

At the 2006 APBS conference, I listened to Ted Carr deliver the presidential keynote address that anchored the past and future of PBS in three principles: happiness, helpfulness, and hopefulness; his address was later published in JPBI. The day I learned that Ted had been killed, I reread his speech. As his voice spoke to me from the page, I remembered how Ted himself truly lived by these principles and helped others do the same.

The first time I heard Ted present, he spoke about the need to establish positive relationships between people with autism and their caregivers to prevent inappropriate behavior and make both people happy. Although it seemed a fairly simple idea, he illustrated the difficulty of making it a reality by demonstrating how even people without obvious challenges tend to unwittingly undermine their happiness. “And here is how,” he said. “Imagine a long-married couple treating themselves to a night out on the town, and here they are in a restaurant reading the menu. Wife: ‘What are you gonna have?’ Husband: ‘I am gonna have the salad. What are you gonna have?’ Wife: ‘You don’t like salad. Have the soup. *I* am gonna have the salad.’ Husband: ‘You always order what I am ordering.’ And then the waiter comes to take their order. Wife: ‘I’m gonna have the salad.’ Husband: ‘I am having what she is having.’” Only Ted could find exactly the right analogies to make me realize that all of us face the same challenges.

When I was editorial assistant for JPBI, Ted, who was one of the associate editors, regularly contacted me to solicit help with JPBI’s on-line submission and review system. When he got stuck, he would call me and say “Claudia, who designed this? Am I the only idiot who needs to call you all the time? Okay, you don’t have to answer this one. Nothing happens when I click here. What’s supposed to happen? Well, that doesn’t work either. Oh, crap! Now I’ve got another error message! Why do I need to save this first? How do I save it? Okay, I am doing it...here it goes. Effortless! Absolutely effortless! Does this really work for anybody else? Okay, I think I did it. Boy, isn’t this a time saver! Okay, well, I guess I’ll be talking to you again soon.” Ted spoke his mind, and by doing so, he helped others understand how to address problems, rather than simply talk about them. I loved his honesty, his irony, and his courage to unabashedly point out what does not work.

Although Ted first knew me as a secretary, he always came up to me at conferences and welcomed me as a member of the PBS research community. Because I so very much enjoyed his presentations, I always attended his sessions at APBS. After I returned from the APBS conference earlier this year, I emailed him to thank him for yet another brilliant, funny, and engaging presentation and to tell him that I am already looking forward to listening to him again at APBS in 2010. He wrote me back saying “You are always so gracious. I am also looking forward to 2010, but I am looking forward to hearing about all the great work you are doing now.” Ted knew how to inspire hopefulness. I will miss him terribly.

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