

FINAL THOUGHTS AND WORDS OF “WISDOM”

I am fairly certain no one could or might want to duplicate my path. I've had opportunities to work with patients up to 3 hours at a time or until either their or my endurance wears thin. I've also had a myriad of influencers and experience in various specialty areas of physical therapy that make me somewhat unique. Nevertheless, I believe there are certain threads that run through my life and work that you might find helpful. Here are some of my ideas.

- ***Listen to your patients and they will be more likely to listen to you.*** If you are paying attention, they will tell you what to do. The trick is to give them as close to what they want and, at the same time, let them know that they may have to modify certain lifestyles if they want to live as independently as possible into a fulfilling old age. To do this in less time with little help you need to listen closely.
- ***Open up all your senses, and your heart, to the next patient to appear before you.*** This may make you feel more vulnerable. But, if you do this, on a very human level knowing that you need each other, you will grow in many more ways than you can imagine. You have the education and the skills....now be your own self in the process.
- ***If you have an idea, capture it before it flies away.*** Write it down. Mull it over. Give it space. Stay away from initial nay-sayers. Who knows, those ideas may lead you, as mine have led me, into product development, book writing, a career that has taken me to parts of the world I never thought I would be and a knowledge of the human body that I might never otherwise have had.
- ***Go back to the basics.*** Review your anatomy, kinesiology, physics, and biomechanics many times over. It's amazing how I, with anatomy as a favorite subject and with all I've studied, continue to learn more.
- ***If you are drawn to a specific specialty area in practice, follow it.*** Ask your supervisor to send more patients with that diagnosis your way. Take better notes. Do a more complete assessment. Keep all your senses on alert to pick up the nuances that can occur in patient-therapist interaction. And notice how, even with the same diagnosis, each patient is unique. Design your program to meet the patient's specific needs rather than taking a program from a book or a research study that may not fit the individual.
- ***As soon as you think you know something, watch out!*** Something or someone will come along to make you think otherwise.
- ***And remember, in the end, that you are just one of a team who may see this patient.*** You don't have all the answers and you may end up with more questions than answers. Learn to live in the question and be open to what comes.

You chose this wonderful profession of physical therapy for certain reasons, some of which you know and some of which you have still to find out. Stick with your idea of making this a better life for one person at a time. That will spread out into society and around the world. You may not see all the fruits of your labor in your lifetime, but do it anyway!

And so, I have come to the end of the story of my life thus far. My dream continues and I'm hoping that you who are reading this will join me in that dream. If we are to “transform society by optimizing movement to improve the human experience” then we need to definitely bring the bones and our own heart into the exercise equation. When you do that, your practice too will change and in ways you might never expect.

Be prepared for a roller-coaster ride and have fun along the way.

Sincerely Yours in Good Bone Health,
Sara Meeks