

# Professionalization of Exercise Physiologyonline

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## **Understanding Faith and Change**

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I was raised by my parents to think of faith as something that keeps a person going. Whatever the challenge might be, I was taught that faith sustained a person through thick and thin. In other words, I was taught that faith is analogous to sustainability! If you think you can, then act as though you can. That was the bottom line while growing up.

Is it true? Is faith the answer? If so, by “faith” what do we mean? What if I failed to succeed? Is it because my faith wasn’t enough? If faith isn’t the answer, then, what is the answer? Is it simply hard work and an attitude of never giving up? Or, is it that success or that of failure has nothing to do with faith?

If challenged as to why an idea is successful, is it likely that it is God’s creation? Are we interfused with God more than we know? Perhaps, we have already been in competition with ideas and possibilities beyond our everyday thinking. Similarly, perhaps, we are part of a displayed attitude sustained by a “spirit” that is yet to be understood.

What isn’t clear is our lack of knowledge that what we are engaged in is a miracle or it is an act of God. Is it both? Is the role of the American Society of Exercise Physiologists “miraculous” or is it “supernatural.” It is tempting to suggest that it is neither one, but reality is often difficult to grasp. The professionalism of exercise physiology is consistent with well-known types of hard work. Someone

else might disagree, but that is okay. The language of professionalism expresses itself in factual assertions of certain thinking.

That thinking is consistent with the work and implications of established professionals through healthcare. It is reasonable and it is a matter of straight thinking at that. Not only is it reasonable, it an attitude of thinking right. That is why the ASEP organization is the right expression of a new 21st century exercise physiology perspective. It is right, and it will help protect the students in our colleges who get a college education so they can locate a credible, financially sound job.

The ASEP perspective is one way of seeing exercise physiology. It should be the only way because the subject matter is too important to be relegated to the continuation of failed rhetoric. Exercise physiology is a profession whereby exercise physiologists prescribe exercise as medicine. However important, it is not and cannot be research on one hand by those with the doctorate degree and Bob's Gym on the other hand by the wannabe exercise physiologist.

I work on the assumption that credible exercise physiologists can only begin from within the vision of professionalism. Reality is that non-doctorate exercise physiologists are seen from a certain perspective; a certain point of view. That view is what society sees with their eyes but not their mind. This is true also for many academic exercise physiologists. They are in fact at the core of the problem. Some seven or eight decades later, the notion of professionalism is still removed from the full meaning of exercise physiology.

Yet, it must eventually become reality that exercise physiology is no longer the "physiology of exercise" course that physical educators decades ago and now exercise science majors take. In spite of the many possible manipulations by the politically involved to keep exercise physiology as a research discipline, it is very gradually becoming visible to students and others as a healthcare profession. Those who turn a blind eye fail to get that doing nothing is worse than being neutral. Simply stated, they cannot decipher their failure to act for lacking the necessary presupposition for seeing themselves differently.

Many academic exercise physiologists go about their teaching, researching, and mentoring without seeing the big picture. Even when questions are raised by their students, they listen without understanding. Their minds have been dulled by years of misinformation. Therefore, they go about the practice of “teaching” with all the shortcomings of their earlier teachers. This failure to see the big picture is never innocent and never passive. It is a particular way of looking at exercise physiology and not seeing it as it should be.

It makes sense to question the idea that exercise physiology is physiology of exercise. The ASEP exercise physiologists feel that it is their duty to see the invisible. It is this kind of realism that allows them to experience their desired reality. Mystery and possibilities begin in the senses, in the vision of seeing what isn't in what can be. This is exactly the dilemma faced by all exercise physiologists. Everything professionals know, they know by attending to what is elsewhere with other professionals and, therefore, even unsettling ideas of always ongoing professionalization become testimony for change.

There is a difference between the established professions and the work of the ASEP leaders, but without question the latter has moved from indifference to uniformity in thinking as healthcare professionals. The reason for this is the equalization that occurs in thought and behavior. It is the understanding that time goes forward and that all positive change rises from the pieces of things that have fallen apart. Life has always been a complicated piece of work.

The terrain between chaos and order is a delicate one that is unpredictable and yet, at times it is a lecture of randomness measured by complex study. It takes time to organize new thinking, just as it takes time to grow a rich history of logical evolution of the professionalization of exercise physiology. Similarly, it took billions of years for the earth to evolve one “human” thing; but the simple minded person thinks exercise physiology by way of ASEP is suppose to have evolve yesterday.

The problem of evolving is that it is a function of time. Intuitive expectation is in equilibrium with time. What's more, all strengths and weaknesses of the actual process of change represent fragments of the change process. Yet, despite its

ongoing complexity, the notions of depth and complexity eventually surface. This is the risk of change. The ironic thing is that the phenomena of a new life cannot be realized without action and everyday practice of the “meaning” of a professional.

Therefore, when we say “healthcare professionals” in everyday life, we spontaneously think of accounts of professionals and discard information that is less predictable. We listen for new thoughts and certain states of a composing mind that knows the name and direction of where we are going. At times, the process arouses mental energy that may be unpleasant because we experience anxiety and even depression. At other times, we become inspired to try the impossible, to free ourselves from our past. We rebel not because of our pride, but because we are emotionally caught up in the good of change.

No wonder we so often feel separated and different. The function of taking action is to change and to transition. It is the practice of growing-up and associating with the “freedom of thought” that is passed downward from those who have gone on. It is learning that it is okay to fail while trying something new, and that the unfathomable process of change is exactly that. Otherwise it is impossible to condense one’s work to an understandable digestion of facts, ideas, and individuals who are gradually learning to think outside the box. Change is not about the opposite of status quo. Rather, it is a consciousness effort to nourish the complex of change.

The thesis is extremely simple, at least when there is the capacity to summarize events of yesterday into a simple story of failed rhetoric. Yet, no matter how simple this point is, it does not effectively counter the non-change consciousness. Thus, the point is this: When you open your eyes to see the real damage of failed thinking, you see something. You see the future, and it is then that one acts immediately to get even a single glimpse of what matters. So open your eyes, listen, and act.

Practiced regularly, a person will gradually learn to see the light, hear the need to change, and register one’s position of making sense of everything. Learning to live one’s vision is symbolic of what reality should be. It is a combination of faith and action. Moreover, it contains the ideas of measured work of one’s integrity that

corresponds to the rate of informational change. Thus, at some point in the future, what exercise physiologists' think eventually becomes a forced reality.

Remarkably, the time line during the process of change is in accordance with the flow of information back and forth between one exercise physiologist and another. The difference between exercise physiologists today and tomorrow is the increased interest in healthcare and exercise as medicine. This is hardly something for which most exercise physiologists have published. Many, in fact, would be profoundly shocked if the truths were clarified. Turning a blind eye isn't a flawless behavior. Indeed, there are many areas within the profession where adults have failed to think straight.

But, this goes to show that once the ball is pushed, it will undergo a change in position. From the professional's point of view, the remarkable thing is that there is a nonstop effort to publish without consideration for the difficulties students face when they graduate from college. This thinking can be mapped, compressed, and summarized in different ways, but the only correct way is to see and live exercise physiology as a healthcare profession is to tell it like it is. Being able to sense the need to change, to exit the mind and body to act, and to discard the past way of thinking exists within the dynamics of the mind.

This is the point, isn't it? The mind is inspiring and powerful. It is either a story of events that violates the act of freedom or it is the act of communicating new ideas and new freedoms. The impossibility is possible only if exercise physiologists express their sense of drama, only if they exercise their brains, and only if they verbally and all other ways capture the ASEP 21st century perspective. Or, they could simply continue to run about with their tails between their legs. If it is the latter, then, this is the dilemma and the failure to make a breakthrough in living the ASEP vision.

One thing is clear: The indifference will eventually die. Then, thinking about professionalism in exercise physiology will be equal to the research efforts of understanding the psychophysiological benefits of regular exercise. But even when we try to use both eyes to see a clear picture of what is needed in exercise physiology, we still may not see the existing traditional blind spots that keep us

from getting rid of the illusion of yesterday's thinking. Understandably, to see differently, as a rule will take a while to switch thinking from then to now. But this does not make the effort less significant to push to live, see, and experience a new consciousness and view of exercise physiology.

The expediency of this thinking lies in its spotlight on professionalism. The way is paved for developing important inroads into professionalism, professional development, and knowledge of exercise physiology as a credible healthcare. This means very simply that if exercise physiologists do not provide an account of who they are and what they do, then, no doubt in time more college graduates will experience the conviction that a college education is worthless.

How long will it take for the academic exercise physiologists to wake up and smell the roses? As a college teacher for the past 40 years at five colleges and universities, it is acutely clear that the effects of failing to think differently will only create more confusion and failed rhetoric for decades to come. Put simply, those who don't change from yesterday's thinking will continue to be part of the problem. They will wake up one day to realize that personal training is not a profession, and that certifying college graduates as personal trainers is the wrong path to have taken. Such thinking is a meaningless state of mind that makes explicit what has been known for decades. Not every college teacher is a straight thinking person.

The upshot of the failures of individuals who are teaching exercise physiology is that they will eventually figure out they are "problem." This is most true among those who have derailed the efforts of those who have witnessed the failure of mainstream thinking and have to the conclusion that it is wrong and are doing something about it. Of course there is also the powerful blurring of straight thinking by the well-established identity of existing organizations, professional or otherwise. The fact is simply this: good people will do bad things to keep "what is" and "what is comfortable" from changing.

They have not only convinced themselves of their right to do so, but they have learned to live with the double standard. They have learned to adjust to their brief but often unacceptable standards of behavior. Even their attempt to organize in support of the deception does little to perfect a formula for success. Ultimately,

they will realize that denying behavior and misdirecting their tensions will only further define their history. In reality then they are fated to submit themselves to the generic world of sports medicine and exercise science and, therefore, to live a life of a lie.

So what does all of this mean? How right is ASEP to work hard to create the profession of exercise physiology? This is certainly an important question. Where is the critical-mass of exercise physiologists to share in the direction of exercise physiology development? Where are the exercise physiologists to deal with the endless wrong thinking of others? Where are the exercise physiologists to nurture the institutional habits of professionalism? Where are the networks of exercise physiology and exercise as medicine? What is the right thinking and sense of rightness for exercise physiologists of the ASEP organization if they are to provide a voice for change?

Understandably, there are no quick answers to the questions just asked. But, remember, the ASEP leaders are working on embedding professionalism in academia and exercise physiology. Remember also, change is a process. It does not happen overnight. A new way of looking at excellence and acceptance as healthcare professionals takes time. Much of this thinking was initiated in the first few years of 2000 and, while it continues, the discussion is roughly one-third of what it should be. Clearly, this is a failure on part of the academic exercise physiologists who have allowed themselves to be trapped by decades of misinformation.

It would be safe to say that academic exercise physiologists are walking a fine line in relation to success and failure. The quality of their thinking or the lack thereof will shape, maintain, and sustain a worldview of exercise physiology or it will continue to define itself via past thinking and, therefore, conform to the past administration led by exercise science and others. As one might guess, it takes a large heart to carry the load of change and its impressive necessities in the faith and learning dialogue of cultivating a new view of exercise physiology. One could say, it is all about faith and believing strongly that the integration of professionalism and exercise physiology concepts and ideas will take place.

With this context in mind, given the threats from others and their desire to damage the reputation of the ASEP members, it is important to stay strong and resistant to the efforts of the “little people” as they have their moment in time. As with essentially all other evolving professions, those who work on behalf of their profession understand “God’s call to faith.” They get the message of “unselfish service to others” as well as the ethical and professional necessity to be responsible and knowledgeable professionals.