



ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

Message from the President

Change and Transformations: The Right People at the Right Time

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Every perianesthesia nurse comes into this specialty for a variety of reasons. During a fateful summer of mine, my critical care experiences had me and my colleagues caring for airmen from Dover Air Force Base with multi-trauma and significant head injuries. Caring for military heroes was a privilege. The work was exhausting, exciting, tedious, horrible and glorious all at the same time. I loved the demands and heart of this type of nursing. I relished the unpredictability of these patients' outcomes, not unlike living on the edge some nights.

Still, I found myself driving home and wondering if I was making a difference, especially after a death or life altering injury. I knew I was a 'crackerjack' ICU nurse, and knew the value of my work and dedication, but those demands were taking a toll on my personal life and perspective. I found myself dismissing any illness less critical, even with loved ones, as trivial or irrelevant. For the first time, I found myself at a crossroads – and realized I needed a change to be able to put everything back into perspective.

Change and Transformation

I didn't realize at the time that this part of my nursing career was preparing me for the next level and perspective, one all the more challenging and rewarding! That same summer I was offered a relief position in the PACU. For me, after working in the critical care unit, the post anesthesia care unit felt like coming home. But changing from a part-time RN in the ICU to a per diem in the PACU meant no benefits, an unpredictable schedule, a significant change in income and a potential loss of stability in my work life. Transformation was occurring. According to Kipfer,¹ **transformation** is defined as "to change completely, reconstruct, remodel, translate, renew, and metamorphose." By the same token, **change** is defined as "make or become different, adjust, alter, evolve, modify, recondition, revolutionize and transfigure."²

My transformation was a decision that introduced me to a life-long love of perianesthesia practice, involvement in my professional organization, and boundless opportunities. I gained new colleagues, lifelong friends and a window of opportunity I never dreamed of, a transformational change to my own development and understanding of my professional organization. This year, as your president, I have learned about the value of transformation and change. Each is a necessary part of our own growth and development, and equally so to the evolving needs of our organization and members. Change takes initiative, tenacity, risk, creativity and questioning popular thinking.³ Maxwell asserts that 'stretching' our thoughts will provide the right formula to achieve a real impact and legacy.

The Right People at the Right Time

"The Right Thought plus the Right People in the Right Environment at the Right Time for the Right Reason will equal the Right Result."⁴ As a perianesthesia nurse since 1987, I have seen the results of the right people in 24 ASPAN presidents and their leadership teams, members, and colleagues, utilizing this same process and effort to assure that ASPAN remains viable and successful. The visions and goals of these leaders have been and continue to be pioneering since the inception of this society.

Further, these same leaders who envisioned that change and transformation were needed, created an ongoing journey, customizing it to provide the outcomes that will continue to define us as a society. General George Patton said, "Successful generals make plans to fit circumstances, but do not try to create circumstance to fit plans."⁵ ASPAN's Strategic Plan must be an ever changing, dynamic and living

entity, critical to ASPAN's success, giving direction and credibility to going in the right direction. It cannot look the way it did 10 years ago, nor will it look the same today as it will as we move towards tomorrow.

What the Future Holds

As ASPAN focuses on the future, its compelling vision will become all the more defined. As a society, ASPAN must never lose sight of its sacred trust to members to be the premier provider of education, research and clinical practice. I eagerly anticipate ASPAN's 32nd president, Sue Carter, BSN, RN, CPAN, CAPA, continuing ASPAN's vision. She will assure that ASPAN and its leadership collaborate to 'stretch our thoughts' to maintain membership advocacy and focus. Like so many before her, I look forward to her continuing the legacy of making a difference in the practice for our patients.

Linda Staten said:

"As you journey through life, choose your destination wisely, but don't hurry there. You will arrive soon enough. Wander the back roads, the forgotten paths, the unknown ways, as you keep your dreams in your heart as the light that guides you. Seek out new voices, strange sights, and bold ideas. Such are the riches of the soul."⁶

My very warmest and best regards to all of you as you continue your own journey in life and practice. Thanks sincerely for being a part of mine.

REFERENCES

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