



# ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

## Message from the President

### Igniting Professionalism Through Mentoring

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**ASPAN President 2014-2015**

Mentoring has been around for over 3000 years. With its origins in Greek mythology, Mentor was a loyal friend and advisor to the King of Ithaca, Odysseus. While the king was away fighting the Trojan War, Mentor helped raise the king's son, Telemachus, serving as teacher, coach, counselor and protector. Telemachus and Mentor built a relationship based on affection and trust.<sup>1</sup>

As the nursing population continues to age, it is imperative that we mentor and develop our younger peers into the profession of perianesthesia nursing. Let your legacy be the knowledge you share with a new graduate or new nurse to perianesthesia nursing. ASPAN has had many innovative leaders who have provided their vision to the Society, creating the premier organization that exists today. Their contributions have been remarkable and important! Replacing them could have been a daunting task. However, being true professionals, they have mentored replacements along the way so that there continues to be a seamless transition of new leaders into ASPAN.

Mentoring is defined as a more experienced individual assisting a less experienced individual.<sup>2</sup> How simple that seems. Those of us who have been in perianesthesia nursing for a while jump at the opportunity to take students when in the department or precept a new nurse. We are also present when a peer is going through a challenge with a difficult patient and offer reassurance that they are doing a great job. For many of us, this is like breathing. We possess the characteristics intrinsically necessary for a successful mentor: empathy, patience, flexibility and intuition.<sup>2</sup> In my own perianesthesia department, I have a room full of excellent mentors willing to share their knowledge and experience. Not only does this create a welcoming environment for students and new nurses, but it creates a stronger team of professionals that care and support each other.

Successful mentoring is very important to nurse retention. Developing a trusting, collegial relationship with your new members of the perianesthesia team will foster a positive work environment. It solidifies their feelings of inclusion while creating a desire to remain part of the team. An engaged team is a strong team!

Nursing is a dynamic profession, and, as perianesthesia professionals, we are obligated to review our practice, seek evidence to support it and then implement those changes into our perianesthesia practice. This can be an invigorating process. Encouragement for peers to attend educational seminars provides the opportunity for that information to be brought back to the department and shared, igniting in others a desire to seek continuing education. Motivating colleagues to challenge themselves to take the certification exam can be infectious. Generally, if one decides to begin his/her journey toward CPAN or CAPA, another follows.

#### REFERENCES

1. Origins of Mentoring. Available at: <http://www.mentorcoach.com/coaching/origins.html>. Accessed June 20, 2014.
2. Garret J. Is mentoring the new black? Training Journal. 2014;2:66-69.