice to join ASPAN. Membership in the national organization offers resources and networking that improve the ability to respond to constant and challenging demands of a transforming healthcare environment.

### **What's Your BAG?**

Harold V. Melchert said: "Live your life each day as you would climb a mountain. An occasional glance toward the summit keeps the goal in mind, but many beautiful scenes are to be observed from each new vantage point."<sup>5</sup> What are your personal and professional goals? What inspires you? Do you seek to discover true passion? Where do you see yourself in five years? What is the secret to balance in your life?

There are two basic steps to attaining dreams. The first is to identify your BAG, be it virtual or real. The second is to identify the smaller steps to help you reach your goal. Membership in ASPAN is a critical step toward making the organization the leading resource for the full scope of perianesthesia nursing practices. And your personal ASPAN membership is a critical step for helping you meet those professional goals. Our patients, practice, and profession need YOU to help spread the perianesthesia roots of knowledge and nourish the seeds of transformation.

### **REFERENCES**

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