



# The Power of One

*Reflections on Intention, APPA 2017,  
and the Emerging Professionals Summit*

*By Sharona Code, MBA, CEFP*

**A**s a facilitator for APPA educational programs and an adjunct professor in a construction management program, “Why APPA?” is a question I hear often in class. Thankfully, I always have an easy answer. Without hesitation, I reply that my favorite thing about APPA are the people who are a part of it. Of course, APPA provides amazing educational offerings, a vast library of research and publications, recognition, certification, and much more that I utilize; but the single APPA resource that has had the greatest impact on my life, both personally and professionally, are its people.

Two valued examples are Chuck and Vicky Scott, who “never met a stranger” and provided me with numerous examples of how to live a wholehearted life—a life of being involved in volunteer work, having a strong work ethic, learning the art of listening, cultivating kindness, and much more. I was excited when Chuck was elected APPA President and knew that he would have a positive impact on the organization.

#### THE POWER OF ONE WORD

During a conversation over dinner one night, Vicky told me about a book someone had given her called *One Word That Will Change Your Life* (written by Jon Gordon, Dan Britton, and Jimmy Page). Vicky, Chuck, and I had a thought-provoking conversation that night about the concept, and Vicky told me she was going to send me a copy of the book so I could read it myself. Within a week, it arrived at my home, along with a very kind note from Vicky. I read it from cover to cover that very night.

Rather than setting annual resolutions, the authors encourage people to select one word to guide each year of their lives. They believe that one word is easier to manage, easier to remember, and easier to stick to than a list of resolutions. Further, it provides guidance in many areas of our lives, rather than just one. Essentially, it is a simple vision or mission statement. The book details a three-step approach to choosing your one word: “Look In, Look Up, and Look Out.”

To “Look In,” the authors suggest that readers dig deep into their hearts and put some thought into choosing their word, thinking about who they want to be and in what direction they want their life to go. Once a person thinks they have their word, they should validate it in some way. The authors call this “Looking Up,” which to them means praying about the word to ensure that it is the correct word for you. If you are not a religious person, there are many other ways

to validate your word, such as meditation, contemplation, or asking a trusted person for input, to name a few. Once you validate your word, then you need to “Look Out,” which means you live by that word, keeping it front and center in your life.

I was really excited by the ideas in *One Word*, and I have since paid Vicky’s gift forward by purchasing it for many other people and sending it to them. One of the people I shared it with was Lindsay Wagner, and I encouraged her to include the “One Word” concept in the Emerging Professionals Summit she was facilitating at the APPA 2017 Annual Meeting.

#### THE POWER OF INTENTION

Just like setting a vision statement or a mission statement for an organization, choosing one word to guide your life for the year is really about intention. It is actively choosing your path in life rather than waiting to see what comes your way and reacting to it. It is knowing what you want and strategically doing the necessary work to move toward it.

#### THE POWER OF ACCOUNTABILITY, AUTHENTICITY, AND VULNERABILITY

A large part of leading an organization with intention or living a life with intent is accountability. By sharing your intentions with others, you immediately gain people who are willing to help you do the necessary work to accomplish your goals, who will cheer you on from the sidelines, and will call you out when you veer off course. Sharing your intent with others, especially if it is personal, takes authenticity and vulnerability. Authenticity is being emotionally honest with yourself and others, and knowing your standards or values. Vulnerability is being willing to communicate your emotions and standards to others, even if you are afraid to do so and regardless of the outcome. In other words, it is being true to yourself with the people around you and being willing to say, “This is who I am, take it or leave it.”

Therefore, in the interest of accountability, authenticity, and vulnerability, I am going to share my one word for 2017 with all of you: “Fearless.”

Interestingly enough, I initially chose the word “fear,” but found that whenever I told anyone my word, I immediately followed with an explanation clarifying that I meant I was going to embrace my fears and do things that scared me. Realizing this led me to contemplate whether it mattered if you picked a word that had a negative connotation or a

# The Power of One

positive one; so I asked a few trusted friends for their opinions on the matter, and we all agreed that having a positive word was critical to success. In fact, one of those friends shared a recorded speech by a running coach named Bobby McGee, who related this concept to athletes.

One of the things he said was to be careful of language because it will seep into your internal dialogue. During his speech, he asked the audience to imagine they were training for a race in the mountains and that their internal dialogue was, “I suck at hills.” Then, he asked them what would happen if they trained harder and one participant said, “I would suck less.” Thus, his point was made: The internal dialogue is still centered on the word “suck.” His advice was to reframe the thought and use different language; maybe saying, “I am good at hills, just not good enough yet.” This speech reminded me of the famous quote by Henry Ford: “Whether you think you can or you think you can’t, you’re right.”

Armed with this newfound belief, I changed my word from “fear” to “fearless,” and instantly it felt right.

With most of 2017 behind us, I will tell you that I have done some unbelievable things in my year of living fearlessly—many of them things I never thought I would ever do. The most important thing I learned is that the more I used my proverbial “fearless muscle,” the easier it became to use it. This process of becoming comfortable with being fearless definitely was not a happy, flower-lined path. There were days I cried, days I cursed, days I tumbled, days I thought about quitting, days I struggled, and days I complained.

Right along with those hard times, though, there were also days I jumped for joy, days I celebrated victories, and days I felt pretty darn proud of myself. Just ask my ski instructor, who probably observed all of those emotions from me every single time we skied together. It just so happens that only good things came from putting myself out there in some wild and crazy ways! I have now skied a black diamond run, told people how I really feel about a situation, asked for things I never would have asked for before, tried every single class offered at my gym at least once, and ran across the Golden Gate Bridge during APPA 2017 in San Francisco.

## THE POWER OF A CHALLENGE

That run happened this way: I happened to be in San Francisco in May 2017 with a colleague (Weston Woodward, the friend who shared the Bobby McGee speech with me). One morning he told me he was going to run across the Golden Gate Bridge and asked if I wanted to go with him. I am not a runner, so I declined his offer. Then, almost immediately, I regretted it. I

had given in to fear, the fear of not being able to run all the way across the bridge (1.7 miles each way) or making a fool of myself next to someone who happens to be an accomplished athlete. Very quickly, I determined that I had to right this wrong. Knowing I would be back in San Francisco for APPA in July, I decided that I would run across the bridge then. I told quite a few people so they would hold me accountable, and even enlisted a few of them to run it with me.

Fast forward to my flight to San Francisco for APPA 2017, where the voice in my head had plenty of time to try to talk me out of running across the bridge. It told me that surely I would get busy during the conference and not find time to get to the bridge, certainly I had not trained enough, and the bridge was not all that close to the hotel in which we were staying. You name the excuse, and it probably went through my mind during that flight. As soon as the plane landed, I texted Weston to tell him I was wavering and hoped to get some words of encouragement from a trusted friend who has always believed in my ability to do anything I can dream up; he did not answer my text.

I had previously made plans with Viron Lynch to share a cab to the hotel, as our flights arrived in San Francisco within five minutes of each other. As we were traveling from the airport to the hotel, I realized it was now or never—if I did not run across the bridge as my first order of business, I would not do it at all. I told Viron that I was going to check in to my room, change my clothes and shoes, and head back out within 10 minutes, and he was free to go with me if he wanted. Thankfully, he agreed. And I fearlessly ran across that bridge, absolutely hating every single second of it. Once we were on the other side, I realized how proud I felt, and to top it all off, my time was a personal best for me.

Later in the week, I was talking to Mary Vosevich about my bridge experience and she said, “That’s great. Now what’s your next fearless action?” Her dedication to pushing people to exceed (to “lift while she climbs,” if I may borrow the phrase) is remarkable. My answer was that I would write an article for *Facilities Manager* magazine about the experience. On to the next fearless challenge.

## THE POWER OF A SMART GROUP OF PEOPLE

I was honored that Lindsay Wagner had asked me to assist her in organizing the Emerging Professionals one-day summit prior to the conference, and happy that we had been able to work the “One Word” concept into our outline for the day. In addition to discussing generational differences and similarities, the “Outward Mindset” philosophy, and diversity and inclusion, we did an exercise where we created One Word for the

facilities management industry. For a portion of the day, the EP group joined the Senior Facilities Officers (SFO) group for some collaborative work.

One of the things we did during this joint session was have the EPs lead each table through the process of coming to consensus on one word for the future of our industry. Some of the words the groups came up with included the following: “collaborate,” “connect,” and “transform.” “Connect” came from the concept of Legos and built from there, while “transform” came from the concept of needing to be essential. Once each table had their word, Lindsay facilitated an exercise with both groups, working toward consensus for the room. Ultimately, the group determined that their One Word for facilities management for the coming year would be “transform.”

#### THE POWER OF A MOTIVATIONAL KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Imagine my delight when during his keynote speech the next day, John Jenson asked those in the room if they were “transformational.” I loved seeing that the EP/SFO group had hit on a hot topic, a valid topic. John encouraged us to become transformational by seeking clarity on the following three things: 1) who we are (our brand, which he says we are either polishing or tarnishing by our daily actions); 2) what we do; and 3) our ability to create movement in people. He challenged us to come up with an out-of-the-box description of what we do (such as “I am a landscaper” versus “I am part of a team ensuring there is a visual image telling people that this school has its act together”). He encouraged us to give people a reason to pay attention to facilities.

#### THE POWER OF A FULL-CIRCLE MOMENT

At the banquet, Chuck Scott gave his last speech as the outgoing APPA President. A key component of his speech was to telling us to “find your one thing.” He even showed a clip from *City Slickers* to illustrate this point. I was sitting in the audience, feeling all kinds of wonderful emotions about the

idea of “one” coming full-circle right back to Chuck: from one word to one thing.

A new year is almost upon us, so I leave you with a challenge: Come up with one word for yourself, your organization, and/or the facilities industry to guide you in 2018. I have already picked my one word for the coming year; if you see me at an APPA event, ask me what it is I will be happy to tell you. And, I will be even happier to hear about the kinds of transformations you will experience by having your own one word to guide you. ☛

Shawna Code is director, facilities management, at Weber State University, Ogden, UT. She can be reached at [srowley@weber.edu](mailto:srowley@weber.edu).

**Open Doors for Everyone**  
with America's Durable Door Openers™

**Model 2300** residential and **Model 4300** commercial automatic door openers work with wall plates, switches, keypads, radio-operated hand controls and almost any activation method. Power Access continues to be the premier provider of automatic door openers for four decades, with many thousands of installations.

- For interior or exterior doors
- Easy installation and retrofit
- Automatic or manual operation
- Wired and wireless controls
- Programmable open, close & hold times
- Standard 115 VAC current

800-344-0088  
[automaticdoor.biz](http://automaticdoor.biz)

**POWER ACCESS**  
AMERICA'S DURABLE DOOR OPENER™