

From the President

Building AAPS into a Household Name

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By the time this article is printed, we will have elected the next President of the United States. Or will the next President be selected for us?

Do not feel uncomfortable that I pose such a question. The “eternal vigilance” necessary for maintaining a republic demands that an engaged public always treat those in power with unremitting skepticism—and includes asking “conspiratorial” questions. We must do so for our own protection.

Sadly, the long track record of human history clearly shows that the burning lust of some to rule over the many has wrought untold carnage—destroying entire nations and bringing about the deaths of tens of millions of innocents. The power elite of every era always display a predictable behavior pattern of doing anything to keep that power. They will lie, confuse, obfuscate, and scapegoat. With the awesome power and prestige of the office as top prize, the one who is foolish is the one who is afraid to ask: Will the next President be selected for us? The question only demands accountability of those in charge. It is they who must constantly be made to feel uncomfortable, not you, and not I.

In the past, Americans were not afraid of asking these sorts of questions because Americans maintained a healthy skepticism of those in power. Because of that, we won our independence from a despotic British king and founded a republic based upon individual liberty that lasted several generations. We are now dangerously close to losing the last vestiges of that republic to the latest scourge of power-lusting elites. What happened? The reasons are too numerous and depressing to explore in this article, but the wonderful news is that we have the talent and the means to turn this situation around—quickly and peacefully—if we resolve to be as clever, motivated, and fearless as the farmers, smiths, shopkeepers, and physicians who gathered in taverns and town halls in the 1770s.

Fear Not, and Question Boldly

We must first have the courage to ask questions without fear. We need to speak up. We must encourage others to speak up, as your teacher encouraged you to do in grade school: There’s no such thing as a “dumb” question. Keep those who wish to constantly lord over us very uncomfortable with all of our questions. Don’t be afraid to ask them anything.

Thomas Jefferson put it this way: “Question with boldness even the existence of a God; because, if there be one, he must more approve of the homage of reason, than that of blind-folded fear.”

Edmund Burke, a British Member of Parliament in the 1770s who was quite sympathetic to the American push for independence, also wrote: “All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.”

Silence allows evil to triumph. Silence helps those who lust for power to carry out unspeakable evil. Every totalitarian wants you silent. This is the whole point behind “political correctness,” and the “hate speech” witch-hunts carried out by self-described “social-justice warriors” who see so-called “sexists,” “racists,” “Uncle Toms,” “homophobes,” and “Islamophobes” everywhere. The endgame is to keep people alienated, silent, and powerless. Don’t play the game. Fear not and question boldly.

Think of some of the most heroic people you know. Were they afraid to ask “uncomfortable” questions? Was George Washington silent? Was Gandhi silent? Was Rosa Parks silent? Was Phyllis Schlafly silent? No!

The Message of Personal Liberty

The public senses that something has gone rotten with our power elite. Most Americans feel that our best interests have been sold out by government officials for personal gain or ulterior political motives. Ours is a time of great danger—when destructive totalitarian ideologies can find fertile ground in a public fearful and desperate for answers. But this is also a time of great opportunity. The best solutions to societal ills are found in the simple message of personal liberty. Personal liberty brings about the greatest prosperity and the greatest happiness to the greatest number of people. Personal liberty means you are empowered to make your own decisions. You are free to live your life so long as you do not harm others. Personal liberty is the true way to human peace. We must proclaim this message to the public just as boldly as we question our leaders. Each of us has our own unique way of making the case. Make it confidently.

The Role of AAPS

AAPS must courageously continue to question boldly and proclaim the solution of personal liberty.

AAPS is in a unique position to ask bold questions and to also proclaim to the masses a unique message of personal liberty. We are experts on medicine. Every day we experience the real damage caused by the crushing weight of mounting government regulations. We are distracted away from our profession and see our patients needlessly harmed or even die as a result. We must step up our efforts to educate them. We must tell them what we see and how it hurts them. We must offer free-market alternatives without apology. Patients depend upon us to help them maintain good health. We mustn’t be afraid to tell them that government interference in the medical marketplace is just as much a real threat to their well-being as are cigarette smoking, drug abuse, or sedentary

lifestyles. With this message we must bring our patients in as AAPS associate members.

Many of our non-AAPS physician colleagues mistakenly believe that the American Medical Association is the main voice for physician interests, when the rest of us know full well that the AMA sold those interests out long ago for a worthless "seat" at the political table. As a consequence, we see these same fellow physicians now feeling confused, powerless, burned out, and silent. We must redouble our efforts to bring them into AAPS by reminding them that the patient-physician relationship is sacrosanct and has been seriously violated by interlopers. Teach them that our organization is fully dedicated to the very reason why they became physicians in the first place: *Omnia pro aegroto*—"All for the patient!"

AAPS has the potential to be much bigger and far more influential. AAPS should be rightly proud of all accomplishments to date. We are an organization with only a few thousand members and yet we often find ourselves fighting "David vs Goliath" battles and winning. Imagine, however, if we were 10 times or 100 times or even 1,000 times larger in terms of membership and efforts. This can be achieved by each of us by simply reaching out and recruiting new members and encouraging those among us with media talents to help spread the virtues of free-market medicine and emphasize the sanctity of the patient-physician relationship. This simple message can be spread in a variety of ways: from public blogs, Internet message boards, "viral" videos, and social media memes, to the use of reception-room materials such as copied articles, bulletin board postings, AAPS position papers, basket booklets, etc. Use whatever method that works for you. Use your unique talents to get the word out. The point is to do it without apology. Remember, all that evil needs to triumph is for you to do nothing.

The Example of the National Rifle Association

Whether you agree or disagree with the aims of the National Rifle Association, the organization is unquestionably effective. Why is that? It has a simple, singular, clear message and has built up a membership of more than five million. It is tightly focused, extremely vocal and unapologetic, and unafraid to question boldly or expose those in power who move to infringe upon the 2nd Amendment. It uses rapid-response communication networking involving all forms of media from "snail mail" mass mailings and monthly magazines to e-mail alerts and Twitter feeds. It maintains a strong lobbying presence in all levels of government: local, state, and national. It can mobilize many NRA members at a moment's notice to bury an elected official with thousands of letters, e-mails, and phone calls. Nothing gets the attention of a wavering member of Congress more than to suddenly receive 20,000 warnings from voters in his district not to vote a certain way. The NRA is also very good at making certain all its members know how candidates stand on 2nd Amendment issues by publicizing and disseminating a "grade card" before every election. That way, the NRA helps to elect solid 2nd Amendment-supporting legislators in the first place.

In the 1960s, the government laid the groundwork for crushing free-market medicine (Medicare) and for ending the

private ownership of guns (Gun Control Act of 1968). What has happened since? Let's be honest. The NRA has proven far more successful in winning its battles these past 50 years than we have as free-market-oriented physicians. We can learn a lot by studying, with humility, the recruitment and messaging methods of the NRA.

The Untapped Power of the Internet and Social Media

AAPS has been very successful at what we do, but we need much more help in our fight. We need to grow the membership. We need to become more creative. We need to use all methods available to broadcast our basic message and to expand our membership and influence. I am no expert on websites, or viral videos, Facebook memes, Twitter trends and the like, but I have surfed around enough to know that there are some extremely talented people out there doing some amazing things on the Internet. If you are an AAPS member with talents in these areas, you are a godsend to our organization. Be encouraged to create. Get out the word about us.

For the rest of us who are still struggling to find a way around a computer keyboard, let's redouble our efforts on doing what we do best. Offer gift memberships or invite a colleague to an AAPS meeting. For those who don't want to join formally, encourage them to continue receiving our e-mails and literature. Make our materials available to your patients, in a variety of ways. Keep it in your waiting room or link to it on your website. In the course of natural conversation, tell people about AAPS and of our mission. Show them how easy it is to join, donate, or to simply sign up for email updates. Let them know they are not alone.

By staying laser-focused on promoting the sanctity of the patient-physician relationship and the virtues of free-market medicine the way the NRA promotes the virtues of the 2nd Amendment, we will attract a much larger audience hungry for our message and inspired by our outspokenness. By educating our colleagues and our patients about our organization and our mission, we can build an enormous membership base. By inviting our members to use their unique talents to spread our message we can reach tens of millions and become the "NRA" of free market medicine. AAPS can be a household name.

As current members, we all know that for many years AAPS has been a lone, steadfast, and loyal warrior battling on behalf of the patient and the physician. Yet, countless others have never heard of our organization, or see us as only a dim light on the horizon of a dark and stormy sea. We must guide the lost and hopeless in with the safety of our message. Bringing them home also gives us strength. Bringing them home will help us win much bigger battles in the near future.

Evil can only triumph in the darkness of silence. We make our light bigger by expanding our message through every means available. We extinguish the darkness and drive evil away.

Never be afraid to question boldly, and to speak truth to power.

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