



ASEP Newsletter

ISSN 1097-9743

ASEP

April 2014
Vol 18 No 3

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-Guest Editorial-

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Things to Remember!

Regardless of how slow the process of professionalism is, it is important to get up every single day and do something about it. That's it. Well, there may be more to the story. Why do I write monthly articles in PEPOnline and JPPEP? The answer is simple: Every step I take believing in my reality of exercise physiology, the better I feel. Also, my father taught us as very young children that when you start something, then, finish it or die trying. So, there you have it. I also believe in the content of a quote I wrote some years ago: "We 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.”

The truth is that regardless of what others may think, I believe their failure to take on the professionalization of exercise physiology from within their own professional organization is their failure, not the ASEP members. Success is not how long it takes, but the ability to stay the course. Look at exercise physiology today and compare it to what it was prior to the founding of ASEP. No one thought of it as a healthcare profession. And yet, yes, today, many academic exercise physiologists still think of it as a discipline. The challenge is that professional development is slow until the majority of the people decide to get involved. Here are a few remarks I shared with a friend who asked me about ASEP and why I continue to work on behalf of ASEP, exercise physiology, and students who want to be more than a trainer or an instructor.

1. Change Is a Slow Process

It is amazing how many people want to see something built yesterday, but seldom do they do much to pitch in and help. Instead, they sit back and do nothing. Most of the time in life, changing anything that needs changing requires a major effort and commitment to take that first step. Then, only a little happens without continuing to take more steps. You would be surprised of the number of exercise physiologists who simply stopped taking steps on behalf of ASEP. Whether they are looking for others to do the work or they are just comfortable where they are is hard to know. Naturally, life within ASEP would be a lot easier with every exercise physiologist moving together. Reality is that they are not likely to step up to the plate until something forces them to do so.

Having made such a bold statement, perhaps, one or two more will finalize this part of the ASEP Newsletter. Just because professional development in exercise physiology takes time doesn't mean that ASEP is not a success. It is without a doubt a success. The ASEP leadership created the first-ever organization of exercise physiologists, code of

ethics, board certification, standards of professional practice, and accreditation. In addition, they created electronic journals and newsletters that never existed before 1997. Good things have taken place within ASEP and its membership. So, be patient and stay the course. We are living in an age of technology and creativity. I believe that if we do those things others have done to enhance their professionalism, then we will eventually surrender our issues and learn to participate, singly and collectively, in the development of the profession of exercise physiology.

2. Change Takes Courage

Since the process of professionalization isn't something that happens fast, and since it is often associated with significant feelings of frustration and doubt, one has to draw on his/her sense of will to keep moving ahead. This act of the heart is essentially what we call courage, and I am so grateful for the exercise physiologists who have displayed the courage to stay with ASEP in spite of the rashness of others. Remember that the challenges that we deal with today will be less difficult in the future. It won't always be an uphill climb. Eventually the truth of failing the students of today will be understood. Those who have hidden behind the statement "I did not want to get involved." will see the students' suffering from dozens of meaningless academic degrees. Then, they will mentally escape from the past way of thinking to help colleagues grow in self-actualization. Such is life, so find time to enjoy life, laugh a lot, and smile big time, and of course it is important to stay true to your passion for the recognition of all exercise physiologists as credible healthcare professionals.

3. Commitment is Just That

Just about all aspects of life require "giving it our best" with the idea that we might not win the race. There is always a winner and those who don't win in sports. Working on behalf of creating a profession is no different. Deep inside I know what makes sense, and so I am running

the race of laying the foundation for a profession of exercise physiology. Could I be terribly wrong in believing what I am doing is the right thing to do? Do I have doubt about helping to create ASEP? No! Well, maybe just a little at those very low moments when everything seems so slow and friends disappear into the generic organizations. Yes, that is very uncomfortable and, yes, it gives rise to moments here and there of some doubt. Such is life, right? Doubt is a reasonable expectation of most things in life, but conviction and desire for something better than “what is” keeps me (and most good men and women) on the right track.

Remember the great statement by someone who said, “It is always better to attempt to do something great and fail than to attempt to do nothing and succeed.” I like it. Commitment is a good thing, especially when you have your heart in it. That is why people keep at it...whatever it is because their commitment is based on a belief of something better. Commitment is all about action and staying the course with a smile. Frankly, the true story is that I am happy for the opportunity of a lifetime to help build something that never existed before. That is exciting and, yes, tiring and frustrating.

4. Stay Strong

There is no need to feel defeated when working to create something new. All new creations are a process of bringing the pieces together. That is as I see it. Key individuals have given birth to ASEP and other key individuals are helping it to grow into its new reality. As strange as it might sound, it is an act of love in that it clearly helps others to realize their hopes and dreams of success. This is hardly much different from helping people who have lost everything and just existing has gotten the best of them. Helping out is just that, helping and bringing something into reality, much like raising a child and all the challenges that go with it.

There are degrees of pain when friends and colleagues either go their way or do worse. The essential point here is that you learn to forgive them and move on with your life. After all, even ASEP or a similar

responsibility can be viewed as God's purpose for a person's life work. When we become absorbed and wholly involved, that purpose gives meaning and intensity to life. No doubt I and others like me have grown stronger, given the lessons we have learned and will continue to learn. As my daughter, Tara, says "It's all good." What is interesting about the statement is that it helps me to "look for the good in the bad" of everything, including the obstacles and obvious challenges ahead of the ASEP leadership and the membership in actualizing professionalism in exercise physiology.

5. Patience Is a Good Thing, Learn to...

Picasso said, "Every act of creation is first of all an act of destruction." I take this to mean that the new form of ASEP thinking must destroy the old ways of doing things. Clearly, people don't like giving up what they are accustomed to. It is uncomfortable and even threatening to think differently. That is why some have engaged in questionable behaviors in regards to the work of ASEP. But, as they say, "Life goes on." Eventually, there will be a "breakthrough" moment and, then, the work of the believers will indeed be realized as a home run for everybody.

Meantime, it is critical that all ASEP exercise physiologists maintain a professional attitude while working to realize the ASEP vision, goals, and objectives. Learn the power in patience despite failure and rejection. Learn that daring to think differently is not a sin, but an act of creativity. Be patient with your colleagues, but do help them if possible to dream the dream of something better for all exercise physiologists, particularly those with the undergraduate degree (and not just the doctorate prepared ones). Learn to be a positive thinker, especially when colleagues work to isolate you, if not hurt you by their negativity towards you. Learn to stay strong and dream of a better future. Learn to smile and be willing to take that extra step (however long the journey) to keep going the right path. Learn to live your future now.

***The best way to predict the future is to create it.
- Peter Drucker***