



ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

Message from the President

Perianesthesia Nursing: A Job or Your Professional Destiny?

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Is there a difference between working at a job and experiencing your professional destiny? Most definitely! Early in my nursing career, I often found myself asking the question, "What do I want to do when I grow up?" I began my professional journey 33 years ago in the emergency department. I went to work each day, clocking in and out, while earning a paycheck every two weeks. After leaving the hospital, I never thought about work until my next shift.

As a graduate nurse, my energies were focused on transitioning from clinical to real-life nursing. I enjoyed my work, but wasn't vested in it yet. Although I knew there was an organization for emergency room nurses, money was tight and generally served to pay the rent, car payments and other living expenses. I didn't join the Emergency Nurses Association. In fact, since none of my co-workers were members of the organization, there was no impetus for me to join. Emergency nursing certification wasn't available until 1980 and, by that time, I was contemplating a move to critical care nursing in a different city.

The next four years were spent working the night shift in a busy community hospital intensive care unit. Some unit colleagues were active members of the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses, so I joined the organization to take advantage of reduced rates for educational programs needed to fill gaps in my critical care knowledge. Even though I was a member of the national association, I never joined the local chapter or attended any local meetings. It was not a priority in my life.

Discovering Destiny

Twenty-five years ago this summer, I had an opportunity to transfer to a day/evening position in the Post Anesthesia Recovery Room. A few short weeks into my orientation, I felt I had found my niche in nursing. I enjoyed my work, attended seminars and read all I could about recovering anesthetized patients. I joined our professional nursing organization and soon sat for the CPAN® exam. In 1992, the Illinois Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses' fall conference was held in St. Louis, Missouri. I volunteered to participate on the planning committee, and I was hooked. The rest, as they say, is history.

A job is something one does in exchange for a salary to provide the necessary means to support a family or a particular way of living. A job is something one is expected to do. For me, perianesthesia nursing became more than a job. Instead, it marked the beginning of a journey to discover my professional destiny. Management consultant and Professional Destiny author, Valerie Hausladen, defines Professional Destiny® as: "finding your purpose in life and practicing it every day in your profession."¹ This involves being engaged in a vocation to which one is suited and through which a positive impact is made. In her book, Hausladen describes several indicators that you may recognize when on the right path to your destiny:¹

- You love what you are doing and things come naturally to you
- You become committed to the job you are doing, and you make a contribution
- Because you are making a difference, you find fulfillment in your work
- You seek out opportunities to become more involved in your career beyond the workplace

Giving Gives Back

Finding purpose in your profession may start with volunteering. Perhaps you can become involved in your workplace by joining committees or councils that advocate for patients, nurses, or standards of care. Share knowledge and expertise with nurses outside of the perianesthesia unit by giving presentations such as surgical patient preoperative preparation, pain management, or specific invasive procedures. The next logical step is to get involved outside of your facility. Attend ASPAN component district or regional meetings. Participate on component committees at the local or state level, or run for a position on the governing board. As you give of your time and talent, new channels for personal growth will unfold. Stay open to new opportunities and, in doing so, enjoy the camaraderie of nurses who share a similar fervor for perianesthesia nursing!

Humans are programmed to learn and grow, but there may be an unwillingness or fear to move from the familiar to the unknown. The minute you stop learning and growing, you become stagnant, or 'stuck in a rut'. Keep improving your skills and experiences, take advantage of new possibilities to move and contribute to a greater purpose and cause. When you acknowledge that you are learning, growing, accomplishing something and making a difference, you will achieve fulfillment in your career.

Our success is based on what we invest and put into our profession. Hausladen wrote, "We do not need to save the world, but simply make a difference to someone or something."¹ That someone could be your patient or colleague. That something might be your unit or your professional nursing organization. When following your professional destiny, you are empowered. So, stretch yourself and be flexible. This newfound position may not always be comfortable, but, as spiritual author Neale Donald Walsch is credited with saying, "Life begins at the end of your comfort zone."² It's time for your professional destiny in life to begin!

REFERENCES

1. Hausladen V. *Professional Destiny - Discover the Career You Were Born For*. USA: CreateSpace; 2009, 4-5, 141.
2. Walsch ND. *Communion with God*. New York: Berkley Trade Publishing; 2002, 1-240.