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Look For the Good in the Bad

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Instead of complaining that the rose bush is full of thorns, be happy the thorn bush has roses.

-- Proverb

Recently, I was asked: "Don't you feel discouraged when it seems as if your dreams are very slowly to materialize." I said, "What are you talking about?" He said, "For the last several ASEP meetings, the number of people in attendance has been very small." Then, I said: "That is not a problem. My friends and I are determined to keep the dream alive." Our talking went back and forth several more times, but in the end I said that too many people listen to naysayers. It is most unfortunate that they do not have confidence in their own aspirations.

Dreams do become reality. Some simply require more time than others. The journey is different for different challenges. Those of us who keep the dream alive within us experience its growth, however slowly it is to everyone else. Proverbs 3:5-6 states it well, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." This, I believe because I do believe that God brings good out of tragedy. I trust in God to take care of the students of exercise physiology; a dream I think he planted in my heart.

You gotta look for the good in the bad, the happy in your sad, the gain in your pain, and what makes you grateful not hateful.

-- Karen Salmansohn

My dream gives hope to many because it gives them the expectation of a better future. They, as members of the American Society of Exercise Physiologists are willing to take one step at a time. In this sense, it is no more complicated than trusting in God and cherishing the relationship. My point is not complicated. The bottom line is that it is never too late to find the success that is linked to a career-specific college degree. Yes, I understand that college graduates are accustomed to applying to graduate school to earn a master's degree or to physical therapy in hopes of increasing their chances of being "job successful".

Such thinking should not be the case for college students who are paying a seriously high tuition per semester. The academic degree should help our students accomplish their reason for attending college. Those who disagree should be told to move on and get out of the way of the students who desire to climb the mountaintops. They understand that fulfillment, joy, and success are not found in simply getting a college degree. All three are found in being true, persistent, and faithful to the decades of ethical academic teaching.

Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma - which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition.

-- Steve Jobs

Success after college does not come from simply earning an academic degree. As a college teacher Wake Forest University in the early 1970s, I asked a colleague: "Why is it that exercise physiologists do not have their own organization?" His response was, "Exercise physiologists are members of the American College of Sports Medicine. That is the way it has always been, and that is where they present their research." His response confirmed the mess we were in then and now some 40 years later.

The problem with academic exercise physiologists is that they are more concerned about their success than honoring a commitment and respect for exercise physiology. In other words, they are working to take care of themselves first and there afterwards they may or may not address the students' concerns.

Likewise, it seems that they are happy as exercise physiologists under the sports medicine title. It is strange to me since it is contrary to the work of established professions like physical therapy, nursing, and athletic training. Each profession has its own professional commitment to its own professional organization.

Meanwhile, academic exercise physiologists call themselves "scientists", which is a profound misunderstanding. If only someone could give the academic exercise physiologists a discerning heart to govern exercise physiology as a healthcare profession and to distinguish between rhetoric of yesterday and the students' needs of today and tomorrow. It is not hard to know what is right if only exercise physiologists, singly and collectively, would discipline their minds and say "no" to generic interests.

No, none of this is new to me! It is just tiring to experience the same rhetoric and nonsense decade after decade. Yet, it is my constant hope and prayer that I will see the necessary changes in how academic exercise physiologists think. This point is important, given my colleagues' surprise at the University of Southern Mississippi in the 1980s when I (as the Graduate Coordinator) tried to change the degree program from Human Performance to Exercise Physiology. Despite my planning and effort to get the administration to speak with an exercise physiologist who understood the need to link the academic degree by name to the same professional title, the administration brought in a "physiologist" who is obviously not an "exercise physiologist". You know the rest of the story!

But, as an ASEP member, the gift of doing what I can to help the students of exercise physiology to not lose hope is my way of looking for the good in the bad. I would like to see our students graduate with a career-specific degree in exercise physiology so that they can logically and ethically call themselves exercise physiologists. I would like to see our students graduate from an ASEP accredited academic program from which they are required at the end of their senior year to sit for the ASEP Board Certification to practice exercise physiology. As I focus on these goals and expectations I am grateful for the opportunity to see the ASEP dream come true for those who are looking for a better way to survive within the public sector. Hence, when I take time to look at how many fulfilled dreams already have taken place, I am thankful, knowing that God has a better plan for the students of exercise physiology.

Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'
-- Martin Luther King, Jr.

Recall that Jesus said: "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened." This is such a power statement that we should all take time to read it. Believe and the new mind-set will give exercise physiologists the strength to discover a new 21st century exercise physiology that is not only concerned with academia, research, and publishing, but also academia, teaching, and students as well as academia, healthcare, and ASEP. Such thinking will prove to be a life-changing event.

I do not believe that a generic organization, regardless of its power or politics, is capable of developing an exercise physiologist. It can only plant the seed of personal importance through presenting research. Exercise physiologists need their own professional organization in order to grow professionally. The ASEP leaders make it quite clear where growth must occur even when it creates disagreement, given that new thinking and change comes from it. This point is important because conflicts and struggles often result in the identification of what is necessary to avoid wasting previous time. So, the bottom line is this: Always look for the good in the bad. It is the means to dismantling the old unresolved deafness that is keeping exercise

physiologists from entering into a new means to consider their options. Otherwise, failing to take a stand for what we believe to be right is to commit one's life to continued failure.

Key Point: Why not breathe deeply, relax, and forgive each of us for our imprisoned thinking to the past ways and rhetoric in the expectation of a much richer life as professional exercise physiology healthcare entrepreneurs?

Suggested Readings

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