



# ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

## Message from the President

### Attitude: An Opportunity to Build Your Own Personal Cathedral

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"You can choose to live your life with the joy of the front row or solemnness of the third. The choice is yours." I found this on my Facebook page the other morning without an author identified. It was accompanied by a vintage photo of a rollercoaster filled with prim and proper ladies in their dresses, hats and gloves. In the front row sat two mature (code word for older) women, dresses flying in the air, hands holding onto hats and joyful smiles on ecstatic faces. In the third row, two stoic women sat with hands clasped in their laps, and bored looks on their faces, both looking off to the side, as opposed to the direction the coaster was rapidly hurling and twisting.

The women sitting in these rows, although only a photo, certainly portray palpable and markedly different attitudes and reactions to the exact same experience. Looking at the photo, one couldn't help but ponder if it was choice that created the seating arrangement for these women, or was it chance? Would it have made a difference if the riders in the rows had traded places, or would the reactions have been exactly the same regardless of where they sat? So much is dependent upon the attitude we have toward all the situations we face every day. I suspect both the joy and boredom experienced by the four roller coaster riders would have been the same regardless of their seating arrangements. Personally, I am delighted the jubilant riders were seated in the front seat of that roller coaster photo, or I suspect the reaction I had to it, as well as others whom have seen it, would have been completely different. I seriously doubt I would even remember it, or that it would have had a positive impact on me personally if the stoic, seemingly bored riders were photographed in the front seat. The feeling of joy would certainly not have been palpable.

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The choice is yours."

Do you find this to be true in your daily life also? We all respond better when we are addressed with respect as opposed to being treated with disrespect. We respond better to friendly, happy, positive people than to those who are angry, spiteful, or rude. Is attitude a choice that individuals willingly and knowingly make, or are attitudes merely chance? Perhaps attitudes are both, depending upon the circumstances at the time. But there is no denying that attitude towards daily events, whether it is riding a roller coaster with abandon, or going through the daily routines and responsibilities of life and work, impacts the foundation of how each of us will be viewed by others. Attitude ultimately constructs the framework for the way our day, week, year, LIFE will unfold.

Consider the following individuals and the impact their attitudes had on their particular situation at the time. All of them had failures and set-backs, but we don't hear about those setbacks. We remember these people for their success. Take a moment and reflect on the achievement which surely was related to their attitude.

- The Vice President of Columbia Pictures told this actor that he was never going to make it in the business. The actor? – Harrison Ford
- His first book was rejected by 12 publishing houses and 16 agents. – John Grisham
- They were turned down by a recording company saying, "We don't like their sound and guitar music is on the way out." – The Beatles

- He was told by his father that he would amount to nothing and be a disgrace to himself and his family. – Charles Darwin
- He was told by a music teacher, “as a composer, he is hopeless.” – Beethoven
- He was told that “he couldn’t sing at all.” – Enrico Caruso
- He was cut from the high school basketball team, went home, locked himself in his room and cried. – Michael Jordan
- He wasn’t able to speak until he was almost four years old, and his teachers said he would “never amount to much.” – Albert Einstein
- He was fired from a newspaper because he “lacked imagination and had no original ideas.” – Walt Disney<sup>1</sup>

In other words, our problem is not our problem. Our problem is our ATTITUDE about our problem.<sup>2</sup> Whether it is riding in a roller coaster with child-like glee, or laughing in the faces of our detractors, attitude makes a difference.

The classic movie, *My Fair Lady*, is based on George Bernard Shaw’s play *Pygmalion*. In the movie, the character of Eliza Doolittle is transformed from a poor flower girl into a sophisticated and well-spoken woman. Shaw said, “I can’t control what life did to me, but I can control how I react. Therein lies the difference.”<sup>2</sup>

Attitudes can build you up, and give you strength, energy and enthusiasm. They can allow you to rise and achieve towering opportunities. But they can also tear you down. Many times the choice is yours. Choose to be the roller coaster riders in the front row seats. Seize the day, and do not limit your joys or those joys you have an opportunity to pass on to others. Your attitude will contribute to how smoothly and quickly you build your own personal life cathedral. Choose joyful and solidly constructed attitudes, so that what you build will be admired and sought after by others.

#### References

1. Inspirational Stories. Available at: <http://voices.yahoo.com/inspirational-stories-famous-failures-their-2132113.html>. Accessed August 31, 2012.
2. Timberlake L. Imagination. In: *First Thing Every Morning*. Naperville, IL: Simple Truths, LLC; 2009: 27-28.