

Attitude is Everything

By **Julie Crandall**, DPC Education Center Board member

Having 35 years of experience living with kidney disease, I have learned a few lessons. I like to think I was given this life to pass on the things I have learned along the way.

The biggest lesson is that attitude is everything. If you have a positive attitude, it makes living with kidney disease so much better and easier. I started this craziness over 35 years ago, at the age of seven. It was hard to take on so much responsibility; diet restrictions, physical limits, sterility issues, etc. My mom taught me an important lesson I have never forgot. In the beginning, when I would get news of another surgery or another test that had to be done, I would get upset and cry. Keep in mind, I was a kid. My mom would let me cry and have my “pity party”, as we called it, for a few minutes. Then, she would tell me, “OK, now that the pity party is over; now we handle it.” After a while, I would skip the ‘pity party’ part and get right to handling it. What a difference it made. No matter what comes up, I can deal with it without tears or worry.

Another example of having a good attitude in a not-so-good situation is: We have all had the experience of the dialysis nurse or tech having a hard time sticking our access. The

difference is HOW you handle the situation. I learned, it is not worth getting upset over. We can not change the situation. What is the use of getting angry or upset? It makes everybody feel bad, and that takes a lot of energy. The dialysis nurse or tech already feels bad enough. Let us not make them feel worse. Let us say, it is ok, these things happen, relax and take a couple of deep breaths. You can stand up for yourself. You can ask for another staff member to try; or, if you know of a staff member that you trust, ask for that person. Ask calmly and respectfully; people are more likely to listen to you, and work with you.

It is the same with a test or procedure or doctor’s appointment we may have. It is something we need to do, getting upset or angry at the world will just make you miserable. It affects no one else. Then, we will need to go through it anyway. Why make ourselves miserable, when we will need to go through it anyway. I know this is easier said than done. It took me years to come to this realization. All I can do is pass on what I have learned and what works for me. I can tell you that attitude really does make a difference. It makes you feel better overall, and it makes life way more enjoyable... for everyone. ●