



What Certification Means to the Individual:

A Reminder from the President of the Certification Board

"Two men looked out from behind their prison bars—one saw the mud, the other the stars." How true this has been in our Certification movement, particularly seven years ago when it was first started. Groups of individuals, all over the United States, who had heard about the new movement were discussing it. It just seemed that so many people saw the "mud" and felt that there was no advantage and no help to be received from certification. Others saw the "stars" and realized the opportunity to lift themselves and our profession to the new high standards which we have today.

I think it would be interesting at this time to see what Webster has to say about certification. To get the full picture, we must use the words *certificate*, *certification*, and *certified*. The Webster dictionary says:

CERTIFICATE means to certify or attest with a certificate; it is a written declaration or testimonial; a writing signed and legally authenticated.

CERTIFICATION means the act of certifying; a certified statement; an attestation.

TO CERTIFY is to give certain knowledge of; attest; to make a statement to as matter of fact; assure; to give a certificate of; to make attestation either in writing or orally as to the truth or excellence of something.

Now, taking the meaning of Webster's words, which, I am sure, everyone here will agree is the thing which we are trying to do, I would say that certification means a direction to go; it means more education; it means more cooperation with one another; it is a means to a good future.

Certification is a plan for the future. Confucius centuries ago felt the same, because he said: "A man who does not think or plan long ahead will find trouble right by his door." So to me certification in this plan for the future means happiness, better workmanship, better understanding and better appliances.

No one realizes better than I do the problems of changing over our field from a commercial business to a profession. I can assure you that it has been a mountain to surmount, but it has been mighty interesting. It has proved a challenge; it has required many nights and hours of going to school; it has required many hours of teaching school; it has required many hours of giving of one-self for the betterment of the patient and our profession.

The things that have hurt the most and have been the hardest to overcome are the little problems. They seem to be the stumbling blocks, such as:

What am I getting out of certification?—If So and So is certified, I do not want to be certified.—John Doe has certification and he cannot do half of what he is supposed to do, yet he is on an equal basis with me.—I have not received any more business because I have been certified, and so on."

Yes, that all may be true, but is that what we are concerned about? Is that what we are working for?

No, I would say. What we are working for is the program for the future that Mac Hanger, our OALMA president, is outlining, giving us an opportunity to show in the beginning, when we start, what we have to know and what we must accomplish before we can do a good job. As one writer put it: "Men do not stumble over mountains but over molehills."

Another famous writer puts it this way: "The only thing more expensive than education is ignorance."

Light attached gives out light. When it becomes loose and detaches, it becomes junk. With over a thousand certified people in the country today, each giving out light and enthusiasm of certification, there is no question but what we have one of the best opportunities in the world of doing good and serving mankind in a manner which no other profession can do and in a manner which is always on the positive side of light.

Our good friends in the medical profession who are serving mankind, have their places; but I often wonder how it seems to have to amputate a man's limb and then the next morning go in to the convalescent's room and face him.

It is true that the doctor has saved the man's life but he has also taken away either his mobility or his utility and has no method whatsoever in which to replace it. I see no reason why every one of us shouldn't experience the biggest thrill of our lives each time we put on an appliance that makes one of our fellowmen whole again.

Voltaire, one of the greatest writers of all times, puts it this way: "The greatest privilege of a human being is to be able to do good." I feel that we have been God's privileged people when we have been given the opportunity of becoming certified.

It is not many years ago when one of us walking into the place of business of a competitor to pay a friendly visit, would get no farther than the reception room. I can remember in my own shop, when I first started, if I saw a mechanic doing something that I wanted to know about, and I walked over to him, he would put it under his bench until I had left. I have been told flatly by artificial limb mechanics in the past, when I have asked them questions, "No, I won't help you. I had to learn the hard way and you can do it the same way." I made up my mind many years ago, If I ever did learn anything about the limb business, that I would take the opposite attitude and tell and show everything I could possibly learn. I have sincerely tried to be that way.

Today most every artificial limb house will take you through their facility and explain to you practically anything you want to know, if you see something of interest. I believe Certification has done this. I believe sincerely that it has united us, and, if united, we can do nothing else but improve.

Certification has given us something to work for and to believe in, and what else does man have in any walk of life than those two things?

WHICH LEG??

Comment by "The Observer"

When a unilateral amputee acquires a prosthesis, the resulting conversation includes frequent reference to the limb which was not amputated.

It is my observation that the reference made is to the "good leg," or to the "normal leg". Limb fitters who have the habit of speaking of the "normal leg" seem to use the term no matter how abnormal the leg may be. If he distinguishes it as the "good leg," he is disparaging the good artificial limb which he is providing. What is wrong with calling it the "natural leg"?

The antonym for "good" is "bad", and we don't want that description given to our masterpiece. The antonym for "normal" is "abnormal", and even this doesn't sound just right for our substitute limb.

We call our substitute limb an "artificial limb". The antonym for "artificial" is "natural". We are not ashamed to call our substitute limb an artificial limb, so why should there be any hesitancy to refer to the natural limb as the "natural limb"!

—The Observer

(EDITOR'S NOTE: *The Journal* welcomes statements of value from any of its readers. We will be glad to have your comments for future issues.)

WHAT CERTIFICATION MEANS (Con'd.)

If you hold Certification and are not for Certification and do not believe in it, but have it only because you think it is the thing to have, then I would say that you are not happy in your work nor getting what you are entitled to out of life.

Ella W. Wilcox, puts it this way:

"There are two kinds of people on earth today;
Just two kinds of people, no more, I say.
Not the sinner and saint, for it's well understood,
That the good are half bad, and the bad are half good.
Not the humble and proud, for in life's little span,
Who puts on vain airs is not counted a man.
Not the happy and sad, for the swift flying years
Bring each man his laughter and each man his tears.
No, the two kinds of people on earth I mean
Are the people who *lift* and the people who *lean*.
And oddly enough, you will find too, I ween,
There's only one lifter to twenty who lean.
In which class are you? Are you easing the load
Of overtaxed lifters, who toil down the road?
Or are you a leaner, who lets others share
Your portion of labor, and worry and care?"

