Go save lives

When my own ‘robotic’ device pinged with the reminder from our managing editor Chris that my next President’s message was due, I just didn’t quite know where to start. Normally I am full of ideas and have a multitude of things that I want to share with you however, on this occasion, I felt less than motivated to draw any of the topics into my psyche.

It may well be considered not professional or politically correct to use this medium for a purpose less than was intended. Those of you who know me well will be less surprised at my boldness, recognising that with me ‘what you see is what you get’ and if nothing else I always aim to remain true to myself.

When I wrote my last president’s message I had no idea that I would need to take my own advice in terms of resolutions quite so soon. On January 3 I lost the great love of my life, my soul mate and best friend and it is quite extraordinary how difficult it is to come to terms with such a huge loss.

My husband Phil Fisher was a man who inspired and taught me more about life, about people and about living than any book or establishment.

As a secondary teacher he influenced and inspired the lives of many young men and women a number of whom were involved in caring for him from both medical nursing and allied health professions.

One of my outstanding recurrent memories goes back to the days I worked in the cardiac theatres at Birmingham’s Queen Elizabeth Hospital. We were always on call! Regularly the phone would ring at some unearthly hour, and a voice which was usually Sharon would say “we have a transplant, can you make your way in”. No more was needed to be said.

As my feet touched the floor and I moaned loudly not wanting to wake-up or go out into the night, that wonderful familiar voice would always give me the identical message “go save lives”!

Phil was in awe of what we did as professionals; he was proud of me and loved the numerous colleagues and friends from perioperative environs that he met over many years. We talked at length about the achievements of science in the field of medicine and he always brought it back to me and to you, acknowledging the insight, commitment and expertise that we as perioperative professionals have and I guess take for granted most of the time.

So the next time you get the call in the middle of the night remember that what you are doing is going out for the sole purpose of saving lives.

Many of you my friends and colleagues are providing this service day in and day out, night in and night out. Little credit is ever given to our profession these days and we don’t look for credit or gratitude; but please remember that out there, maybe closer than you think, are other Phil Fishers who value and acknowledge the contribution that we make in operating theatres throughout the UK and indeed around the world.

I like to think that in my own life, although I no longer do any on-call, that my Phil will be enabling me in my own way to ‘go save lives’. Perioperative practitioners; be proud of what you do and recognise your own worth and value in the difficult and challenging times that are the health services of today.

Thank you for allowing me, your humble president, to share this message with you.

Rest in peace Phil Fisher.