



View From the Pyramids: Perception

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EDITORIAL

Perception is everything, I was once told. Throughout history, perception is viewed from the perspective of the dominant group, whoever that dominant group may be. The perception that the dominant group is providing equity is also a trait seen in the dominant group. A perfect example of this is seen in history books surrounding conflict. A history book in Japan looks very different from a history book in the United States when it comes to the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

Whether it be racial injustice, gender inequality or divisions of class or creed, there is too much “us versus them” happening in the world today. When we see injustices, it makes us all the more irate. We want retribution, fairness, and equity to happen now. Passions run high but often in the absence of reason. We do things without forethought, often to the detriment of those we are trying to protect the most.

In this issue of *The AAO Journal*, a deep-seated issue is finally emerging around National Institutes of Health funding. While we can speculate about the reasons and ultimately get angry about it, the most corrective course of action is to move towards a solution which is equitable to the non-dominant group: us. Dwelling on the inequity has little benefit if not done in the spirit of finding a corrective path. I am hopeful that this issue of the *AAOJ* does more than stir up discontent among the readership, but rather, focuses readers on the solution moving forward.

There was a time when this profession was seen as “other than.” Nettie Bolles, the first female osteopathic physician, was not allowed to practice medicine at the time she graduated, so she focused on hygiene and sanitation while teaching. Globally, 370 million indigenous people have been dispossessed of their lands, making them some of the most disadvantaged people in the world. Battles in third-world countries for religious rights are at the forefront of much of the news, with incarceration simply on the grounds of religion and belief being a global issue. These issues in the news and history represent groups of “others” who were treated with disregard due to belief, gender, or race. The dominant group, authority, religion, or sex, at some point decided what was acceptable in all these cases. These moments in history became crossroads for change. The most productive of these movements focused on the solution, not the problem.

Though legal battles have been fought and won, this profession is still viewed as a minority. It is the collective history that defines us all, and while we can suppose how this history came about, ultimately it is our history moving forward that matters the most.

“ The very ink with which all history is written is merely fluid prejudice.

—Mark Twain¹

We need to be the change agents for the next generation. *How* we do this is just as important as *what* we do. While there is a place for anger, it is not here. The profession needs to find the proverbial “seat at the table.” As osteopathic physicians, we must value academic and scholarly activity in order to find that seat. We must find common ground, but not lose ourselves or our distinctiveness in the process.

What can you do to be that change agent? Become educated in scholarly activity, research, and grants through the [Scholar 7](#) and [Scholar 4](#) series found on the AAO’s website. Have a voice at the table and make it heard through contacting your local and [state organizations](#) and the American Osteopathic Association. Support research through organizations such as the [Foundation for Osteopathic Research and Continuous Education](#). Become a mentor to the next generation of upcoming students. Get involved in the NIH and begin promoting the osteopathic terminology and database that will get us on the scholarly map. Most importantly, *do something* that promotes the profession. This can be our crossroads for change, a key to promoting and securing research for the osteopathic profession for generations to come.

Reference

1. History. Twain quotes website. <http://www.twainquotes.com/History.html>. Accessed May 24, 2018. ■