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## Who Is in Charge, Them or You?

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*In the final analysis, only exercise physiologists can build and promote the profession of exercise physiology.*

I like to think that my work is under my direction and not that of someone else. Yes, of course, there is often a person in charge of a department, if not a chairperson, then a manager or a director or, more generally, a boss. My point is that I think I am responsible for doing my work and doing so the very best I can. Yet, often I feel that I am not doing everything I should to help ensure the professionalization of exercise physiology. I have worked on my attitude so that I will achieve my goals. I have conquered to great degree the fear of failing. Understandably, the change process is not just a challenge but several marathons one after the other.

“Never stop believing” is a phrase that I hear myself saying. “Never quit” is another. “Stay the course” is almost helpful in pulling one’s own strings. It seems that everything depends on a person’s attitude. As an example, some mornings I catch myself saying: “I am going to think positive and happy today.” Or, “Today, more exercise physiologists will join ASEP and help make a difference. After all, growing and nurturing an organization is not easy. I can honestly say that when I laid the foundation for ASEP in 1997, I did not realize the discipline that is required to inspire and minister to exercise physiologists at all levels. However, I have the faith to stay the course.

*...faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”*

-- Hebrews 11:1

I also know that if I don’t do my best and live the success of what ASEP has accomplished, then, I can’t help others gain fulfillment, peace of mind, and joy they need for success in

their lives. Working together, we individually and collectively grow beyond ourselves. This thinking, I believe, is important. It adds self-esteem to individuals who have met with challenges that rendered them with the wrong attitude and often times indifference. Neither is appropriate for a healthcare professional. Those of us who get this point have come together under the flag of ASEP that builds positive self-esteem. I dare you to join ASEP and decide that you too can be successful, happy, and self-sufficient.

People might think this article doesn't have anything to do with exercise physiology, but they are wrong. The failure of exercise physiologists to take the time to think about the ASEP code of ethics and professionalism is hugely problematic. The truth is ... publishing one more research article cannot correct the problem of failed leadership. Many college professors might think so, but here again they fail to understand what other healthcare professionals already know because they have unconsciously closed their mind to the full bloom of the importance of a professional organization. Since I believe attitude makes all the difference, the growth in exercise physiology depends on developing the right state of mind.

Others may disagree with me. That is fine. I don't expect everyone to jump into the ASEP boat. Some are simply scared of change. Others like it as it is, thus they aren't interested in knowing how it could be. Then, there is the issue of politics, power, and greed. Yes, there is a strong current of "who's more powerful and bigger" in exercise physiology. Yet, a slight alteration in Neil Armstrong's famous line – "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind" – offers hope and opportunity for a better life. For example, "One exercise physiologist, regardless of his or her level of education, can make a difference on behalf of all exercise physiologists."

I believe that one person with the right attitude can make a difference in his or her life and that of thousands, which reminds me of a prayer by Robert A. Schuller. Read it slowly several times and rest assured that you will benefit from it.

*Oh, Lord, give me the self-esteem to believe in me  
And the vision to see where You want this child to be.  
Then give me the faith to carry it through  
And the wisdom to know I did it with You!*

Think with me for a moment: You can earn an exercise science degree and call yourself an exercise physiologist, right? Is the statement a paradox? It seems to be self-contradictory. Logically, the statement contradicts itself because the two are entirely different academic degrees by title. But, in everyday language, while it might seem contradictory, it could be true. However, it can't be true unless the person with an exercise science degree sits for the ASEP Board Certification exam and passes it. Then, he or she can refer to him- or herself as an exercise physiologist. Otherwise, it is not true at all. Similarly, it makes no sense for the exercise physiologist to refer to him- or herself as a "physiologist" unless he or she has an academic degree in physiology.

So, what does this have to do with “Who Is in Charge, Them or You?” The point is, “You” must be in charge of your destiny. “You” must understand the ASEP argument for “What is exercise physiology?” and “Who is an exercise physiologist?” “You” must be a leader and not a follower. It’s your choice. You can draw closer to “them” or you can be in charge of “your own life.” Why not try thinking for yourself and see the difference it will make? Why not believe in the vision, mission, goals, and objectives of ASEP? As Robert A. Schuller put it, “The person you see is the person you’ll be.” Do you see yourself as a personal trainer or as an exercise physiologist?

Sure, there is always risk involved in becoming your own person. But, freedom is worth it. Take charge and take a chance on “your” greatness. It’s up to you, and it depends entirely on you. As Franklin D. Roosevelt said, “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” Why not press on?

*Press On: Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful individuals with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and termination alone are omnipotent.*

-- Ray Kroc