



ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

Message from the President

Delivering Excellence Through Caring: The Power of Gratitude

November/December 2022

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*Use your voice for kindness, your ears for compassion, your hands for charity, your mind for truth, and your heart for love.*¹ ~ Anonymous

Fall holidays are upon us, evident with everything pumpkin spice and decorations. The shortened days and cooler weather lures us back into our cozy homes. Surely, it is not time to hibernate! It is a privilege for me to personally celebrate a variety of my Canadian and American traditions. Each celebration offers a moment to pause, thoughtfully scan the past, present, and future. Take a few minutes to ponder the year to date. Acknowledge one challenge, to gain lessons from the meaningful experience. Then direct your thoughts to the positive and momentous bright spots. This simple assessment is a directional compass for potential growth or a full transformation with unlimited possibilities.

Gratitude Throughout Culture

The sentiment of gratitude has permeated a variety of cultures, religions, and traditions as an exceptional moral virtue to instill and exchange with others as a world-wide practice. For over a thousand years, cultures have integrated gratitude as a moral virtue and as extensively described by diverse secular and religious leaders, philosophers, and historians.² Exhibiting higher gratitude is noticeable when emotions or actions are focused on individuals being helpers.² Clinical inquiry can even measure gratitude through validated questionnaires scales and tests.² Those choosing to adopt practices of gratitude routinely have improved mental and physical health outcomes, enhanced satisfaction, happiness, and exchange appreciation gestures more often.²

There are many advantages of adopting gratitude. It has been proven with science repeatedly.^{2,3} It really does not take a gigantic leap of faith to embrace acts, feelings, thoughts, and gestures of thankfulness. A little appreciation can go a long way for the receiver and the giver. Plus, it is something that can be freely exchanged or given away.

ASPAN Shares Its Gratitude

ASPAN wants to share immense gratitude and extend appreciation to each society member. Caring is a catalyst, generating supportive bridges for better partnerships. Amplifying intentions of gratitude builds positive and caring heartfelt emotions for oneself and others. Collaboratively, we deliver compassionate care to patients daily, lead teams, drive clinical changes in our diverse settings, phases, and environments across the nation. Your calling to serve others takes courage and inner strength, especially during a lengthy pandemic.

ASPAN recognizes your time and energies on the frontline, in leadership, providing education, or advancing clinical inquiry within our unique specialty of perianesthesia nursing. Thank you, for all you do!

Prioritize with Optimism

We understand some days can be harder than others. Set the tone for prioritizing the importance of self-care and integrating moments of thoughtful pauses to catch your breath with optimism. We often want to be hopeful, but the better aim is for optimism. Hope is a vague wish or want. Optimism holds a higher level of expectation for positive outcomes and good things. Transforming one's mindset for optimism can

be influenced by practicing habits of gratitude and caring behaviors. Gratitude even has the power to influence your profession and environment.

Caring through gratitude has powerfully influenced my own nursing career. I have thoughtfully reflected on my work-life bright spots by looking in the rearview mirror. I have been blessed with a kindhearted family, mentors, preceptors, colleagues, and friends. Without this circle of community my career would not have flourished. Collaborating with engaged professionals and committed volunteers has overflowed to many aspects of my life and added great value.

Practice intentions of setting aside negativity, as it merely zaps precious energy. It is an impossible task to simultaneously be grateful and complain. Choose to actively look for the good things and minimize intrusive negative thoughts. Open your eyes, mind, and heart to build an inviting foundation to foster a world of gratitude blossoming into a beautiful bouquet for the beholder. We all need more good things to keep us inspired. Consider gratitude and caring as an ongoing challenge to each of us. Create an empathetic and psychological safer environment of genuine kindness. These accessible caring actions are simple antidotes to improve outcomes from burnout for nurses and caregivers.

Practice Gratitude at the End of the Day

At the end of each day, I mindfully transition my thinking to reflect upon my day's events, scanning for moments that positively shine brightly. My evening goal is to extract a minimum of three to five notable experiences. The best parts of my evening ritual include the anticipation and joyful reward of inner peace through a habit of gratitude. This exercise helps me to be grounded in good things, and grow my attitude of gratitude, transitioning me from the day's events with an intentional contemplation seeking only the good flashbacks. A set timer on my free gratitude app notifies me to remember to push the pause button, then thoughtfully reflect on positivity. Pausing for a moment allows one to survey the joyful daily interactions and calms the noisy mind chatter. Today, I am grateful for _____. Then, transcribe thoughts into a gratitude journal. I adore the nightly reminders and it reinforces my proactive positive self-talk and sets the tone for optimism.

Practice Gratitude at Work

A strategy to deepen gratefulness, team mindfulness, and resilience in the work environment is to ponder specific good things provided by self-reflecting team members as a conversation starter. Listening to others highlight their observed positive recalls is extremely important in fostering a culture of gratitude through social change. Experiment describing three good things (3GTs) at the beginning of huddles, meetings, and gatherings. Just listening to others talk about 3GTs boomerangs favorable outcomes for everyone's added benefit. Begin by asking team members to contemplate three different categories of gratitude: 1. person, 2. team, and 3. team member. Then request three members to share one of their 3GTs for the group to actively listen to the responses of listed gratifying - emotions, delights, things, learned experiences, discoveries, connections, successes, mini-victories, and achievements. The science confirms joy is increased with 3GTs activities.⁴

The Power of Forgiveness

Another consideration for adopting positive attitudes and enhancing environments includes the power of psychological forgiveness. The ability "to let go" of perceived negative feelings regardless of deserved forgiveness has substantial benefits.^{5,6} A few advantages of heartfelt forgiveness by letting go of any accumulated emotions improves relationships, decreases stress, and reduces uncivil behaviors from feelings of irritation.^{5,6} It may not be an easy task to forgive, but the benefits outweigh the risks of ongoing anger and resentment. Dr. Rick Hanson is known for his quote, "the mind is like Velcro for negative experiences, and Teflon for positive ones."^{7,8} It takes dedication to break the brain bias for negativity.

The Benefits of Practicing Gratitude

Mindfully rewinding the day and scanning the bright spots enables a higher level of personal gratitude and appreciation. The research supports an overwhelming health benefit when one has a heart full of gratitude. Be encouraged to adopt gratitude tools as a simple gesture and free strategy to expand your life's resilience. The power of gratitude will provide benefits and return on personal, team investment, and wholeheartedly add to overall well-being. Remain thankful for all of life's experiences. Gratitude is a modest action to build a culture of kindness in your home, workplace, and community.

At times, we are reminded we only need to look inside ourselves and then extend our generosity to others as we continue in our busy worlds. Daily hardwired caring extends to our welfare through our personal and professional lives. The heart of caring is a simple task. The act of caring is demonstrated through gestures of smiles, kindness, giving and sharing.

ASPAN's - "why" (aka core purpose) is clear - inspire caring actions to empower and advance the unique specialty of perianesthesia nursing. Be daring to care in the perianesthesia gratitude movement. The measures of positivity we demonstrate by opening our hearts to others, giving time, energy, or sharing a specific thank you, are easily repaid in dividends. This is truly a quick fix to replenish one's habitude of gratitude. Compassionate caring and collaborating with family, friends, components, communities, charities, and ASPAN can be amplified through your deliberate gratitude words, actions, and volunteerism too!

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