



ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

Message from the President

A Difference of Participation: A Matter of Choice

January/February 2002

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ASPAN is rich in leadership talent that is confirmed by commitment, participation, and a willingness to serve at so many levels in our society. As a member, you make a difference each time you contribute to the nursing profession by serving on a local committee, leading a team or process in your clinical setting, or serving as an officer for a community project or professional society. Many of you have hidden talents as 'silent' leaders, yet forget to place value on your contributions or abilities. How I know this and feel the need to dedicate an editorial to this subject is simply put - YOU keep asking me how to become a 'leader' in our society. You continue to imply you are not capable of or have little talent compared to the talent you see in others. You are responsible for the urgency of this message, so listen up, learn from your questions, and realize leadership is as simple as choosing to participate.

A trait of human nature is to compare one's self to the accomplishments of others and forget to honor and recognize the daily activities that also place value on our own personal efforts. The other person always has more talent, creativity, and passion that seem to escape our own individual grasp. By looking outward and easily seeing great characteristics in others, we fail to observe the reflection in the mirror and notice a person who is also contributing and achieving in a very substantial manner. Sound familiar? It should as you bestow these accolades on others with great enthusiasm and tremendous pride. You can readily say the words, so there is every reason to affirm the same qualities in yourself and feel the personal pride and accomplishment in whatever the deed or circumstance surrounding your achievements. "I am proud of MY efforts" is an affirmation worthy of starting each day.

Leaders, mentors, and coaches deal with issues, both great and small, every day. How you deal with an issue is usually the key to personal growth and development as you learn the lesson, teach the lesson, or ignore the lesson. An example is as simple as to choose to be or not to be positive or negative; proactive versus reactive; professional versus unprofessional. Each choice has a consequence resulting in an outcome that translates into a piece of our character and explains who we are as individuals and as leaders. Our strengths and our weaknesses are experienced daily, but it is up to us to learn from our experiences then model and shape our personal patterns into the type of individual we choose to become. The real challenge is in the 'choice' and the 'desire' to add value, integrity, honor, accountability, trust, and the list could go on with many descriptors, to a process or a personal goal.

To enjoy a place of recognized leadership is just a matter of participating in a project. Almost a year ago a member of our society expressed an interest as to what needed to be the next step in becoming an active ASPAN leader and eventually a board member, but she failed to see achievements already accomplished as advancing personal leadership skills. After a bit of conversation it was clear this member had been part of component committees for years, yet was always hesitant to become the chair. There was great comfort in taking projects within the boundaries of routine job-related work or component responsibilities and that role needed to be advanced to the next step. In fact, this member had led many teams to achieve successful outcomes, but did not see the ease with which the same effort translated beyond the job into her professional society opportunities. This proved to be a real 'aha' moment and the hook of affirmation and achievement easily translated into a willingness to move beyond the boundaries of routine and into our society committee appointment. A year later this same person is more confident, more eager, and sees value and personal growth in participation and now wants to serve in an even greater capacity. What a win-win for everyone! Someone that was already naturally motivated found new opportunity by

asking simple questions and 'choosing' to act on advice and direction in order to reach a personal goal. It is really that simple for anyone willing to serve and seek out the many resources available as an ASPAN member Co-Sponsored Seminars to ASPAN Leadership. Each step a bit more challenging and rewarding and each step supported by a willing mentor or coach who does nothing more than hold a mirror up and say, "Tell me who you see?"

Who do you know that would benefit from your mentoring and coaching? Who needs to hear the affirming words of 'You did a great job', or 'Great idea' or 'You have the talent to lead this project' or simply 'Thank you, you made the difference for this team'? If you are waiting for the invitation to participate then I humbly extend the invitation. I will be your resource, coach, mentor, or connect you with other ASPAN leaders that will take the time to help you reach your leadership potential. Connections are as easy as an email from one person to another. There is no reason for you to feel mediocre to anyone else's accomplishments. There is every reason for you to honor the desire to participate within your soul and enjoy the reward of professional society or component participation. Many people are responsible for who I am today and I respect and cherish every piece of advice or critique that was offered for my personal growth. Participation in component and ASPAN activities has proved to be a great choice for me.

Start with a dream and develop a plan. Maybe your goal is simply to begin as a committee member and test your options. You don't have to accept the top role the first time out of the box. Don't let 'analysis paralysis' get in the way of your participation. Be decisive and look for opportunities to serve in ways that suit your style and personality. Do you like detail or creative thinking? Clinical or non-clinical activities? Are you an aspiring politician or challenged by creating a strategic vision? Check the ASPAN web page at www.aspan.org for the variety of activities and see the list of many exciting committees. Invest in yourself. Email the committee leaders for more information. Participation does not happen by accident; it happens by choice. ASPAN needs your participation if we are going to impact the future and address the issues facing our perianesthesia specialty. Choose to Make a Difference. Choose to participate. Choose for YOU and choose for nursing!