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Holding On to Hope

Tommy Boone, PhD, MPH, MAM, MBA
ASEP Board Certified Exercise Physiologist

Imagine that you are holding on to a rope tied to a tree some 10 feet from you and you are hanging over the edge of a huge mountain side. If you should lose your grip, you would end up falling from essentially an 8th floor building to your death. Instead, you are holding on to hope that someone will show up to help you to safety.

Well, within the minds of the ASEP Board of Directors, they believe everyday represents the opportunity for a colleague to say I want to be part of ASEP. I want to help the organization grow larger. I want to help ASEP to be recognized as 'the' professional organization for exercise physiologists. Wow, talk about a celebration, the Board members would jump up and down with joy and hope.

This is not to say that ASEP isn't doing well. It is on target with its goals and objectives. It is just that with more help and service from new members during these challenging times, more exercise physiologists will be encouraged and inspired to promote the "profession of exercise physiology". Yes, exercise physiology is a "profession" and not a "discipline or another name for exercise science".

If your colleagues don't understand you, that is okay. If you lose a friend, regardless that you may have helped him, then you didn't need him as your "friend" anyway.

ASEP is the means to sharing our originality and expressing our importance in the future of healthcare, especially in helping society grasp the significance of exercise medicine. It is our inner entrepreneurial strength to meet whatever challenges that come our way, and remember always that the current situation is not forever.

I hope that the ASEP members may be examples of perseverance for the next generation of students so that they can learn what it means to encourage others. After all, each of us in ASEP has the responsibility to share our thoughts, dreams, and expectations of a better future for all exercise physiologists, regardless of their level of education (i.e., BS, MS, or PhD). That is to say, not everyone needs a doctorate degree to help clients and/or patients to understand and adhere to an exercise medicine prescription.

Has it been a challenge to share with others the ASEP message? Yes. But when I searched my heart more than two decades ago, I knew what I had to do and there is no regret. Planting a seed of hope to encourage other exercise physiologists is being true to myself.

ASEP exercise physiologists understand the challenges of changing how they think about exercise physiology, and they are committed to examining the past and present beliefs that everything will be okay as they hang on to hope. They get that research is important, but more important is their belief that academia is failing to give

adequate attention to the students of exercise physiology. They realize the financial sacrifices students make are huge, and yet without planning for the students' career opportunities the students are more often than not set up to consider another academic major at graduation and more financial debt.

Unfortunately, students and their parents have not learned to reach out for help from other members of the academic institution. Also, equally troubling is the fact that unless change takes place sooner rather than later, history will simply continue to repeat itself. In the opinion of the ASEP leadership, the path of change takes discipline and hard decisions. When we reach the end of our endurance to share the message of change, hope, and a better future for all exercise physiologists, we must always keep holding on. That is what holding on to hope is about.

In the words of Emily Dickinson, "When we just want to give up, we should hold on — even when we can't imagine good things coming our way. Good things are coming, so put a knot in the end of that rope and hang on. Choose to do what it takes to survive whatever dark challenge you are facing." Everything will be okay in the end. We will find ourselves.