



President's Message

To trust or not to trust.....

Joggie Hattingh

I grew up with the saying: "It is good to trust, yet it is better not to trust".

In the situation we're in, it indeed rings true! Who can we trust when our leaders are implicated in looting the coffers, yet clinging to positions of power even though badly compromised? What has eroded our society to the point that self-interest and greed gained the upper hand over honesty, selflessness and working for the common good?

It also leads to the question whether we are able to get out of the rut we allowed our country to fall into politically, economically and ethically. Yes! It is our fault collectively. We are the ones who put those people in positions of power, and we are the ones who failed to keep them accountable!

Then how do we start anew?

As with everything in life, start with yourself! If you and I strive and work to be trustworthy, we will start a movement that will change our country – it may lead to a butterfly effect. You see, if each one of us does it and expects it from our colleague, then it firstly changes my opinion of myself, then my opinion of my colleague, my profession and... and... and.

Talking of my profession. Pharmacists have for decades shown up amongst the most trusted professionals in our country. I have not seen the outcome of this type of survey lately, but I believe it still holds true. This gives a great start to the change required in our country! We can be the change we want to see and then we can demand it from all of those with whom we come into contact. We can break the chain of negativity and start a wave of positivity!

It does imply that I make myself vulnerable by being transparent about the way I conduct business and that I will subject myself to the scrutiny

of my peers, but is this not what is required anyway? I should not even contemplate being part of any underhand dealings, whether financial or organisational.

We need to understand that whatever is done, there will be consequences. If it is good, we will get approval from our members, colleagues and the authorities. If we are up to no-good (and this includes inactivity) we will receive sanction from them. Each one of us needs to ensure that we know the measure of our leaders, be it professional, political or religious leaders, and if they do not make the mark, we have the obligation to terminate their leadership. This may be a risky statement to make as a newly elected leader, but it's one I am willing to stand or to fall by!

I have grave concerns regarding our ability as a society to keep fraud and looting at bay, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. This was the ideal opportunity for the new government to show their ability to run a clean ship. I think we can agree that we failed dismally. Do I trust them if they say they will ensure that Universal Health Coverage funding will be well guarded against fraud and mismanagement? I think not.

I will require proof of change and proof that any (and all) implicated in fraudulent transactions during COVID-19 and prior, be brought to justice. Only then will I reconsider!

And in the interim?

In the interim, let you and I take the lead and start the change to ensure a fair, honest and just society.

Because we can!