



**“KEY TO EXCELLENCE”**

Good evening, I want to thank all of you for attending. A special thank you to the Montgomery Area Chapter, 2004-2005 Alabama Division Board, Redstone Arsenal Chapter, and Gordon, Beth, and John David.

In IAAP, we have words to live by – Education, Networking, Mentoring, Leadership, Professionalism, and Excellence. This year I have chosen Excellence (maybe it starts with an E) as my word to live by.

My theme this year is “Key to Excellence.” I have been known in the past to think up some pretty unusual themes and titles to presentations. I hope that this will become clearer in a very short while.

From the beginning, we need to realize that excellence is not perfection, but essentially a desire to be strong in what we do. Everyone has a different definition of excellence. Excellence is an attitude and a choice I make.

The Key to Excellence consists of three areas. They are Personal Growth, Professional Growth, and Chapter/IAAP Growth.

My personal growth begins with a positive outlook or attitude and keeping a sense of humor. A great thing about both your and my attitudes is that it is totally under our control.

I can’t think of another way to say this but another form of my personal growth is when my “heart is full” – near to bursting out of my chest. Several years ago, Beth (my daughter) asked Gordon and me to help with Relay for Life for the American Cancer Society, we help with the luminaries. I am a regular platelet donor at the American Red Cross. When I attended my first Relay for Life event and saw the survivors take that first lap, my heart was full to bursting to think that my platelets might have helped one of them. I don’t need all my platelets, I can make more. There are never enough pheresis donors.

In Girl Scouts, living by the promise and law has helped in my personal growth. When you say the promise – “On my honor, I will try: to serve God, and my country, to help

people at all times, and to live by the Girl Scout Law.” This reinforces your beliefs in honor, God, and country. Who better to honor than God and your country or to help others by living the law – being respectful, resourceful, friendly, considerate and responsible.

It is important to strive to enjoy life on a daily basis. May people ask if there is a secret to happiness? Life is complex and affected by many factors. However, if there is a key factor to happiness it may be to enjoy each day as much as possible.

I was searching the internet and came across this information – humor and laughing can be a significant part of happiness. Laughing seems to be another of those basic human instincts. Although some have far more of a sense of humor than others, it is there in all of us. We all have certain things that make us laugh. **Actually, one great thing about humor is that you can recall something that made you laugh and you can often laugh about it again at any given time.** From experience, it drives others crazy – ask my husband. The human race has one really effective weapon and that is laughter.

Professional Growth – we hear the same thing from almost every speaker – further your career by keeping up-to-date on the latest trends.

Ways to do this is sit for the CPS/CAP. If you don't have one already, get your college degree, be ever alert for promotions, and always network. Education increases your career options, raises your general knowledge, and provides a lifelong sense of accomplishment. Look for new adventures. Always explore the possibilities. Try a new hobby. Learn something new each day.

Chapter growth – The Alabama Division is having a great year in obtaining members. Maria has really outdone herself with her enthusiasm, willingness to help, and her eagerness to attend chapter functions. Thank you Maria for your dedication to IAAP. Talk about going that extra mile – Whoa!

I used to think that Headquarters was pushing for larger numbers because that meant more money. But I came to realize that the more members, the less work you have to do. We increase chapter membership – we increase our potential for more chapter officers, committee chairs, and a large increase in our resources. In my Girl Scout trainings, I tell new leaders to ask the parents what their jobs, hobbies, or interests are. If you are not a crafty person – find a parent that is crafty. If you want to earn an astrology patch, find an astrologer or someone that works for NASA. The same can be seen in our chapter membership – some people actually like to do fund raising – Yuck.

Don't let the new members be idle, put them on a committee. A committee member one year – committee chair the next.

Everybody wins in chapter growth. President might earn a watch, more members-more resources. Members have said to me – I can't be President – of course you can – you just need to elect good officers and get good committee members.

I have to put a plug in for my chapter, Redstone Arsenal. Sometimes they don't always volunteer but when you need them – they are there. At seminar time, the majority of the chapter is working on some aspect of getting the job done.

If you will open your bag, you will find there are three keys attached to a larger key. The keys represent personal growth, professional growth, and chapter growth. They are all connected to the larger key. The larger key is **you**. You make the decision to excel personally, professionally, and with your chapter. Look how many doors you can open when the keys are combined and work together.

I am looking forward to this coming year, to working with each of you, and to the exciting times we have ahead of us. I cannot do it alone, but working together we can open many doors using our “Key to Excellence.”

A saying from our International President-Elect, Kay Enlow CPS,

This is the beginning of a new term.  
You have earned this term to move your chapter forward.  
You can waste it, or use it for good!  
What you do this term is important, because you are exchanging a year of your life for it.  
When next term comes, this term will be gone forever;  
In its place will be something that you have left behind  
Let it be something good.

**“God grant me the serenity to accept the people I cannot change, the courage to change the “ONE” I can change, and the wisdom to know that it’s me.”**

If this year turns out great – it is thanks to all of you.

Ellen Mahathey CPS  
Alabama Division President 2005-2006