Will they hide me?

Joggie Hattingh, President: SAAHIP

Whilst attending the FIP Conference on pharmacy and pharmaceutical education in Nanjing China, I watched a programme on CNN (one of only two English programmes available on television) late at night when my biological clock convinced me that it was actually day-time.

During the programme very successful people from different walks of life were interviewed on their view of success, amongst them Warren Buffet, Madelaine Albright and a number of others. Mr Buffet said two things that really got me thinking!

As background: Mr Buffet donated more than 95 per cent of his billions-worth fortune to humanitarian aid via his foundation. Yet he explained success by using the following story:

He met an old Polish, Jewish lady who survived the holocaust of World War 2 and she told him that for many years after the war, she had great difficulty trusting people. That was until she started looking people in the eye and asking herself, “If they come for me, will he/she hide me?”

Mr Buffet translated this as “Do they love me?” Only if you are loved can you see yourself as being successful. This really caused me to think about what I, personally, see as success, but also what we as a society see as success.

His second remark was, when asked about the billions he gave away, that he has actually given less than a person who put twenty dollars in a church collection plate and who was then unable to buy her child a toy or whose family would then have to miss a meal. He has never had to miss out on anything even after having given up so much.

This took me back to my childhood, where my dad taught me that you have not really given, if you do not feel it in your person or if it does not hurt you! If you give so much that you have to miss out on things or have to reprioritise things in your life, only then have you given.

If I look back at the almost two years that I have been entrusted with leading SAAHIP, I have to admit that I have received endlessly more than I was ever able to give. And most of all, there are so many of my colleagues who will hide me if “they” come for me.

If I may freely translate a quote from the great Afrikaner writer and statesman CJ Langenhoven: “What makes my life worthwhile is the love I have given and the love I have received.”

It is a privilege to call all of you “my friend” and thank you for the love and acceptance I have received.