**Journal of Professional Exercise Physiology**

ISSN 1550-963X

**September 2013 Vol 11 No 9**

**American Society of Exercise Physiologists**

**The Professional Organization of Exercise Physiologists**

The Professional Organization of Exercise Physiologists

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**Overcoming Disappointments**

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There’s no magic number of times you try something before it either works or you concede to quit with honor.  There are no guarantees your persistence will pay.  You just have to be able to look at yourself in the mirror and believe, “I gave it everything I had.”

-- [Jennifer Gresham](http://everydaybright.com/author/Jennifer-Gresham/)

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ECENTLY, I RECEIVED an email from a college graduate that college teachers should find interesting. Since graduation, she has faced formidable obstacles to finding a job. Since I’ve been writing about this problem for 15 years, it is appropriate to mention her concerns in light of the following context. In 2013, A. M. Winkle (1) of the Fordham Foundation reported the following:

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| McKinsey’s survey of 4,900 recent graduates of two- and four-year colleges is the latest contribution to a literature of dismal news on our nation’s latest crop of young professionals….nearly half of all graduates from four-year colleges said that they were in jobs that did not require a four-year degree…. |

As we all know, a college degree is considered the ticket to success – right? Well, Carl E. van Horn (2), professor of public policy and director of the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University, had this to say about this point: “Since the time these college graduates were very young, their parents, educators and political leaders have told them that getting a college degree is a ticket to success in the knowledge economy.”  Honestly, how many times must this point be talked about in national meetings and published in newspapers and blogs before the college faculty and administrators get it? The harsh realities of society’s economic problems and the failed rhetoric of academic departments shouldn’t surprise anyone, especially students. In fact, many college students have become increasingly pessimistic about their ability to achieve the American dream.

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| [The size of your success is measured by the strength of your desire; the size of your dream; and how you handle disappointment along the way.](http://www.searchquotes.com/quotation/The_size_of_your_success_is_measured_by_the_strength_of_your_desire%3B_the_size_of_your_dream%3B_and_how/222509/)  -- Robert Kiyosaki |

More than half of the college graduates are not able to get a full-time, salaried job with healthcare benefits. Also, as pointed out by van Horn (2), “…nearly half find themselves in jobs that do not even require a college diploma, and nearly one in 10 are unemployed.” School-to-work transitions have not always been so difficult. While there are numerous problems with both academia and society at large, this article is focused on the failed responsibility of the academic institution to properly prepare college students for occupationally-specific careers and hands-on skills.

Somebody within the academic institution has to accept responsibility in that the disappointments following the students’ graduation are huge. Let’s be honest; all of us (especially the college administrators, advisors, and faculty) have shared with potential students that a college degree is the road to success. What isn’t shared is that today, perhaps, more than ever in the past, it is more than just getting a “college degree” that counts. Since a high percent of college graduates end up completing an application for graduate nursing, PA school, PT, or OT, the problem is that many of the undergraduate degrees have evolved into a meaningless list of academic courses without the specific intent of the degree linked to a credible career. These non-specific degree programs represent a waste of time and money since only a few jobs are linked to them. Again, if that were the case with the physical therapy major, the newly graduated DPT would have the same problems locating a credible job. But, that isn’t the case because the DPT degree is occupationally linked to specific healthcare jobs and skills.

Arum (3), a professor of sociology and education at New York University said, “…young adults today as a group are highly motivated, but often directionless.” Yes, to be fair in the overall analysis of this problem, students are also partly to blame for what has transpired in academia. No doubt they could be more forthright and honest about their education or the lack of it. But, having said that, the primary responsible party, the academic institution and faculty, is getting all the tuition fees while avoiding their responsibility of promoting and fine tuning attitudes and skills necessary to be gainfully employed. As a result, more and more college graduates end up working in service-type jobs at Gap, Arby’s, and Starbucks instead of a career-type job. Shouldn’t the administration and faculty think more about what their students are learning for the tuition dollars they are paying the institutions?

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| One reason so many colleges fail is that the gap between the world of work and the world of school has become almost unbridgeable. That needs to change.  -- Walter Russell Mead’s Blog (4) |

As reported by Pam Kruger (5), Richard Vedder, an Ohio economist, concluded the following: “The number of people with bachelor's degrees is growing at a rate that exceeds the creation of jobs demanding college degrees.” Using 2010 the data from the Labor Department, Vedder found that “…the number of college graduates was 41.7 million – while just 28.6 million jobs required a college degree.” If you think about it for a moment, since not all academic majors are equally rewarding financially, it would make sense to take a step back and thoroughly evaluate whether certain undergraduate degree programs should continue to exist?

My point is simple: While you can’t unscramble eggs, you can do something about the degree programs. If they do not allow for credible career opportunities, then they need to be updated or deleted from the list of degrees. Academic degrees cannot exist just to ensure that the departments has “x” students. The department and the academic institution should work on behalf of the students’ potential for serious career options. The department chair, in particular, should provide discipline-specific career talks, job advice, and income information to students. Department faculty should be encouraged to work in partnership with healthcare businesses and entrepreneurs in the community to ensure that students receive timely, appropriate, and comprehensive career advice.

Understandably, it is ultimately the students’ responsibility to not turn a blind eye to the challenge of finding a credible career. Therefore, they need to keep thinking about how they can make it. That’s why they must develop the attitude that it is okay to think about developing healthcare and functional fitness businesses? In other words, it is okay to start earlier rather than later in taking charge of their life and business opportunities? It will take courage and hard work, but it is possible. So, where it is indicated, get rid of the mindset that it is impossible to be successful. Everyone can be successful, and everyone can overcome adversity. Don’t give in to negative thinking. Instead, think positive. Believe in possibilities. In fact, why not become ASEP Board Certified? Why not go to the ASEP website and click on the EPC exam and read the steps in sitting for the exam? Earning the credential allows you to refer to yourself as a Board Certified Exercise Physiologist even though your academic degree may be in sport science or human performance or some other related degree program. You may have to take a course or two to qualify for the exam. Such is life, and you may have to study for several months to properly prepare for the exam, but in the end you are doing the right thing.

Once you are Board Certified, you will be held accountable to the ASEP Code of Ethics (6) and the ASEP Standards of Professional Practice (7). Both documents are a solid foundation to begin your new business as a healthcare entrepreneur (8). You may not realize it now, but Board Certified Exercise Physiologists have a lot to give to society. After all, exercise is medicine and exercise physiologists are educated to safely apply the exercise medicine prescription. In fact, from psychophysiology of the mind and health to the scientific aspects of regular exercise to avoid or reduce the effects of chronic diseases, the Board Certified Exercise Physiologists can help set the circumstances for others to live a healthier lifestyle. Why not think about meeting the needs of individuals of all ages throughout the public sector and, at the same time, build your own healthcare business? The more you focus on helping others the more your business will grow and you, too, will be happier and healthier.

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