



ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

Message from the President

Leading with Knowledge – Serving with Heart: Never Underestimate the Power of Giving

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We started this journey with each other approximately 10 months ago. We spoke about creating a vision for our component members. Sometimes, the road has been bumpy. But, I have asked all of you to take the time to see where we could go if we all just listened more deeply, showed some additional empathy, and thought about what could help us heal our various communities. On the day I addressed you as a new ASPAN president, I asked you to dream big with me, and you have. Part of my journey will always be anchored to this amazing year. But, the journey will also move forward as I continue to work alongside others to encourage and support the next generation of nurse leaders.

Conceptualization and Foresight

These thoughts of mine tie into the servant leadership ideas of conceptualization and foresight. Robert Greenleaf noted: “A mark of a leader, an attribute that puts him [or her] in a position to show the way for others, is that he [or she] is better than most at pointing the direction... the leader can articulate [the vision] for any who are unsure.”¹ I believe we can all learn this concept and practice it to hone our skill.

I see conceptualization as that idea of dreaming great dreams. We are so very fortunate to have an amazing National Office staff that sees to our everyday needs and required realities. Their dedication to this organization allows each president to think beyond the necessities of the everyday, freeing each of us to create a vision of what possibilities await this organization. This freedom places each of us in a space where we can transform that vision, and, conceptualize how we each see ASPAN and how we can contribute to its organizational growth.²

Servant leaders also use foresight to understand lessons from the past, the realities of the present and the likely consequence of a decision in the future.²

Moving Forward

Each year passes in the blink of an eye, and I would be remiss if I did not thank all of you for the grace and hospitality that was extended to me everywhere I went and spoke about our remarkable organization. I encourage everyone to continue working toward this dream of supporting our component members, sharing our vision of excellence through education, research and clinical practice standards and guidelines.

I still hold on to my truth that we can only be nurse leaders if we continue to grow in knowledge of our practice and how we work with patients. But, I will also always believe that this role of leader must be grounded in the art of caring for everyone, as part of the heart of our practice.

The Power of Caring

We each have a story to tell that influences who we are and how we act. My nursing career was shaped tremendously by one small of stature, quiet but intense, nursing instructor named Marian. Marian was the one who led us through the process of learning how to speak with patients, but, more importantly, how to listen to them. As nursing students, we struggled trying to gain the information we needed to complete an assignment on therapeutic conversations with patients, who didn't seem to understand we were required

to have them speak to us. Marian could step into the same space and elicit stories from any patient in the room. It was magic. This didn't seem right. How could she do it?

One day, bewildered and exasperated, Marian shared her secret of the art of the therapeutic conversation. She simply stated: "Never underestimate the power of caring." How could this be so seemingly simple? We all cared, kind of. This truth went far beyond what most of us could really grasp at that pre-novice formation of a nurse. But it became a lifeline for me, and I reflected on it every day.

I watched as Marian entered a room, sat at eye level with a patient, took his hand and asked: "How are you today?" She sat in silence to allow a space for that person to decide how he would respond to this inquiry, to measure if it was genuine. Marian was genuine. She showed she cared in everything she did. Not realizing then, but understanding it now, I had the chance to see my first servant leader, Marian, in action. I owe so much to those six words she shared day after day. We all touch multiple lives everyday. So now, I will also ask you to never underestimate the power of caring.

Christie Watson, a registered nurse and author of the book "The Language of Kindness: A Nurse's Story," recently wrote about nursing and stated:

"Nurses are tough: they have to be. But they understand life in a deeper way. Perhaps because nursing gives access to more varied disciplines than any other job that I can think of. It incorporates science, humanities, art, physics, math, psychology, advocacy, law, politics, chemistry, philosophy, anthropology, pathophysiology, biology, ethics. Nursing is not one thing, that's why it's hard to get at. It is everything. But also nursing becomes a kind of faith in itself. A love and understanding of the human condition, and of what will matter to all of us, in the end."³

Continue to Serve with Heart

This year, we have explored many of the possibilities within us to become better leaders, and servant leadership is just one road. I have tried to care for you and our organization. I know I have had many people caring for me, everywhere I ventured. If we all continue to spread our educated care, wrapped in kindness and concern for our patients and each other, we will always have that potential to lead with knowledge and serve with heart.

Thank you.

REFERENCES

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