

# PRESIDENT'S Message

by Theresa (Terry) Irvin, CLA



risks."<sup>(1)</sup>

A few months ago, I attended an in-house training session entitled "Building Inclusion." When I received the email describing this all day seminar, my first thoughts were "Why is our building conducting a seminar on inclusion?" and "It must be a promotion for the tenants." After taking a closer look, I realized that it was a corporate training session, sponsored by the Diversity Council. A more appropriate title might have been "Building Inclusion in the Workplace," but the abbreviated version made me stop and ask my co-workers what this was about - thereby getting me started on the path toward building a more inclusive work place!

The seminar dealt with a variety of issues, and we performed many individual and group exercises. Some were better than others, but over all it was a good program. About two thirds of the way through, the instructor hit upon something near and dear to my heart - The Process of Development. There it was, a nice, neat little chart with zones. There was the Unchallenging Zone, the Moderate Risk Zone, the Zone of Development and the Unrealistic (for now) Zone.

The Moderate Risk Zone is your comfort zone. It is where we all like to be (and stay). But if we stay in this zone too long, we become bored and complacent, and slowly the Moderate Risk Zone turns into the Unchallenging Zone. The Moderate Risk Zone is not a bad place to be as long as you are moving toward the Zone of Development.

*"The Process of Development is a strategy for building your capability in anything that is important to you. It requires that you set realistic and challenging goals - take moderate, intelligent*

When you enter the Zone of Development, you are challenging (pushing) yourself with realistic goals that require some degree of risk. The key word here is "Development." You are learning. You are making decisions based on your experience. You are taking the risk of moving out of the comfort zone into uncharted territory. You may move back and forth between the Zone of Development and the Moderate Risk Zone. If you followed a path and made an incorrect decision, you may choose to start again, but in the Moderate Risk Zone. You may realize you need more experience to go further into the Zone of Development, but at the same time you are gaining experience by traveling in this zone.

The Zone of Development and the Unrealistic Zone are delineated by the Line of Challenge. Ah, here is the crux. By crossing the Line of Challenge, you automatically have not done a bad thing, but now you may need more assistance than you anticipated and you most likely will have to work harder and faster to catch up. You may have set an unrealistic (at least for now) goal. If only there were road signs or visual warning lights to let you know that you are treading on thin ice. Of course there probably are subtle signs along the way that we tend to ignore, such as the warning signs of too much stress. But again, you learn from the experience, evaluate the outcomes, take a step back and move ahead in a more informed fashion.

What does this have to do with our Association? Ask yourself this question - "What is my Process of Development?" Does your answer include NCPA? By running for an officer or director position, you are moving in the Zone of Development. By chairing a committee you are moving in the Zone of Development. If you have had experience in a position, you may decide to travel in the comfort zone and perform those duties again, expanding on what you have learned and improving the tasks performed.

Volunteering for NCPA further enhances your professional skills and assists in your personal development. It allows you to communicate with others within your profession and outside your profession. You learn new skills such as public speaking, improve old skills such as writing and master current skills such as organization. You work with your peers towards the common goal of promoting the paralegal profession.

We were all knocked out of our comfort zone the day of September 11th, and I want to express NCPA's concern for anyone who has personally been affected by the events of that fateful day. As a country, we have all been affected by this tragedy, and it will stay with us forever. **On November 10th, the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors, by unanimous vote, moved to donate the net profits from the 2001 Mid-Year Seminar to the Families of Freedom Scholarship Fund.** This fund will provide educational assistance for the children and spouses of those killed or permanently disabled as a result of the terrorists attacks. NCPA wishes to thank all the volunteers, those in attendance, the exhibitors and the sponsors of the Mid-Year Seminar and CLA Review Course for the seminar's success.

I pose the question to you again. "What is your Process of Development?" May your answer move you into the Zone of Development to complete an officer or director nomination form.

Wishing You a Joyous Holiday Season and a Happy New Year!

*"It's all about effective effort and support. Your commitment, focus, and strategy determine how effectively you move toward the Zone of Development and push out your Line of Challenge. Support from others - encouragement, strategies, and accurate feedback - is important to your success."<sup>(1)</sup>*

<sup>(1)</sup>Building Inclusion,  
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