

As the Front Door Closes, the Back Door Opens

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As the Front Door Closes, the Back Door Opens

Elizabeth B. Seislove, MSN, RN, CCRN

How many of you have ever had someone say to you: “For every closed door there is an open window or an open back door”? I know I have been told this and I have said it to my colleagues and friends as well as to myself. When a door closes, it can come with an array of meanings: you may have lost your job, or your job was being redesigned, or you were displaced into another position, or you held a position on a committee and the committee was dissolved. The closing door may have been personal in nature; illness, death, divorce, or separation. In my life I have had many doors close, but I concentrated on the opportunities that were in front of me and found the open window or that opened back door. They say that sometimes doors need to close so we can find the open door, see the opportunity, and be enabled to move into another stage of our career or life.

Both Helen Keller and Alexander Graham Bell spoke on the closing of doors; they both were quoted in saying almost identical statements:

When one door closes another door opens, but we so often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door, that we do not see the ones which open for us. (Alexander Graham Bell)¹

When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one, which has been opened for us. (Helen Keller)¹

As my term comes to an end as the president of the Society of Trauma Nurses (STN), I am not looking at this as a closed door but rather a multitude of open windows and a welcoming open back door. I do not want to do what Helen Keller and Alexander Graham Bell stated about spending too much time on the closed door. So I will embrace the words of Scott Eblin regarding leadership:

“Everything changes. Nothing is permanent and do as much good as you can while you can.”² By taking those words into context, I am focusing on my future opportunities in trauma nursing and within the STN. I am going to keep doing as much good as I can through my new opportunities. Through the back door I will stay actively involved within the STN as immediate past president. I will assist with leadership, be part of the board of directors, be available to lend a hand with the membership, and to keep the mission and vision of STN alive. Who could ask for a better opened back door?

You know the saying “back door friends are the best”? I am an absolute believer in that, and it is evident by being a part of STN. It has been an honor and a privilege to have been a leader in such a premiere organization, and the friendships and professional connections that I have built through the years have made my back door open even wider. I have met some amazing and fantastic people in a long adventure that I may not have had the opportunity to meet had I not been involved in the STN. I have been a part of innovative projects and collaborations that have positively impacted our entire trauma community.

My dreams and goals as president were to keep the vision of STN alive and flourishing so that it will stay the premiere society for trauma nurses. It was important to ensure that we made decisions based upon the need of our membership and our collaborative partnerships. I believe that we, as an organization, have achieved this. As your outgoing president, I want to thank you all for this opportunity and privilege. My words of wisdom to you all are to focus on the future of trauma care for our injured community; do not focus on the closed door, but rather keep your focus on the opportunity that awaits you as you walk out the back door. Thank you.

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