



ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

Message from the President

A Difference of Basic Needs: Safety, Love, Values, Achievement, Spirit

November/December 2001

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ASPAN President 2001-2002

Without warning, our lives took on new significance September 11, 2001. As I write this editorial, it is still early in the days following the terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, DC. Like most of you I have missed little coverage and struggle with every personal story of love, courage, hope, agony, and despair. By the time this is read months will have passed. The dawn's early light reveals a visible absence in the New York City skyline as the World Trade Center no longer stands and the Pentagon in Washington, DC, shows signs of permanent damage. Weeks, months, and even years may pass before we begin to exercise the basic needs we once enjoyed as part of our daily routines. In the meantime, what can we do for each other that will impart balance and direction and will allow our souls to be eased of the pain and sorrow that lingers? Our future depends on the actions we choose today. I am reminded of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs that are categorized as physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization. Our basic needs have been challenged, and we must begin at the very bottom of the scale, as individuals and a nation, on our journey to recovery.

Physiological needs involve the basics such as food, water, shelter, rest, and protection from the elements. Self preservation is the core of this stage. If basic needs are threatened, our sense of individual existence is also threatened. We live in an affluent society and many of us do not have a sense of the impact of this need in our daily lives. Many were thrust into this mode in September and, most certainly, still feel the impact today. We have all reached out through community assistance to show our spirit of support for each other as one nation. As I watch the stories unfold I see people helping people by providing food, shelter, medical care, rest, and emotional support. As a community and a country we are restoring the balance of a basic physiological need as a foundation to our survival.

Although it has been weeks since the initial attack, we cannot diminish our personal need to continue to take time to rest, adjust our work schedules to allow time for exercise, meditation, and reflection, and to nourish our soul. Eat healthy foods and nourish our bodies, as we will need to be physically strong. Share your feelings and be willing to listen to the feelings of others. It is times like this that people need to talk and be validated. Spend time with family and friends, enjoy the celebrations of life, and cherish the bonds of friendship. These moments cannot be lost in this tragedy and are basic to our physiological recovery. These measures are simple, yet vital, and we will have great difficulty achieving the remaining hierarchy needs without placing importance and focus on these basic personal functions.

Safety is the next level of achievement and is understood as physical, emotional, and financial. Our basic environment and national safety was threatened in the terrorists' attacks. Never has our nation witnessed such disaster and tragedy on United States soil. Our nation essentially shut down in a matter of hours to protect us from further harm. Safety was first to be implemented as it is critical to create a sense of safety amidst the chaos. Most of us will never forget how vulnerable we all felt as we watched this tragedy unfold. We needed to know the attacks were going to end. Our safety as a nation was greatly challenged. With this attack came loss of life, jobs, financial security, future hopes and dreams, and emotional stability. Many will not recover from this stage as most will struggle for years to come. Our efforts to overcome this stage are in the form of caring about each other by offering safe harbor to our neighbors in need, jobs to those that have none, and financial resources to those who have lost the most. This is not a time for discrimination against one another, but the ideal time for collaboration with one another. It is a

time to honor our human spirit and create sanctuaries of safety where individuals will feel nurtured and out of harm and will thrive. We must think about tomorrow and realize there is much work to accomplish today.

The third level in Maslow's Hierarchy shows we must love each other. We have certainly witnessed an outpouring of love as we have seen volunteers helping strangers, healthcare providers unselfishly placing themselves in danger to help an injured victim, police and fire teams entering unsafe environments to offer a human hand to the injured and bring them to safety-- many giving their own lives in the urgency of the moment. We heard stories of pure love as unsuspecting victims tried desperately to reach family and friends for final moments of shared good-byes. The strength of that love is very powerful and will sustain us through our most grievous moments. At times like this, it is important to hold hands, share hugs, and say how blessed we are to be able to support each other during this time of extreme crisis. To know we are all part of a team or community that cares and feels the pain we are each experiencing will send a message of love to everyone. To honor our religious and spiritual beliefs, we recognize that our diversity will now be part of our universality, and a sense of genuine love of humankind is necessary. We need each other if we are going to place value and significance on our future.

The fourth level of this pyramid has to do with esteem. This level is not easy to achieve and carries such characteristics as independence, status, recognition, reputation, knowledge, appreciation, and respect. Our unique qualities contribute to our individual self-esteem and self-confidence. As we reach this level we are better able to recognize that our contribution and participation in the processes of recovery play a meaningful and purposeful role. Our willingness to serve and make a difference depends on us reaching this level of commitment. Our nation's leaders must function at this level. We cannot begin to help or solve the issues of this crisis unless we have the confidence and a belief in our values and our purpose as one very powerful nation. Our national esteem depends on each of us working in our communities to create a sense of harmony and constructive dialogue. It means facing tough issues with a resolve that benefits humankind, forcing us to the top of Maslow's pyramid.

For the fifth level, the moment of self-actualization, we must have faith and trust in our leaders to succeed in preventing similar tragedies from occurring again. It will require courage, responsibility, integrity, patience, discipline, and honor, which are the very principles on which this country was founded. Terrorists will not diminish our importance or dilute our ability to recover from what will surely be the worst tragedy of the 21st century. Our resolve is now found in our spirit and the desire to carry on the traditions that reveal our values and set us apart from the rest of the world. There is little doubt we will prevail with an even stronger spirit; our flag will once again fly in full breeze, at great heights with tremendous pride. Our spirit will lift us to move forward as a united force and challenge us to make a difference in the next phase of our journey as the strong, proud, and powerful nation that our world needs. God Speed - may we find peace in our hearts and resolve in our soul so that tomorrow will bring triumph and victory over terrorism.