



Musings from a Thirsty Therapist

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The age-old adage says, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink." Or can you?

In my 16 years of experience as a physical therapist, I've invested many hours educating patients on the benefits of physical activity, diet modification, and development of a lifestyle plan that promotes healthy aging. I carry that same fervor for education to the classroom where I share my experiences as a clinician with students studying to become physical therapists in hopes of expediting their efficiency at improving their patients' conditions. Both in the clinic and the classroom there are learners who are responsive to the educational material, and those that resist or ignore it. One would imagine that after so many years of teaching I'd be able to identify those who are avid recipients versus those who I know are appeasing my efforts, however strangely, this hasn't been the case. Much like imparting advice to my children, sometimes the knowledge seems like it is falling on deaf ears, only to find weeks, months, years, or decades later, my efforts are acknowledged and yield a positive outcome. So perhaps it is less about the teacher, but the student who matters.

Making a change in your lifestyle certainly requires discipline, interest, and encouragement, but most importantly, it requires acceptance. Acceptance of the fact that you desire a change and are ready, physically, mentally, and spiritually, to make that change. Perhaps you are facing a health concern that feels overwhelming; maybe you struggle with your weight or pain; or possibly you are coping with your advanced age by becoming sedentary. Whatever your cause, the key catalyst in overcoming your struggle is acknowledging the many barriers that stand in the way of your acceptance and slowly eliminating them one by one.

Acceptance requires the right timing. In order to be ready to take your first step towards a new outlook or approach it is critical to be in the right frame of mind mentally. Depression, sadness, denial, and anxiety make learning and adapting difficult, in fact, nearly impossible. Understanding how to manage your mental status by utilizing tools like exercise, meditation, journaling, counseling and conversing will assist your ability to mitigate those barriers and allow your brain the ability to listen and learn. Calming the inner mind allows the body to do its job more effectively, and whether that job is healing, building strength, improving balance, or creating a discipline of fitness, it is important to inhibit those negative factors that are limiting your progress.

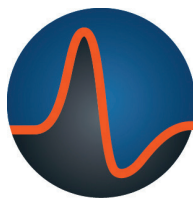
Often I hear my patients, friends, and family contribute their inability to make a change to not knowing how to take the first step. Feeling overwhelmed can stifle even the best intentions! In the end, however, it doesn't matter how you take the first step, but rather that you merely commit to taking one. Read a book, listen to a podcast, listen to a friend's suggestion, or find a knowledgeable practitioner who cares and ask the right questions. Much like a rock rolling down a slope, all that is necessary is the initial shove. Once the momentum starts, you and your loved ones will be pleased with the outcome.

So are you ready to drink at the watering hole? Take note of your frame of mind and your willingness to accept and commit to a change. Know that there are people out there who care about your progress and are willing to spend the time to help in any way possible. Because at the end of the day, no one wants to quench his thirst alone. Wouldn't it be grand to know there is always someone there with whom to toast. Cheers to you, my friends.

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TAKE THE FIRST STEP TO
REACH YOUR POTENTIAL?**



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