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Dr. Alfred Kinsey, the noted researcher on the sexual activities of American men and women, is credited with one of the briefest acceptance speeches on record. When asked to briefly describe his life's work, he said, "Ladies and gentlemen, it has been my pleasure. Thank you." Mine will not be as short or succinct, but I hope that it will be of some interest.

When Stephen Anderson, PPS President, first called me and told me that I was to receive this award, I was sure that there had been some mistake. Years ago, I remember watching The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson on the occasion of the show's 25th anniversary. His guests consisted of some of the greatest entertainers of the time. When George Gobel came in and sat on the couch, he turned to Johnny and said, "Did you ever feel like you were in a room full of tuxedos and you were a pair of brown shoes?" Well you are my tuxedos, and I thank you for this coveted award. It has been my privilege and honor to be a part of this profession for the past 46 years. This profession and the friends and colleagues I have grown to love and respect have given me a life I had no right to expect for but for which I am eternally grateful.

Mentors who have enriched my life both personally and professionally are too numerous to name, but I would especially like to thank Marilyn Moffatt, Ben Massey, Jayne Snyder, Bob Barlett, Fran Welk, Randy Roesch, Ernie Birch, Sue Stovall, and my wonderful family. All of you have enriched my life and nourished my soul.

I have been a clinician for more than 46 years. I am not a researcher or an educator. I will not present slides or a PowerPoint presentation. Truth be told, I wouldn't even know how to do a PowerPoint presentation. I would just like to speak to you of this profession that I love and what it has taught me about life, love, commitment, passion, and professionalism.

I think that passion is the key word. I believe that all knowledge derives from passion. Passion to feel, to know, to understand, to experience, to contribute. I have been around for quite a long time. I sometimes feel like the Strom Thurmond of the physical therapy profession. Through all this time, I have never lost my passion for the profession. Every patient was a new challenge, every encounter a new blessing, every day a new beginning. What a wonderful way to spend one's life!

Although I was an APTA member for many years, I did not become actively involved until after I received a call from a very young and committed NCPTA (North Carolina Physical Therapy Association) president regarding a lawsuit initiated against my local community hospital. I know that many of you are aware of the circumstances to some degree, but perhaps I can help put it into perspective.

From 1970 through 1980, I was under contract to the hospital to supply physical therapy services. I was the first and only PT in the county, which numbered approximately 50,000 residents. I was responsible for instituting PT services, campaigned to get a PT department built in the new wing, spearheaded a fundraising drive for purchasing equipment, and staffed it with the aid of an orderly. In 1980, a new administrator was hired. He informed me that he did not believe in contracts but he would keep me on as an employee with a 50 percent decrease in income. I chose not to accept his offer and instead opened a private practice. I was advised and encouraged by the medical community to request a continuation of my clinical privileges that had had for over 10 years.

The medical staff recommended to the hospital board that I be granted those privileges. The administrator stated that since I was not an MD, I did not qualify for privileges and the request was denied. It was then that I decided to sue.

The hospital engaged the services of the largest medical legal firm of attorneys in North Carolina, whose fees were subsidized in part by the North Carolina Hospital Association and their national organization. I was funded by me. It was at that point that the NCPTA president, Ben Massey, called me and said, "This isn't right." He set up a meeting for me with the then APTA president, Jane Matthews. She declined APTA's involvement because she thought it was too soon. The majority of members were hospital based and she felt that they were not ready for this. PPS declined to help also. Although the NCPTA was unable to help financially, the moral support was much needed. Ben had made the difference. He got my cause known in North Carolina and nationally. At last, I was not alone in this battle. His support ignited my desire to contribute. I have never lost that desire.

Originally, I lost in the local courts and in the secondary court. The hospital attorney stated that if PTs were granted privileges, they would also have to grant privileges to all other faith healers! I appealed on the advice of my attorney. He said, "This isn't right."

In September 1983, the Fourth United States District Court of Appeals in Richmond, VA overturned the lower courts' decision and stated that "the courts have ruled that medical staff privileges granted to the physician constitute a property interest entitled to due process protection. The clinical privileges held by the physical therapist are sufficiently analogous to those of the physician's medical staff privileges to make a claim to a property interest under the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment." This decision is in the books and cannot be overturned except by the Supreme Court of the United States. At last, someone with authority recognized that the rights of PTs are comparable to those of physicians and other professionals and are protected and cannot be revoked without due process.

Three months later, in December 1983, JCAHO (joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations) published a revision of their standards for accreditation for hospital staff to say that "an

institution should establish procedures that would open staff membership to non-physicians and dentists. Any licensed individual permitted by law to provide patient care may apply for hospital practice privileges.” Those are JCAHO’s words.

After two years of litigation the case was won. The hospital granted me practice privileges and also asked me to provide all physical therapy services to the hospital. The original contract was written for five years. It was in effect for 25 years, until my retirement late last year. The administrator became one of my most loyal supporters.

We all can be pushed to a certain degree...but we can also be pushed too far. Then we push back. There comes a point when we have to say, “This is not right.” When did life or anyone else ever tell us where we should go or what we should do? Sometime we have to dip our oars in the water and start to paddle. That course of action can be chaotic, often terrifying, and sometimes even dangerous, but it can also provide opportunities we might never have had, had we not accepted the challenge. Dr. Rand Pausch said, “Brick walls are there for a reason. They let us prove how badly we want something.” Sometimes we must tear down those brick walls.

That was the past. Now we must look to the future. Where do we go from here and how do we get there? What can we do as individuals? That is the challenge. No matter what knowledge we have acquired or how many years we have practiced our profession, we still have much to accomplish. Any day that we do not learn something is a wasted day. Any day that we think that we know all there is to know about our profession, the political implications, the health care environment, or any other area of our lives is an exercise in stupidity. We can always research facts we don’t know, but it is the development of relationships with our patients, our colleagues, our legislators, our families, and our communities that are most important and challenging. Sometimes the territory will be uncharted and terrifying. It was for me in 1980. We can have endless titles and letters after our names, we can be honored for our accomplishments, but we will be poor in spirit if we cannot relate in a meaningful way to others. We must invest the time, heart, and effort necessary to accomplish our goals.

Despite what is politically correct, we are accountable and responsible for what we do and say and also for our attitude. Both we personally and our profession will ultimately pay the price for our actions, either good or bad. Payback may occur now or later, but the bill always comes due.

We also cannot rest on past laurels and expect others to do what is right or what needs to be done. We must not be concerned with what is best for our narrow interest, but be more concerned with what is best for our profession. If we keep our eye on the prize and work toward protecting, promoting, and preserving the profession of physical therapy, does that not protect our own interests as well? Aren’t we as therapists’ best served when we serve the interests of the profession of PT? Are we all not tired of

politicians who do what's best for their party and not for what is best for our country and the people those legislators were elected to protect and serve? How many of us sent letters, phones, visited, or contacted our senators and congressmen? Have we supported them with our time and our money? And we all know that we have the best legislators money can buy! We do these things for our patients, for our profession, and, yes, we do it for ourselves too. Will we be participants or bystanders? Do we have the "fire in the belly," the passion, or are we willing to allow others to determine the course our profession will take in the future? Or will we fight with passion for what is right?

We deal with "disability" most every day in our practices. The word is a derivative of the word "ability." That's what we set our eyes on. Our ability to do what's right, our ability to serve our patients to the best of our ability, our ability to make a difference in our homes, in our clinics, and workplaces, in our communities, in our state, our country. We don't always get second chances, but we often get many new chances. The great difference between one person and another is how he takes hold and uses that first chance, how he takes the fall if things don't go well, and how he reacts and grabs hold of the new opportunities that come his way, every day.

There are other "ability" words that are significant, such as "responsibility." We must say what we mean and mean what we say. We are our word. We must constantly strive to be the best that we can be. We must strive to increase our base of knowledge and expertise through research, continuing education, and professional development. We must be responsible for the safety of our patients and for ensuring that the care they receive is appropriate and in their best interest.

"Accountability" goes without saying. We must be accountable for everything we do, not only in our professional lives, but in our private lives as well. We cannot be physical therapists and lousy human beings. We cannot be "street angels and house devils." Ethics and morals are not just words.

"Reliability" is the mark of a true professional. It is important for our patients, our friends, and our families for them to be able to rely on our professionalism, our competence, our knowledge, our skills, our word. They must be able to rely on us that we will be there for them when they need us; that they can count on us. If we can't be trusted, we aren't worth much. Our life is not defined by the promises we make, but by the promises we keep.

If we have the "capability" to live up to our "responsibilities," the "sensitivity" to maintain our "reliability," and the "accountability" to mitigate the "disabilities" of those we serve, then the "probability" of our success is enhanced as is our "profitability." Wow! Bet you didn't think I knew that many "ability" words did you!

I like to live in the possibility that everything is possible. That I can and will do whatever is necessary to make things right. To believe that all things are possible. There are so many wonderful opportunities out there if we only have the courage to grasp them. Aunty Mame said, "Life is a banquet and most darn fools are starving to death." There is more than one way to do everything. We must sometimes break the pattern. Change is not a problem. It is an opportunity. If we look at it that way it allows us to see the extraordinary in everything. We can look at challenges from a different perspective, a new point of view. We can change the ordinary into the extraordinary.

Michelangelo said, "The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short, but in setting our aim too low and achieving our mark." In other words, don't walk like a turkey when you can soar like an eagle.

Again, to quote Michelangelo, "So even if we are occupied with important things, even if we attain honor or fall into misfortune, still let us remember how good it was once here, when we were all together, united by a good and kind feeling and a purpose....better perhaps than we are."

Thank you.