**Professionalization of Exercise Physiologyonline**

ISSN 1099-5862

**September 2013 Vol 16 No 9**

**American Society of Exercise Physiologists**

The Professional Organization of Exercise Physiologists

**ASEP: A New Start for Exercise Physiologists**

Tommy Boone, PhD, MPH, MAM, MBA

Board Certified Exercise Physiologist

***Think Positive Thoughts.***

*We will become what we think, what we talk about, and what we do. If we think our work is for the right reason, if we think that our actions will bring forth positive results, and if we start living as professionals, we will become our vision.*

T

HE BATTLE TO DOING most things in life is in the mind. Those who are not willing to support a “new start” have already lost the battle. Why, it is as simple as 2 + 2. If you think you can’t do something, the chances are you never will even if you have the skills to do so. Years ago, I witnessed many of times the battle in the minds of young gymnasts. I knew that certain gymnasts could do a front handspring front flip combination or a full twisting back flip after several back handsprings, but they didn’t think so. The primary barrier to learning gymnastics skills is not necessarily the gymnasts’ physical ability. Rather, it is the mind. Once gymnasts started to focus on the “I can” attitude, more often than not they progress in their training as expected.

If you think you can do something, there is an excellent chance it will happen. Boldness, persistence, and staying the course are important in all aspects of life. Today, the challenge before exercise physiologists is to promote exercise physiology as a healthcare profession. There can’t be any question that exercise physiologists can play an essential role in today’s healthcare, especially since regular exercise is recognized as exercise medicine. That is why the ASEP leaders believe that exercise physiologists are legitimate healthcare providers of prevention and risk-reduction services.

Regardless of how long it takes to be fully recognized as the professional organization of exercise physiologists, new thinking always begins with that first step. All that is necessary for a new start in exercise physiology is to change your thinking. This means stop being passive and settling for a life of mediocrity. Exercise physiology is not an academic degree that exists to transition into physical therapy. The ASEP members understand this point. They are talking about what they can do to make a difference in the profession as healthcare professionals. Exercise physiologists are educated to promote health, wellness, and fitness through risk factor identification and the implementation of professional services to decrease risk factors that lead to chronic diseases.

|  |
| --- |
| The **Code of Ethics for Exercise Physiologists** asserts the values and commitment to excellence for clients, patients, society, and exercise physiologists individually and collectively as a profession. |

No doubt you recall the Bible saying, “We have not because we ask not.” Well, why not ask for the energy and the drive to promote the profession of exercise physiology by supporting the American Society of Exercise Physiologists? No, I am not kidding. Exercise physiologists need an edge, which is ASEP. In time, that edge will help others to recognize that Board Certified Exercise Physiologists provide evidence-based exercise physiology healthcare services. In short, they practice exercise medicine. How do I know this? Part of the answer is because ASEP is dedicated to raising the standards of the profession. Another part comes from the significance of the Exercise Physiologists’ Code of Ethics that establishes the ethical standard for the profession. It is not negotiable in any setting nor is it subject to revision or amendment except by formal process of qualified and competent members of ASEP and the Board of Directors.

There is a profound difference between the personal trainer and the exercise physiologist. Similarly, although you may not see it yourself, there is a big difference between the fitness instructor and the exercise physiologist. In the most basic terms, both personal trainers and fitness instructors are not educated to scientific aspects of exercise physiology. They are not prepared to discuss or apply even the basic principles of oxygen pulse, myocardial oxygen consumption, systemic vascular resistance, arteriovenous oxygen difference, cardiac output, double product, and respiratory exchange ratio much less identify the four major flexors of the shoulder and their origin, insertion, functions, and nerves.

|  |
| --- |
| The **Standards of Practice in Exercise Physiology** delineates the scope of exercise physiology practice and the accompanying competencies. |

Please appreciate that my comments are not meant to demean others, but to point out why students and their parents spend thousands of dollars on college tuition fees and living expenses to earn a college degree. Simply stated, they believe that a college education will produce a career-specific job linked to financial success. That is what the college counselors and administrators tell them. It is much later that they realize the undergraduate degree isn’t linked to a credible career, but rather to ensure the continued growth of physical therapy or some other established healthcare profession. Now, they must come up with even more money (often, the thousands of dollars range) to correct what they realize is a major flaw in the academic system.

The flawed undergraduate degree and the traditional mindset can change. The ASEP leadership has created the right vision for exercise physiology. They are leading those who understand the need for change and are driven to achieve it. They believe that it is never too late to do the right thing for the right reason. Regardless of what has transpired in your work place, you have the opportunity with ASEP to start fresh – a new beginning! But, remember that you can’t be an Exercise Physiologist unless you earn a degree in exercise physiology or you pass the ASEP Board Certification exam. Do not be concerned with what others may say. Change is always a struggle.

|  |
| --- |
| The only constant is change.  -- Isaac Asimov |

So, stop letting other people shape your thinking about exercise physiology and your future. Do not let them play games with your mind or diminish your dreams of becoming an exercise physiologist. Develop the ASEP mindset that will allow you to thrive. That is, very simply, become what you believe you are. Expect success, think right, and start believing that you are a success. This means daring to engage the “new thinking” in exercise physiology? If you will do so, then, you will keep hope alive. Be confident of this point, especially when the going gets tough or life doesn’t go exactly as you planned. Your future is intact with ASEP. Once you see it and believe it, then it will come into existence.

It is time to step up to the plate of new thinking and change. Forget about your colleagues disappointing you. Dream the dream and stay the course. Life isn’t easy so be prepared to be overwhelmed by the challenges and the blessings that accompany the change process. All exercise physiologists are part of a family of healthcare professionals. Dare to be part of this family. It’s okay to be different, to appreciate your differences or otherwise you run the risk of missing out. Think the positive thoughts because they determine your destiny.

|  |
| --- |
| The difference between the possible and the impossible lies in a person’s determination.  – Tommy Lasorda  LA Dodgers Manager |