

Enjoy a Docia Story

— about “Conferences” —

from Docia Zavitkovsky

As someone who has attended conferences for more years than many of the readers, I have found that the comments made on evaluation forms remain about the same year in and year out. They nearly always include:

*More time for rest and recreation is needed.
Too much time is wasted on leisure time activities.*

*The scheduled hour workshops are great . . . can attend more sessions.
Schedule longer workshops or move hotels closer.*

*Exhibits were great . . . mind boggling.
Eliminate exhibits that show little understanding of young children’s development.*

*Registration couldn’t have been smoother.
Plan more time for registration or get more help.*

*National conferences are exciting and inspiring.
Have fewer national conferences and more regional conferences.*

As for major speakers, that’s a horse of a different color. Everyone becomes an expert on who to have; what the topic should be; how much time should be allocated; and how good, mediocre, poor, or hopeless the last speaker was.

I have found that most major speakers enrich and increase understanding and motivate us to grow.

Though once in a while, I must admit, a speaker sneaks in who surprises us inspite of a vita a mile long, degrees and years of experience, as well as authorship of numerous books, pamphlets, and articles.

I remember sitting in a packed auditorium, pencil poised and ears at the ready waiting for the pearls to drop. What I heard was:

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I turned to my friend and asked, “What is he saying?” “I don’t know,” she said. “I haven’t the foggiest idea.” Somehow that made me feel better. Maybe next year. . . .

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Docia Zavitkovsky has furthered the cause of young children as a practitioner in the field for over 45 years and as past president of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Known far and wide for her storytelling, she has traveled extensively as an early childhood consultant, lecturer, and adventurer.