

Message from the President

Perianesthesia Nurses Together: The Importance of Connection, Power of Community!

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One of my favorite memories as a child was watching the movie *The Wizard of Oz*. We didn't have instant access to movies at that time, so we had to wait for it, which led to even more excitement. We made snacks and piled on the couch together and watched Dorothy, Toto, Scarecrow, Tin Man, and the Cowardly Lion. They were an interesting and diverse band of characters who became a team. Together, they found their way from Kansas and the Land of Oz, then on to the Emerald City.

Dorothy was your typical young woman, independent, wise beyond her years, a visionary in the face of uncertainty. Despite her young age, she was a leader, a mentor. It doesn't take long for Dorothy to recognize her friends all had needs. It was through kindness, sincerity, and fortitude that this group turned into a team. They found that together they possessed intelligence, passion, and courage. And, along the way, she helped them discover their gifts and walked with them the whole way.

Inspired by the dehumanized American factory worker from the 1890s, the author of *The Wizard of Oz* introduces us to the Tin Man. Once a healthy strong person, he lost his heart, and he lost his love for his labors due to the soulless condition of modern mass manufacturing. Sound familiar?

The Scarecrow felt inadequate, was filled with self-doubt, and thought he needed a brain. It's likely he had been victim to incivility, or bullying. All too often we have heard stories of nurses facing intimidation and ridicule that demoralizes them. Sound familiar?

The Cowardly Lion thought his fear made him inadequate. Traditionally, the lion is remembered as the bravest animal in the kingdom. Despite his presentations of fear, the Cowardly Lion performs acts of bravery during the movie. Sound familiar?

We can draw from the themes of *The Wizard of Oz* to highlight how we, as perianesthesia nurses and members of ASPAN, are on a journey together. This is the image of a perianesthesia nurse and ASPAN member the world needs to see. We work in a complex profession, and it takes a team, not just one superstar. We all have gifts and abilities, but it calls for us working together to accomplish our goals. I think Dorothy's best qualities were that she was humble and courageous, she sought after wisdom, and she asked a lot of questions.

Encouraging each other and working together as a team is inspiring. It is through inspiration and relationships we will reach the emerging generation. We will not reach them by acting like we have it all together or know it all. Maybe some of us are trying hard to be something we're not. Maybe we're emulating styles of leadership that are outdated. Maybe the best thing that could happen to us would be to have someone pull back the curtain and reveal we aren't superheroes, but regular men and women who are on a journey and just want to reach a destination with our team, our friends.

Over the past two years, it has been evident we need each other. Together, we continue to overcome adversity and prove our resilience. As the year has progressed, we have accomplished many tremendous things. We've talked about some very important topics like ownership, kindness, connectedness, authenticity, passion, and togetherness. I want to express my deepest appreciation to the scores of ASPAN members who have served on the Board, Committees, Strategic Work Teams, and Specialty Practice Groups to advance our unique specialty. I also want to recognize the ASPAN National Office as I have witnessed the incredible attitude, strength, and courage they have demonstrated throughout my service on the Board of Directors.

Perianesthesia Nurses Together – The Importance of Connection, Power of Community! It has been an honor to serve as president of the American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses. I am a bedside nurse, caring for patients in all phases, of all ages, and I recognized an opportunity and valued the importance of being connected to other perianesthesia nurses. That is why I joined ASPAN, that is why I got involved, that is why I serve ASPAN. My journey would not have happened, had my friend and nurse manager not invited me to come along. I encourage you to do the same, be nice, teach others, share your expertise, time, and energy.

In closing, Mother Teresa is quoted as saying, "I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot, together we can do great things."¹ Let's face it, we are united by many things; among them are music, laughter, sports, social media, and the list goes on and on. We are united in a unique way based on our calling, our mission, our passion, and our day-to-day activities. ASPAN is made up of many diverse people, yet we are one body, one specialty all working together to provide safe care and an enjoyable experience for patients. Engaging with each other and building human connection are the ingredients that create our community. Together, we grow as individuals and as an organization. It is absolutely a joy to be part of something bigger than myself.

REFERENCE

1. Teresa M. Goodreads news and interviews. Accessed February 5, 2022. <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/63168-i-can-do-things-you-cannot-you-can-do-things>

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