**What Am I Here For?**

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***God has a purpose for your life and Jesus is a central part of that plan.***

*-- Ephesians 1:11*

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| ***The man without a purpose is like a ship without a rudder – a waif, a nothing, a no man.****-- Thomas Carlyle* |

postle Paul (1) said, ***“It’s in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ…he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone.”*** This verse is more than just a few words. It is a guide to empower the ASEP journey that will enable us to discover that exercise physiologists are healthcare professionals. Having this point of view will help decrease the stress tied to the change process. It will also prepare ASEP exercise physiologists for their future in healthcare.

Take a moment and think about the work of the ASEP leaders who are doing what they can to transform exercise physiology from a research discipline to a healthcare profession. They believe it is important that exercise physiologists change the way they think. Only then will they know what to do. Only then will they join in the work of the ASEP leadership and the organization itself. Remember, Paul told Timothy, “Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this” (2). I also believe that during your reflection you will experience a sense of hope and expectation for something better.

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| ***The universe is change; our life is what our thoughts make it.****-- Marcus Aurelius Antoninus* |

Remember, with the help of other ASEP members, you can achieve more and do it faster than trying to accomplish your goals by yourself. You don’t have to publish yet another research article without taking a breath. In fact, as the Bible says, “Obsession with self in these matters is a dead end; attention to God leads us out into the open, into a spacious, free life.” In other words, regardless of what we are taught, life isn’t all about what is happening to you. Rather, life is about living your purpose for being alive. It is this purpose that gives order to life and makes sense of living and working hard.

At this very moment life may be too complicated or disappointing to think about others. But, regardless of your problems or your feelings of being bullied by so-called friends, life is about your driving force to help others. I know because the force that is within me to promote professionalism in exercise physiology is what gets me up in the morning. It is my reality, and I am conscious of that fact every day of my life. It keeps me from wandering through life without a vision of something better. This way I know that I am not lost in something other than exercise physiology. Why, rather than trying to like everyone else and doing whatever to please them, I am living a purpose-driven life.

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| ***Trusting God completely means having faith that he knows what is best for your life. You expect him to keep his promises, help you with problems, and do the impossible when necessary.*** *-- Rick Warren* |

Rick Warren (3) understands this thinking. His book, *The Purpose Driven Life* is all about finding meaning in your life. When a person understands his or her purpose in life, then, just about anything bad or disappointing can be dealt with. Without the ASEP vision (4) to promote exercise physiology as a healthcare profession, my life would not have the meaning that I think it has. One example of this thinking is this: While the first 20 years of my college work was all about how many research articles I published, and how it benefited me. I didn’t think much about my students and their success after college. But, the second 20 years of academic work has been spent with the strength, hope, and expectation of society seeing exercise physiology as a healthcare profession. This is my purpose and, thus my power to cope even with the worst of circumstances.

My desire to promote exercise physiologists professionalism has helped me to cope with organizational politics and misguided people. Purpose is essential to life and one’s work. It defines what I write. It defines why I believe it is essential to allocate my time to helping others understand the importance of exercise physiology as a profession (5-12). You may ask, “Does the activity of writing books and articles about the importance of professionalism, ethics, credentials, and standards in exercise physiology fulfill God’s purpose for my life?” I think so. Why not? When you are doing what is going to help others, that can’t be a bad thing. Also, doing so is a pleasure and I believe it is making a difference. It is stressful and even fatiguing at times, but not in a bad way. It is fulfilling and, in many ways, it is the opportunity to be creative.

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| ***Remember, it’s your choice. You can either think straight or crooked. You can either form a relationship with ASEP or sports medicine. You can either create your future or let it happen by an accident. What is it worth to you to be in control of your life?*** |

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| ***Nothing is easier than say words. Nothing is harder than living them day after day.****-- Arthur Gordon* |

Purpose requires focus, which is the key to staying on track and getting things done. Focus and concentration are the driving forces that prepare exercise physiologists to see themselves as healthcare professionals. Concentrating on what we value and our goals gives us strength and determination to keep going. This is true regardless of our problems, unanswered prayers, and senseless criticism from the nonbelievers. Remember, the Bible (13) says, ***“God keeps his promises, and he will not allow you to be tested beyond your power to remain firm; at the time you are put to the test, he will give you strength to endure it, and so provide you with a way out.”***

Strength to endure whatever comes our way is the means to staying the course. It is the way to happiness because those with the strength to endure will see what is unseen. Of course, it is important to establish the habit of staying in the present with a perpetual attitude of the possible. Training our minds to remember what the students gain by helping them to become healthcare professionals vs. fitness instructors or trainers is a good thing. It is pastime to find all the lost college graduates to become part of ASEP. They need to sit for the EPC exam to get their career and opportunities back on track. Above all else, it shouldn’t be necessary to spend more tuition dollars on graduate school unless that is the person’s desire.

Remember, the existence of ASEP isn’t about being recognized or acknowledged. It is all about doing what one person among many can do to deliberately shift exercise physiology to exercise physiologists and away from the politics of generic organizations. Everything that has been done and will be done for decades is for a better future for the students and exercise physiology. The ASEP organization is real. It exists in the work of every member. The truth is this: It is through organizations that the natural way of change and development takes place. It is a test of faith – one that all exercise physiologists must face.

***The Question Is This:*** Will you step up to the plate of change and help continue the work of ASEP, even when you are challenged by your colleagues and others to turn your back? Will you discover your role in healthcare through an ASEP relationship with board-certified exercise physiologists who administer exercise medicine?

These remarks should not be viewed as surface-level chit-chat. What I have shared comes from the heart. It is from the gut. It is what I am living, what I care about, and what my life is about. It is disclosure that is meant to be more of an experience than a lecture. Everything isn’t rosy in academic institutions throughout the United States. Students and their parents are spending too much money on meaningless degrees without the hope or expectation of finding a job when they graduate. This has to change, but it requires each of us to stay the course in face of rejection and being hurt by people who just don’t get it.

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| ***You can be anything you want to be, if only you believe with sufficient conviction and act in accordance with your faith; for whatever the mind can conceive and believe the mind can achieve.****-- Napoleon Hill* |

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