

Commitment and Dedication

Marvin L. Birnbaum, MD, PhD

It were good, therefore, that men in their innovations would follow the example of time itself, which indeed innovateth greatly, but quietly and by degrees scarce to be perceived.

Francis Bacon
Essays: Of Innovation

Where there is not vision, people perish.

Proverbs, xxix.19

As we prepared the position paper: "Disaster Medical Response Research: A Template in the Utstein Style," a question repeatedly crossed my mind, "Would this document ever have come to be without the help of the Laerdal commitment and dedication to emergency medical services and disaster medicine?" When I paused to contemplate this question, its scope became broader and deeper, and I came to realize what a remarkable role the Laerdal family has played in the evolution of our science.

It all began with the near-drowning of his son, Tore, and Asmund Laerdal's desire to promulgate mechanisms of resuscitation. This event occurred almost simultaneously with the landmark work of Peter Safar in the utility of mouth-to-mouth ventilation. These factors stimulated this wood and plastic toy-maker into the development of a mannequin to teach airway maneuvers and mouth-to-mouth ventilation. When he incorporated into this mannequin, the closed-chest compression methods described by Kouwenhoven, Resusci-Anne was born—a single development that made it possible and practical to train millions of persons in the techniques of cardiopulmonary resuscitation. This one contribution alone changed our approach to sudden, unexpected death and resulted in the saving of innumerable lives. Without the vision that led to this innovation, the resuscitation sciences and citizen CPR could not be where they are today. For this one contribution, humanity's debt is great and Annie is known by millions.

But the contributions from the Laerdals did not stop with Annie. The Laerdal commitment to the resuscitation sciences continued. Annie was followed by the development of an improved and instrumented Annie that made CPR training into an educational experience reinforced by feedback—and we *all* learned. Then came the resuscitation baby, the self-inflating bag-valve-mask, the intubation training mannequin, a monitor-defibrillator, and more and more—and we *all* learned. Laerdal pioneered an industry dedicated

to the preservation of life and well-being—an industry that allowed our sciences to be born and to prosper.

But this has not been a selfish endeavor, for much of the profit from the sale of these innovations has been invested in the support of conferences aimed at improvement of the resuscitation methods (Wolftrap conferences, American Heart Association Consensus Conferences, European Resuscitation Council), in the development and distribution of educational programs, stimulation of neophyte journals such as this one, provision of awards to stimulate quality research in prehospital and disaster medicine, and investment into the Laerdal Foundation for Acute Care. This commitment to fellow human beings did not die with Asmund Laerdal (1981), but has been taken on by son Tore, who is as gracious and as committed to *the cause* as was his father.

It was not by accident that the all-important conference that produced a template for the design and reporting of resuscitation research happened at the 800-year-old Utstein Abbey just outside of Stavanger, Norway.¹⁻⁷ That conference and the several that followed were made possible and were facilitated by the Laerdal Foundation. It is not by accident that this remarkable Abbey was transformed into a secluded place of peace and wonder that provokes thought and harmony. This remarkable facility resulted from the commitment and vision of Tore Laerdal.

It was not by accident that the Laerdal Foundation supported the remarkable vision and efforts of Knut Ole Sundnes to attempt to establish some pattern for the conduct of disaster response research and for its reporting. The structure embodied in using a carefully constructed template for guiding research already had been established for resuscitation research.¹⁻⁷ But it is significant that the template for disaster research presented in this issue could not have been accomplished without the support of Laerdal. The details of the document and the template as it is

published actually evolved at the Utstein Abbey. The environment was perfect and stimulated the thought and camaraderie that were essential in production of consensus on such a difficult topic. But it would not have worked without the orchestration and encouragement of Tore Laerdal. Tore made it easy for us to think and to talk and to reason. He guided us along a path previously used for similar important retreats. And the support of the Laerdal Foundation and the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs made it possible for experts from around the world to come together first in Pittsburgh, then in Geneva, and, of course, in Stavanger.

Pause and reflect for a moment on how the Laerdals have impacted your world. Each of us knows the name, but just think of how much one family has contributed to our evolving science. The vision and concern of this one dedicated family for fellow human beings set a mar-

velous example for each of us. It is dedication to a vision of how the world should be imparted in a quiet, unassuming, and gentle way that characterizes the true giants of humankind. We salute you, the Laerdals, for helping us to get started, for assisting in adding science to our art and for recognizing the art in our science, for making it possible for us to move forward. We thank you for renewing our faith in our fellow human beings.

Golden hours of vision come to us in this present life, when we are at our best, and our faculties work together in harmony.

Charles Fletcher Dole
The Hope of Immortality

Vision is the art of seeing things invisible.

Thomas Swift
Thoughts on Various Subjects

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To Asmund from Peter

*Thoughtful friend from across the sea,
Your body no longer feels pain.
Yet some of it lingers within me, For I'll never see you again.
I'll miss your laugh, your twinkling eyes,
The talks that often we had.
Your soul and body have now found peace.
Forgive me for feeling sad.
For there's anger within and confusion, too,
Why such a kind man must die.
So many with seemingly less value here
Still live, and I can't explain why.
Man's body may lie in a cold, dark grave,
And it seems he is gone.
But the lives Asmund touched in this troubled world
Will see his work carried on.
We are links in chains, some strong, some weak.
What counts is the overall plan,
Just how we lived our life on earth
And treated our fellow man.
For some, death comes as an enemy,
To others a welcome friend.
The love Asmund gave to all he knew
Means his life will never end.*

—Nancy Kirimili, Pittsburgh, 1981
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