As I think about the important lessons of life, I realize that my father said many things that had a profound impact on me. A favorite of his was “90% of life is just showing up.” While I like the familial link, I find that this is really an adaptation of the quotation of Woody Allen: “Eighty percent of success is showing up.” Another version of the same sentiment is the 1979 movie Being There, where the great success of the lead character is attributable to simply showing up.

Let us consider the importance to scientists of “showing up.” We often attend faculty and other meetings where we may wish we were somewhere else. I can think of one meeting that I have regularly attended where the comment is made that “perhaps it would be a great place to die as there would be such an easy transition.” What happens if we miss a meeting? There may not be a quorum and the meeting is cancelled. Any of us might be labeled as uncooperative and be treated accordingly. We may miss hearing a critically important piece of news. As we plan for the conferences and symposia we will be attending this year, perhaps we should consider the importance of showing up.

For a graduate student, being there (and presenting a paper orally or as a poster) provides a tremendous opportunity to test ideas with an audience from outside his or her home institution. In addition, contacts are made that will stand you in good stead for the rest of your life. There is also the situation of serendipity—being at a meeting opens up the possibility that a potential employer (university, government laboratory, or private company) will meet you, and if they like what they see, ultimately there may be a job in the offing.

For a faculty member, government researcher, or industry scientist, being at a meeting offers many possible advantages. These include the following:

- Being seen by colleagues.
- Continuing to build a network of contacts.
- Having your work or that of your students being noticed.
- Creating opportunities to develop collaborative project(s) with colleagues. This can be based on happenstance—hearing a good paper and seeing the potential synergism between that work and your own. Alternatively, planning which papers you wish to attend or which colleagues you want to meet with can be critical to getting the most out of a meeting.
- Having the opportunity to meet with people from federal funding agencies and other organizations that may fund research.
- Being able to glean the “hot” new ideas and meet the best of the crop of graduate students.

Even in these days of severe budgetary constraints, there is a strong case for poultry scientists to attend all of the following: 1) the national/international meeting irrespective of whether these are poultry science or combined poultry, dairy, and animal science meetings; 2) regional meetings with high industry attendance such as the Southern Poultry Science Society–Southern Conference on Avian Diseases meeting with the International Poultry Scientific Forum and Expo; and 3) meetings focused on one discipline, whether that is genomics, nutrition, behavior, reproduction, or anything else. Attendance at these meetings also gives you an opportunity to talk informally with the Poultry Science Association board of directors and journal editors.