**Every ‘Day Is Another Day: Believe You Can**

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Every day that passes should be lived in light the past, in light of the future, and in light of eternity.

-- Thomas Chalmers (Ev1780-1847)

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very day is another day to live ASEP. There is not a single day that does not require some thinking and doing on behalf of the professional organization of exercise physiologists. Perhaps, my comments come as a surprise to the reader. I suspect that not too many exercise physiologists actually read articles pertaining to professionalism. This is the result of the exercise physiologists’ long history of emphasis on research and nothing else. At least for the moment, it is apparent that only research matters. There are very few things that compare, especially since doing research correlates well with status and promotion for the academic exercise physiologists.

It is true that certain undeniably fixed thoughts emerge as obstacles to new thinking. The events of history support this point all too well. But, if exercise physiology is to be more than the doctorate degree, the surface of every academic degree that is dirty in its rhetoric must be cleaned. One of the most prominent of these dirty surfaces is exercise science! It is a completely useless college degree when it comes to finding career-specific job opportunities. One can only imagine the pain and dysfunctional states of the minds of so many college graduates who must live with the deception and disappointment.

Ultimately, this means that the students’ education today is rarely what it should be. There are inevitable contradictions and failures. Unfortunately, the birth of an idea decades earlier continues to prevail with such negative certainty that strangely enough it is still a topic of little interest among the academic exercise physiologists and/or college advisors and administrators. What a mess and yet, it gets worse. Even with all the passing of days, years, and decades, nothing has change – except more of the same rhetoric. The first thought by physical educators/exercise physiologists back when prevails today as though it will always be the final word. Distressing isn’t even close to the feelings felt by the ASEP leaders. Revolution is the only answer and, frankly, it is integral to change. By this, I mean a revolution in good thinking versus a failed rhetoric.

Whatever might have been the gut feeling of something special about exercise science decades ago is no longer the case today. It is time to do the honorable thing, and that is to update the academic exercise science degree to exercise physiology in every conceivable way possible. It is a matter of being willing to change the present-day thinking and feelings about the degree to improve the lives of the students. It should be obvious but apparently it isn’t that the quality of student’s thinking leads to achieving their dreams. If they are not provided the right tools, the right degree, and the right breaks during and after college, failure is inevitable. Now, some people might think this is crazy talk, but my 40 years of college teaching tells me otherwise.

I believe that history will argue in favor of the change. Moreover, the ASEP leadership is convinced that it is doing the right thing for the right reason. This article is an attempt, therefore, to keep alive the intensity and 15-year tradition that is driving the change process. The ASEP exercise physiologists are playing a significant role by “staying the course.” At two o’clock in the afternoon of yesterday, 99% of the exercise physiologists would have walked away from ASEP because it simply is a huge volume of work and that doesn’t take into account the criticisms or even worse. Well, this isn’t true for people like Shane Paulson who has his own work as a health and fitness business entrepreneur. He is also the President of ASEP. He isn’t in denial of the challenges nor does he need the President’s position to be successful.

Paul of Tarsus (c. 10-65) said, “Bad company corrupts good character.” What if the quote is reversed? “Good company corrupts bad character.” I believe Shane Paulson, Dale Wagner, and Frank Wyatt to mention just three exercise physiologists are changing how people think about ASEP and professionalism in exercise physiology. Their good company is singly and collectively corrupting those who were convinced of the role of exercise science in academia. That is a good thing. The good news is that other exercise physiologists are getting this message. It is the same as creating a never-ending circular series of positive thoughts that can only lead to more leadership, teamwork, and growth in exercise physiology.

ASEP is very much like a piece of art that is constantly transitioning from one appearance to another. As more people become acquainted with its goals and objectives, the battle for change intensifies. Increasingly therefore, as more exercise physiologists want to become recognized healthcare professions, they realize the work of ASEP and the good ideas that keep coming from it. They realize also that finally they see what they couldn’t see earlier. The good news is that the mind and how or why a person thinks a certain way can change when they start to think for themselves. Gradually, then, they see themselves in a different place with an entirely different impact on society. The academics, in particular, become better at thinking and caring for their students. They get the importance of communication and teaching exercise physiology not just as a science but as a healthcare profession.

Learning to write articles about professionalism in exercise physiology is learning to think and living exercise physiology in a different way from the experience of yesterday’s thinking. Thoughts are shaped differently. Ideas are processed and new possibilities are expected. Everything begins with the seed of exercise physiology as a healthcare profession. The idea of “who are we” and “what is our function” is driven by the original thought that pinned the ASEP vision and mission statements. Now, more than ever in the history of exercise physiology, like every other profession, every thought has the potential to become something great. After all, what good is a college degree if it has no application to real life circumstances? That’s the problem with exercise science, especially since it is divorced from both philosophic and professional principles that guide the development of profession.

Big-picture thinking allows the exercise physiologist to visit new ideas every day of the week, month, and year. It brings maturity and connectedness to new ideas that need relationships, timing, and acceptance. Also critical is the simple fact it keeps the ASEP exercise physiologist thinking about professionalism and credibility. Let’s face it: many aspects of exercise physiology would be greatly enhanced if more exercise physiologists would learn from the ASEP mindset. Focused thinking is the key to great ideas and new possibilities. So, why not explore your own areas of interest within the styles of ASEP thinking and imagination? Why not connect with your ideas in an article or, perhaps, write a book about professionalism in exercise physiology? Hammering home your ideas can help move exercise physiology into the 21st century.

In sum, why not believe that you are already where you want to be? If you are an ASEP member, then, you are already living the future. It is a matter of walking in faith and in the Spirit of change that you can resist the criticisms of the world, and that you can grow as a credible healthcare profession. To help others with the transition, why not give them the following poem for internalizing the truths that will keep them on track:

**If You Believe You Can, You Can**

If you think you are beaten, you are.

If you think you dare not, you don’t.

If you want to win but think you can’t,

It is almost a cinch you won’t.

If you think you’ll lose, you’ve lost.

For out of the world we find

That success begins with a fellow’s will;

It’s all in the state of mind.

Life’s battles don’t always go

To the stronger or the faster man;

But sooner or later the man that wins

Is the one who thinks he can.

-- Unknown Author