

Ben & Jerry & Administrative Professionals Week

The other day I was in a meeting when something shifted above my gum up in the left side of my mouth. I surreptitiously searched around with my tongue until I found the issue: a peanut, which I *thought* I had eaten a couple hours earlier, was still hiding up in my cheek.

This happens, seriously, all the time.

About seven years ago I noticed an odd little numbness on the left side of my nose. Within a few months, the numbness had spread to most of the left side of my face, from my eye to my jaw, and including the left halves of my lips and tongue. My muscles all work fine – I just constantly feel like I'm coming off of Novocain.

The neurologists can't really nail down a cause. They just know that whatever is going on, it isn't killing me at the moment. So I try to ignore it.

This mostly works, except after I eat, because if some food sneaks up into the space between my upper left gum and my cheek, I won't know it's there until it makes a surprise appearance, perhaps during one of my motivational speeches.

Nothing says "don't trust what this guy is telling you" like a fully intact peanut falling out of his mouth while he is talking.

The other problem with this numbness thing is my taste buds don't work well on the left side, so the joy I used to get from a pint of Ben & Jerry's ice cream has been reduced significantly. And that brings me to Valentine's Day and, in a similar way, to Administrative Professionals Week.

Valentine's Day is built on the idea that *someone else* is going to come in and make you feel loved. But that won't work if your capacity to feel loved is diminished, in the same way that a pint of Ben & Jerry's can't make you happy if your taste buds don't work right.

So, while gifts from your significant other during Valentine's Month are nice, it's also nice to give yourself a gift: the permission and the capacity to feel worthy of being loved. And if that capacity isn't fully developed, then focus on that.

Similarly, during Administrative Professionals Week there is an expectation that admins' clients will offer them appreciation and even gifts in recognition of the admins' professionalism and abilities. And these offerings are good, and definitely deserved.

But your fully appreciating that recognition depends a great deal on your own ability to appreciate *yourself*, and to feel like you are fully developing your abilities and your potential.

So during Administrative Professionals Week this year (April 22-28), I hope you will take advantage of some of the many opportunities being offered by your IAAP local chapter and IAAP nationals to focus on yourself and develop your professional and personal abilities.

It also is a good idea to avoid letting food fall out of your mouth during meetings. It really undermines that whole professionalism thing.

Chuck Hansen is an associate member of the IAAP-Old Dominion Chapter, a motivational speaker, writer and humorist, and author of "Build Your Castles in the Air: Thoreau's Inspiring Advice for Success in Business (& Life) in the 21st Century." He can be reached at chuck@chuckhansen.com or www.chuckhansen.com.