



ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

Message from the President

Reach Out...Dare to be Different...Follow Your Dreams

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ASPAN President 2002-2003

Thoreau once said, "If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours."

I remember my first mentor in perianesthesia nursing, Kim Litwack, PhD, RN, FAAN, CFNP, CPAN, and how I admired her. At that time I was trying to find out as much as I could about post anesthesia nursing in preparation for taking the certification exam. Every opportunity I had I would attend a post anesthesia nursing seminar. I wanted to learn and absorb everything I possibly could about the specialty. While attending these seminars, during the breaks and after the seminar, I would ask questions about our practice and clinical situations and sought advice about advanced education. I was reaching out to Dr. Litwack and other educators for information, and they were always very open, responsive, and willing to provide all the information available. These experiences had significant influence on my growth in the specialty and, eventually, my commitment to the national organization.

The time came to take my CPAN exam and I decided to sit for it during the ASPAN National Conference in Cincinnati. I felt privileged to be attending my first ASPAN National Conference, and I remember my excitement. My most cherished memory was attending the President's Reception. I was awe struck to be meeting Debby Niehaus, BSN, RN, CPAN, the then President of ASPAN. She took the time to speak with me, and we even had a picture taken. She was so kind and friendly. I reached out to Debby Niehaus and she responded with her openness and receptiveness. I was so impressed and excited to be a part of it all.

I made the next step by joining my state component, the New Jersey Society of Post Anesthesia Nurses (now known as the New Jersey / Bermuda Perianesthesia Nurses Association). I completed the NJSPAN (now NJBPANA) application and carefully selected committees I wanted to join. I remember being astonished when I received a call at work, and it was the NJBPANA Vice President asking if I wanted to help them with their fall conference. I was delighted. I would be responsible for receiving all the registrations for the conference and for assisting with registration on the day of the conference. That was my big start on the component level. I reached out by filling out the information on the application and the component reached out to me by calling me and inviting me to participate.

A few years later, I remember one evening receiving a call from Jan Odom, MS, RN, CPAN, FAAN, ASPAN Immediate Past President, asking me if I would consider running for a national position on the Nominating Committee for ASPAN. I seized the opportunity, as this would be my first elected position in ASPAN. Jan Odom reached out to me to get involved, and I reached out to her and ASPAN by accepting the challenge.

With these experiences in mind, I encourage each and every one of you to reach out to others and encourage their involvement. Go that extra step to encourage your friends and colleagues to become more involved. Be conscious of how you respond to others who reach out to you. Be open, welcoming, and encouraging. I often think, what if Dr. Litwack had not been receptive and willing to answer my questions? Maybe I would not have continued to pursue a career in perianesthesia nursing. What if Debby Niehaus had not been as friendly and open when I met her at the President's Reception? Maybe I would have not been so impressed with ASPAN. Maybe I would not have attended the next national conference. What if my component did not reach out to me to become involved? Would I ever have

gotten involved? What if Jan Odom did not reach out to me to accept the challenge? Would I have ever run for an ASPAN elected office? I suspect that things would have been very different today.

Many of you are thinking that this does not apply to you. Perhaps you're thinking you are not like all of those people who get involved in the component or national association. Perhaps you are also thinking that an advanced degree, fifty years experience, and conforming to norms are pre-requisites. Well, each of us is different and unique. I know from talking with you and working side by side with many of you, that you have much to offer! Every person has different tastes, ideas, and talents that are not the "norm." That is just fine. The blending of all these different tastes, ideas, and talents can produce amazing outcomes! For example, I enjoy Harley Davidson motorcycles and heavy metal music such as the rock groups Cinderella and KRISIS 13. I remember when I was a perianesthesia nurse manager and some of my staff would say, "I can't believe you like that kind of music." I would just chuckle and respond, "Always have – always will." Each of you has an individual spirit inside of you that makes you special. That uniqueness contributes to the whole – ASPAN – and strengthens it. Just because we are in a particular role does not mean that we are all exactly alike. So I encourage each of you to evaluate your interests and strengths and get involved. Above all, "be yourself" and dare to be different!

I want to leave you with thoughts from an unknown author "Champion the right to be yourself..... Dare to be different.... Live your own life and follow your dreams...for in the end, if we live truly, we will truly live." It was my dream to become ASPAN President, and I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to follow my dream. I challenge each and every one of you to Reach Out... Dare to be Different... and Follow Your Dreams!