President's Message
September 2021 ADAA Update

By Betty A. Fox A.S., CDA, RDA, FADAA

American Dental Assistants Association

What's In Your Background?

When the pandemic hit in early March 2020, I would venture to say many people had never conducted business via Zoom, much less another type of video conferencing platform. (Although of course ADAA members were more used to videoconferencing, as we have been using these technologies since 2016 for our Annual Session and online learning programs.)

When Zoom meetings seemed to take over in early 2020, there were plenty of people who didn't quite seem to understand how important the background is when your sit in front of your computer's camera. It was certainly revealing to see where people were conducting their virtual meetings. It's one thing to be on a video chat with family and friends. But in a professional meeting, do we really need to see an unmade bed, pile of dirty laundry, or a sink full of dishes? If it's a virtual interview or professional meeting, take a look around the room. What are other people going to see? What's the most photogenic part of your space? Maybe a closet or children's room is the only quite place away from a yappy dog. That's okay — just preview your camera before you connect to video. Be sure to put your best (virtual) foot forward. If you find yourself in a situation where you cannot attend the virtual meeting without an uncluttered background, it is probably best to leave your camera off for the meeting to remain professional.

A messy background is not limited to Zoom calls. Social media can also be a space where backgrounds can be a distraction. A quick look on Facebook will show you that more and more often, people are revealing more about their lives, and you can find out almost anything you want to know about them. Sometimes an off-handed post will follow a person for a long time. Perhaps it was a comment made in anger about a dentist, office manager, or co-worker. Once it's posted and others have seen it, it can't be easily taken back. The poster could potentially lose their job. When they go to look for another dental assisting position, a background check could find the negative post.

Our background — our successes and failures, our triumphs and defeats — reveal a lot about us. Our background has made us who and what we are today. We should take what we have learned from the past and apply it to our lives, working toward avoiding previous mistakes and working toward constant self-improvement. Our future relies upon how willing we let change direct our path.

I've been thinking of change quite a bit as I approach the end of my term as President of ADAA. Many of us are apprehensive of change, and at times I have been as well. But as I reflect on all the new friends I have met and new experiences I enjoyed, I look positively on change as a catalyst for self-growth.

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I hope you are always willing to accept change and learn from the past. As you approach your dental assisting career, I encourage you to take advantage of the continuing education ADAA offers to its members. Reflecting on the past and taking steps for future success will lead you to places higher than you can imagine.

I encourage you to become involved in the leadership of ADAA; perhaps even serve as its president one day? If you are interested in being mentored in this aspect of the association, please reach out to me at bgfoxcda@yahoo.com. I'd love to help you find a place to serve next year and watch you grow in your professional organization. ■