

Living the Dream!

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When I dare to help others – to use what information that I have – then it becomes less and less a problem that I am alone.

FROM OUTSIDE the door of my office, a voice says, “Where are the jobs? And I said, “What can I do to help you?” The student said, “Can you help me?” Again, “I said, “What is it you need?” Then, it became painfully clear from the tears in her eyes that she needed a job. Each time I come into contact with students, I share their concerns and know I must “Cry out!” with them. Distressed, I wrote to a handful of friends. If you are reading this brief article with the desire to live your dream, why not click on the following information:

USAFA is now accepting applications for Instructor of Physical Education (Human Performance Lab)

- Open Period: Monday, October 29, 2012 to Friday, November 09, 2012
- This position is located in the Directorate of Athletics, Physical Education Department, United States Air Force Academy, Colorado.
- Responsibilities may include, but are not limited to, teaching undergraduate exercise physiology course, along with other physical education courses to include combatives, aquatics and lifetime sports; testing and training of intercollegiate athletes; conducting research and serving on internal committees.
- for additional information and how to apply:
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It is amazing what happens when people care, especially when they learn the importance of reaching out as a voice of hope and change. Serving society isn't easy when students and faculty learn little more than satisfying their own interest. Yet, by saying "yes" to doing the right thing for the right reason, we find peace and purpose in life. Instinctively as this thinking should be, it isn't. No doubt that is why we feel betrayed and angry at different times in their lives.

Each of us must always be aware of the fact that we can and do make a difference when we take time to help our students. Yes, even though we might not want to admit it, when we share their concerns we give them a voice and, often times, the opportunity of something better. This point is not to dismiss what others do in different ways, especially when it avoids injuring the spirit. Rather, it is simply about embracing the moment and living your dream of something better for everyone. Helping students by giving them hope of a credible career in healthcare and supporting their passion for exercise physiology nurtures the inner spirit of each of us.

If we live by the spirit, let us also be guided by the spirit.

-- Galatians 5:25

In the end, it is necessary to be aware of the shallow and narrow perceptions of some people and how they personally portray the dreams of others. Little do they realize just how transparent and revealing their behaviors are and how it has defined them. As though they were naked and spiritless, they live a meaningless existence even though they are not usually aware of their mistakes. Why not become instead a trailblazer who opens doors and creates new opportunities and a new image for exercise physiology students? Why not become known as someone who stood up staunchly for his or her beliefs? There is no shame in trying to do what hasn't been done, especially if it is the honorable thing to do.

Hold your head high students, cherish your thoughts about exercise as medicine, take risks, try new ideas, and don't listen to people who want you to live their ideas and their thinking. Turn exercise physiology into an adventure of entrepreneurial opportunities. Try unfamiliar paths and expand your horizons. Imagine, "What if..." What if you started your own healthcare business? Imagine, where would you be 10 years from now? One needs to only ask once such a question, and the answer becomes much more appealing

than working at Bob's Gym. Never forget the power of your mind to create your future, and remember "If you think you can or can't, you are right!"

Surround yourself with positive thoughts, positive expectations, and dreams that drive your passion for success. Thinking right is the key to looking back on life with many great memories. If someone asked you this very minute if you are *thinking right*, what would you say? The bottom line is this: The courage to deal with those who aren't thinking right and to bring a whole new body of healthcare opportunities to society and to the students of exercise physiology isn't for the weak hearted. Discovering new paths, creating new friends, and finding ways to help overcome the inertia of failed rhetoric is the means to moving from darkness of little to the much larger light of possibilities.

If you are a college teacher, learn to be a compassionate teacher. Realize that your job is more about your students than it is about doing research and building your resume. The best academic degree with trusting professors begins where compassion and vision meet.

If the undergraduate degree equals the sounds of laughter, that is good. But, if the degree is a heart ache, the student will be forever altered and marked by grief.

Naturally, this speaks to the not so obvious need for role models who are living the dream of something better for their students and the profession of exercise physiology. Role models who enable students to hope and believe in a successful return on their invested tuition dollars are what a college education should be about. It is this point that offers meaning and indeed footprints that invite others to follow the same path.

Joni Woelfel may have said it best, "It is when we help others that we learn of ourselves." Time and time again, while teaching more than 6000 students over 40 years of college teaching, I have received gifts from many of them. Just recently, I opened an email gift from a student I taught 30 years ago.

Dr. Boone, it has been many years since I called you in Mississippi. You answered and we spoke for about 10 minutes back in 1986. I think you were in the middle of a big party, but you were friendly as ever. I think of you often. I am going to remind you of what you said to me when I was a junior in college. I played tight end on the football team. After taking a health class with you, I was asked to follow you into your private office with the cadavers. You convinced me that I should take Gross Anatomy with you.

You looked at me straight in the eye and you said: “Cuz, let me tell you something: You are not like most of the football players I have known. You can go places if you want to. You are not a C student.”

I have to tell you that while I was never a C student, I never felt like an A student until taking that Anatomy Class. You pushed me in class to always know the answers. The other students used to gossip about why you asked me the questions about origins, insertions, functions, and nerves so frequently. I knew you would ask me so I made sure I knew the answers. I talked about as much as you did in that class and I did make an A on every exam. You continued to say to me that I was doing better than the biology people and the pre-med people taking the class.

I began to believe I was smart, and it became a self-fulfilling prophecy. It really comes down to applying what you know to the world around you. That class was great for me because I have never gone into any venture since thinking that I wouldn't be the first one in my class or group to master the skill, and that has largely been true and it was mostly because of that conversation. I have managed health clubs, sold pharmaceuticals and hospital instruments. Later, I went on to sell industrial chemicals, and I even started my own company. I opened a fitness studio this past year based on fitness classes, not weights.

Mostly, I would like to thank you for taking an interest in me. You helped me to believe in myself off the field and that was invaluable.

The courage to be original, to face life's challenges after college, to experience the good and the bad is a necessity. My friend who wrote the email believes it all begins with faith and the right attitude to stay the course. No matter where you are, each day with the right education and discipline, attitude makes all the difference, especially in dealing with difficult people and even the really stupid ones. But, remember, betrayal can be a major blessing. Always look for the good in the bad. In chaos there is sunshine. In betrayal there is forgiveness even if it should mean that nothing will ever be the same.

Key Point: As written in Daniel 10-19, the best way to deal with the bullies is this: “Do not fear, greatly beloved, you are safe. Be strong and courageous!”

The change process is difficult. Trying to change status quo is hardly ever easy. But, in the process, it is always important to be strong and courageous. There will be uphill

battles to finding the right career. Yet, more often than not, people learn from their struggles and, yes, they learn from each other. Some will fool you. Not everyone has a backbone. Not everyone understands integrity. Many are always looking for the safe way to keep their position or status. Do what you can to help them, and then leave them as they are to figure out their own problems.

As The Dalai Lama said, “Our prime purpose in this life is to help others. And if you can’t help them, at least don’t hurt them.” So, why not stop throwing stones and instead engage yourself with more acts of kindness. Perhaps, this message doesn’t come too late even for the bullies. They may learn from their mistakes even while realizing that those they offended may forgive them but not forget their dialogue or acts of betrayal. After all, living in the fringe is not living your dream. It is a place without the power to go beyond “what is” and, therefore, it fails in the act of awakening to something better.

What is needed are compassionate and caring college teachers who will become a compass for others who are seeking their way in society.

Like the intrinsic value of the hallways of educational buildings and the physiological equipment in an exercise physiology laboratory, the feelings that jump at you are often sacred like. Buildings, equipment, and students are worth our time both in reflection and sweat. Similarly, the heart of our work as exercise physiologist is living the dream of something better. It is all about professionalism, which is the highest order of possibility thinking when it comes to the 21st century opportunities for exercise physiology students when they graduate. That is the answer, isn’t it, that is, to trust one’s education as “the” guide to a better future, especially when the future has been so unknown.

It shouldn’t be necessary to be reminded of how important professionalism is to the students of exercise physiology, but it is. And yet, all other healthcare professionals from physical therapy to medicine and beyond understand that professionalism is at the core of their standards of practice. Faculty and students who are void of professionalism are at a loss for grasping the deepest meaning of their work and value. This point is critically important. So, learn to think positive about the ASEP leaders and members for they have sacrificed everything to hold exercise physiologists accountable.

Yes, it is difficult and it is painful at times, especially in maintaining relationships. It seems many do so simply because they are either afraid to leave what is familiar or what is promised. The personal challenge of every exercise physiologist who is interested in living the dream of something better is to acknowledge their fear of change. That means simply this: Replace worry with hope and expectation. It is the only way to feel you are on a purpose-driven path, growing a little every day as a healthcare professional. If you are following your heart's desire (like the young lady mentioned at the beginning of this article), you are living your dream.

Key Point: If God leads us to it, He will lead us through it.

-- Joseph P. Biernat