



ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

Message from the President

Detecting Greatness: The Proof is in Our Practice

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With the birth of ASPAN in 1980, recovery room nurses took the first step toward forging an identity as a unique and separate specialty. Through ASPAN, perianesthesia nurses defined a purpose and a mission. ASPAN earned national and international recognition for contributions to perianesthesia standards, education, and research. As an organization, we achieved unity with leadership development and a sense of national community. Over the years, ASPAN's contributions to perianesthesia nursing have multiplied. Our publications provide perianesthesia nurses around the globe with current references for bedside care as well as access to perianesthesia research and evidence-based practice. Ambitious projects move us ever closer to our vision: to be recognized as the leading organization for evidence-based perianesthesia practice.

Continued Evolution

Perianesthesia nursing continues to evolve. After 36 years, ASPAN is not the same organization as the one founded in 1980, nor should it be. Technology and innovation have advanced not only our bedside practice, but our organizational presence. More telecommunication options allow our teams to work together no matter the geographic challenges. Webinars and On Demand modules connect members to education without the need for costly and time-consuming travel. Literature searches conducted by the ASPAN librarian facilitate research, evidence based practice, clinical standards, and practice recommendations. The ASPAN teleconference line and GoToMeeting option afford every ASPAN team and every component a reliable communication experience and a fiscally responsible option to some face-to-face meetings.

Historical Expectations and Perspectives

Member expectations and needs have changed through the years. For the past year, *Energizing Generations: The Race to Distinction!* was the heart of President Katrina Bickerstaff's message. We examined the impact of four generations co-existing in the workplace. We learned that generational perspectives on work-life balance are filtered by vastly different life experiences and values. Preferences for communication and continuing education often differ. Leadership styles may clash.

However, our basic principles of passion, respect, integrity, diversity and excellence provide a common bond and a means to forge new and stronger relationships. We examined the varied ways each generation contributes to the perianesthesia specialty. We recognized a critical need to attract dynamic leaders who will replace those retiring from the workforce and from leadership roles in our component organizations. We concluded that ASPAN's experienced leaders must find new ways to relate to, mentor and support their replacements.

Going from Good to Great

As we embark on a new ASPAN year, let's shift gears and pay tribute to ASPAN's coming of age. Our 2018 National Conference theme, *Detecting Greatness: The Proof is in Our Practice*, embraces ASPAN's readiness to move from "good to great."¹

In his 2001 book, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...and Others Don't*, James Collins describes the mindset separating good from great organizations. He says, "Greatness is not a function of circumstance. Greatness...is largely a matter of conscious choice...and discipline."¹ Greatness

begins with personal introspection. What traits, qualities, and talents do you possess which enable you to succeed as a leader? What characteristics do the members of your team bring to the table? What can you share with someone taking the initial steps on the leadership journey? ASPAN's committees and strategic work teams continually raise the bar and challenge us to do more as individuals and as an organization. Do we consciously choose to contribute the best of ourselves to every undertaking? Do we have the discipline necessary to overcome personal and organizational challenges?

ASPAN Past President Terry Clifford related the natural wonder of the aspen tree's impact on its surroundings when she introduced *Roots of Knowledge, Seeds of Transformation* as her theme for 2009-2010.² She compared ASPAN's growth and evolution to the life cycle of the aspen tree which is known for its ability to regenerate and adapt following adversity. As ASPAN grows and spreads its influence throughout the world, we must adapt to the changing needs of the members and the organization. Complacency is incompatible with greatness. We must not take our members or our organization for granted. We must nurture creativity and innovation. If greatness is our destiny, we must build upon what we do better than any other organization--conduct original perianesthesia research, publish evidence-based perianesthesia practice recommendations and present the latest in perianesthesia education. These are the components of ASPAN's DNA. This is our road from "good to great."

Challenge Yourself

As a manager, I challenged staff to do something that scared them, just a little bit, every day. I encourage all of you, both novice and experienced leaders, to believe in yourselves, to be daring, creative and innovative in problem-solving, to challenge yourselves and your teams, and to take a risk in the limits you set for personal and professional development. Don't be the boulder blocking your own path. I sometimes say that I stumbled into perianesthesia nursing. I did "land" in a recovery room quite by accident and that simple decision shaped my future and my life's work.

Perhaps Robert Frost expressed it best in his poem, *The Road Not Taken*, which concludes:

"Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, and I —
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference."³

The time spent travelling the perianesthesia road with ASPAN can be your best professional experience. It is never too late to push at the boundaries or limitations we allow others to put around us. Commit to doing something which scares you just a little bit. Detect the greatness in yourself. You will find proof in your own practice.

REFERENCES

1. Collins J. *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...and Others Don't*. New York, NY: Harper Business/Harper Collins Publishers; 2001.
2. Clifford T. Roots of Knowledge, Seeds of Transformation: The Ecology of Perianesthesia Practice. *Breathline*. 2009;29:3.
3. Frost R. The road not taken. In: *Mountain Interval*. New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company; 1920; Bartleby.com, 1999. Available at: www.bartleby.com/119/. Accessed February 28, 2017.