



**THINGS I
LEARNED FROM
MY LIFE AS AN
ICP**

Pat Piaskowski

I AM MANY THINGS

- A wife
- A mother
- A grandmother
- A sister
- A daughter
- A friend
- and
- At work I am also an infection control professional (ICP)



THE WORK SIDE OF MY LIFE

- Balance in work and personal work is critical

Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.

Theodore Roosevelt ¹

¹http://www.manifestyourpotential.com/work/make_sense_of_work/find_great_work_you_love/great_work_inspiring_quotes.htm Accessed may 9, 2013



CHOICES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Where does the road to becoming an ICP begin?
- The road begins in different ways for different people...some are anointed or some are appointed or some apply!
- For me it was the tap on the shoulder over 25 years ago as a nurse at an outbreak meeting in a nursing home
- *Lesson #1 “In the words of Yogi Berra..when you get to a fork in the road...take it”*



WHAT HAVE I SIGNED UP FOR?

- What do I know about infection control and in the midst of a Norovirus outbreak that felled about half the residents and as many staff in a 150 bed long term care facility?

- *Lesson #2 : Always think twice before saying yes! Which is a lesson I have yet to learn....Learn to say “no” to the good so that you can say “yes” to the best*



ICP TRAINING

- I signed up for my first official ICP training course at Miller Dwan Hospital in Duluth MN
- The instructor was Gayle Gilmore (long time APIC member and CHICA presenter)
- Distance from Thunder Bay to Duluth (3.5 hours)
- Or drive to Toronto for 16.5 hours

- ***Lesson #3 : training as ICP is life long but starts with that initial program or course....so many more opportunities!***
- ***Distances can be challenging and so can costs! Kudos to CHICA and others for online or e-courses!***



GETTING INVOLVED

- Joined our local CHICA group which was comprised of public health, acute care and mental health....I was the LTC newbie
- I was in awe of and learned from my local mentors
- ***Lesson #4 : Involvement in CHICA expands horizons and provides so many opportunities for those who seek this out—try it you will like it!***



TAKE A CHANCE!

- Submitted a poster to the first CHICA poster contest and surprisingly won!
- My reward was to attend my first CHICA conference in Kingston in 1990!
- Met so many new and interesting ICPs
- ***Lessons #5 : never be afraid to take a chance at being involved! You never know what can come of it!***
 - *sometimes this means ignoring lesson #2 of learning to say NO!*



ACROSS THE CONTINUUM

- After 12 years in IPAC in LTC (among many other hats) left to take ICP role at Thunder Bay Regional Hospital
- Two sites with 350 beds and one ICP!
- Let the outbreaks commence...VRE, MRSA, *C. difficile*, aspergillus, etc etc.
- ***Lesson #6 A change can be as good as a break. Changing roles creates new opportunities and challenges. Do it!***



THE WIDE WORLD OF IPAC

- In 1997 I had the pleasure of being CHICA president at same time as Candy Friedman of APIC
- International Infection Control Council (I2C2) was born in Quebec city and took root in New Orleans (*laissez les bons temps roule*)
- Along with APIC and ICNA (ICS) we had the amazing opportunity to create international toolkits!
- ***Lesson #7 To accomplish great things we must not only act but also dream not only plan, but also believe (from a card from Gerry Hansen)***



MORE CHAPTERS IN MY LIFE AS AN ICP

- As SARS was brewing in the Far East and soon to arrive in Ontario, I gratefully accepted the editor in chief position for CJIC. In addition to being Scientific chair for the CHICA Canada Conference in Thunder Bay in 2003!
- *Lesson #8 you never know how strong you are until being strong is the only choice you have!*
- *Once again ignoring lesson #2*



CLOSING CHAPTERS...WELL ALMOST!

- In next couple of years I will retire from my job as Regional Network Coordinator but not from being an ICP!
- What a joy and exciting ride this has been in my different roles as an ICP
- My membership in CHICA has opened doors, windows and opportunities which I will forever cherish and value!
- *And Lastly: Lesson #9: "Learn from the past, look to the future, but live in the present."*
- *Stay tuned for Lesson #10!*



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- To my husband Joe and family for supporting me on this journey
- To the many mentors I have had in IPAC. There are many and some are in Heaven (miss you Moira!)
- To Gerry Hansen for being an incredible resource and support. (the wind beneath my wings and the sane voice of reason)
- To my CHICA \I2C2 project colleagues over the years : Candy Friedman, Nancy Alfieri, Sandra Callery, Isabelle Langman
- To my PHO RICN and IPAC colleagues...what an amazing group! I am truly blessed



AND LASTLY

- As in life as doors close other doors open. So it is with work.
- I am so humbled and grateful for this honorary membership and will always cherish the years I have spent as a CHICA member!
- Thank you all for being part of my life and helping me learn along the way.

