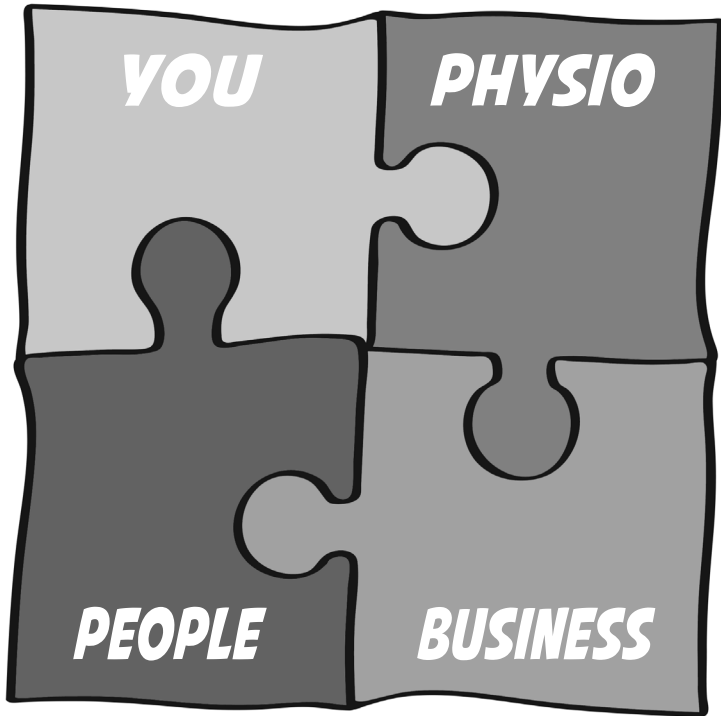


BECOMING THE
ULTIMATE
PHYSIO



**A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO
PRIVATE PRACTICE SUCCESS**

NICK SCHUSTER



“If there is one thing you need to invest in it is yourself.”

Warren Buffett

“Succeeding in private practice requires much more than just technical competence. A careful and considered mix of personal character, professional will, leadership attributes, business acumen, and community endeavour must be blended with the more obvious contributions of clinical excellence and intelligent reasoning. Nick has realised this to be true for himself, and is one of the few members of our industry who is seeking to raise others’ awareness to this. I encourage you to invest into yourself more broadly and with determination if you truly want to be effective.”

Jason T Smith

Founder & Group Director, Back In Motion Health Group

Principal, Iceberg Leadership Institute

Chair, SOS Health Foundation

“As Physiotherapists our university education gives us an incredible understanding of anatomy, physiology and rehabilitation – however very few of us graduate with any business skills, marketing knowledge or how to make the most of our degrees and have a full and satisfying professional career. In this book, Nick lays out a blueprint for how to be a successful, effective and happy health professional. Essential reading for all current or future therapists wanting to succeed in private practice.”

Paul Wright

Health Business Consultant

Director of OneMinutePractice.com and HealthBusinessProfits.com

“At its essence, being an effective and sought-after clinician requires clinical skills coupled with great communication. At its essence, being an effective practice owner requires far more. A greater impact beyond a sole practitioner requires team. Team requires leadership. Leadership requires intentionality, a commitment to mastering habits, garnering insights, making wise decisions, and both charting and staying the course. The best leaders in business are voracious in their pursuit of growing in their leadership. This can comprise investing into resources like this book to advance your leadership skill and capacity. Well done Nick on adding to the body of non-clinical helps inside the physiotherapy industry.”

Brad Beer

POGO Founder, Physiotherapist, Bestselling author,

Host of “The Physical Performance Show”

“I can wholeheartedly recommend this book for physios considering purchasing a practice, for new clinic owners and even those who are experienced looking to grow. It is a thought-provoking book that challenges some of the ‘norms’ that hold back our wonderful profession. Use it with your teams, and pour over it a few times to glean all the gold nuggets of information.”

**James Schomburgk BAppSc (Physio), MAppSc (Manip Physio), APAM
Director Valley View, Campbelltown and Mt Barker**

“In the last 13 years I have built The Physio Co into a practice that has eight times been ranked as one of Australia’s 50 Best Places to Work. Looking back, the most important thing I have done to grow my business was to firstly grow myself. Regardless of any business goals, it’s important that we focus on the big picture first – who we are and what we really want out of our work and our life. Learning to learn, to reflect and to become the best version of myself continues to inspire me everyday. I recommend you begin your journey of personal and business growth too.”

Tristan White
Founder of The Physio Co
Author of *Culture Is Everything*

“Nick Schuster’s passion for his patients and the profession of physiotherapy are clearly evident in *Becoming the Ultimate Physio*. Nick profoundly understands that operating a successful private practice requires much more than outstanding clinical competence. The lessons from his ‘Physio Success Quadrant’ should be required reading for all aspirational therapists seeking to optimise their professional success. In short, successful physiotherapy practice requires supplementing your clinical expertise with non-clinical education, ideally provided by those who have enjoyed success and learned the necessary lessons. Nick, in a very personal way, shares his success and provides a blueprint for its replication.”

Gary Cunningham
Founder, Results Physiotherapy USA

“As a new graduate working in a private practice with two 10+ year experienced physios, I struggled to comprehend how I was providing similar value for patients as the other clinicians. To overcome this, Nick has challenged me for the last 18 months to grow not just as a physio but as a person. His approach to private practice is both patient and therapist friendly. *Becoming The Ultimate Physio* teaches you all the things you need to know about private practice that university doesn’t.”

Jackson Williams

Physiotherapist

Scarborough Physio and Health

“Being the ultimate physio is something Nick has worked towards throughout his entire career. He has worked tirelessly to educate himself and people around him, and his enthusiasm for helping people is outstanding. Nick has a high energy level, and is committed to improving the physio profession so that it is more recognised, more profitable and more professional. The information in this book is invaluable to anyone working in a clinic, anyone who owns a clinic, and anyone who wants to improve their practice.”

Ruth Woollett

Practice Manager

Scarborough Physio and Health

“I have worked in private practice my whole physio career, and like many private practice physios I started to get complacent, unmotivated and just frustrated with the physio profession. I found I was just going through the motions and not excelling in my career. This was until I started working with Nick and undergoing the Ultimate Physio Training. I have never been so motivated and driven to be the best physio possible. The Ultimate Physio Training really has reinvigorated my passion for physio and has helped me get a better understanding of myself and my own barriers to success. I just cannot recommend this program enough.”

Todd Bartholomew

Senior Physiotherapist

Scarborough Physio and Health

“In the last eight years I have sent hundreds of clients to Nick’s practice to get treatment, with phenomenal results and feedback whether they worked directly with Nick or one of his amazing team. This guy is not only a great physio but a great leader, and most importantly a great person. Listen to what he has to say – he is the real deal, having built an amazing business.”

Jake McLuskie

Founder & CEO of Positive Existence Personal Training

“Having known Nick personally for many years I can attest to his passion for personal growth and the business growth that follows. His relentless attitude and intellectual intensity grabbed me from our first chat on the touch football field.

To see his thoughts come together in this easy-to-read book is a gift to the young physios out there. Life is too short not to learn from others who walk the talk and hack their thinking! It takes someone willing to openly share. Within these pages, Nick shares all.

I encourage you to read and consider with an open mind, whatever health discipline you practise. As a dentist I got a lot out of it for myself and my team.

Authentic thought leaders are hard to find. For physiotherapy, Nick delivers.”

Dr Dave Houston

CEO Australia Dental Group

“This book is a must read for all physios, from new graduates to senior practitioners. Nick’s Ultimate Physio model is one of the most helpful mentoring and business development models that I have come across. Nick has been instrumental in helping me to value what I can offer as a physiotherapist and to improve as a practitioner. Thanks to Nick’s methods, I am now working in my dream physiotherapy job while still maintaining a healthy work/life balance.”

Shena Dale

Running Physiotherapist

Scarborough Physio and Health

“Becoming the Ultimate Physio: the ultimate guide to private practice success is a book that can benefit physiotherapists at all stages of their career. It challenges us to remember our purpose and why we became physiotherapists, and the importance of valuing ourselves, and the service we offer. For the new graduate, it offers advice for setting yourself up for success in private practice, and for employers, it’s a reminder that your business is about the people you employ, as well as the people you serve. With increasing numbers of physiotherapists experiencing ‘burn out’ and limited opportunities for career advancement, it is critical we re-examine how we grow and support ourselves and each other to create a rewarding and sustainable career helping people. This is true for physiotherapists working in private practice, as well as other settings.”

Cherie Wells

Senior Lecturer in Physiotherapy, Griffith University, Gold Coast

“I highly recommend all physiotherapists learn from Nick Schuster’s message to value themselves highly.

I used to think that I had to be in physiotherapy just for the love of it, to the detriment of the rest of my life. This didn’t match my focus of healthy activity and family life.

It was only when I valued my time and my skills highly that I could see how this helped me make the most of my abilities, allowing me to problem-solve even more effectively and create a better life for me and for my clients.

I also have a vision similar to Nick’s: for physiotherapists to be valued similar to other successful professions. The good news is that it is already happening. The next step is for more curious physiotherapists to learn how they can also benefit themselves and their clients a lot more.”

Michael Ridgway

Founder, Ridgway Institute International

“To be a great physiotherapist is one thing, to run a great physiotherapy business is something completely different, and to combine both is exceptional. Having known Nick for many years, initially as a friend and in more recent times a client, he is an exemplary model for anyone serious about building their business to serve their market and team in a truly valuable way. In his book *Becoming the Ultimate Physio*, Nick shares – in true abundant entrepreneurial spirit – real-world advice and guidance for other physiotherapist business owners on what he has learned and applied in building his own super-successful practice. This book is a must for any serious physiotherapy business owner.”

Brad Flynn

Business Coach

Actioncoach International

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Some of the incredible physio mentors I have had over the years include Michael Ridgway and David Butler from a clinical perspective, Paul Wright from a business perspective, and Jason Smith from a leadership and self-development perspective. All are experienced and progressive leaders in the field who started their careers as physios in private practice. They have reached amazing heights through their thirst for knowledge and learning – a desire you must possess if you really want to succeed.

After learning from these leaders I decided to pursue significant amounts of education in the business world. Some of the more significant business education I would like to acknowledge includes the Key Person of Influence 40-week brand accelerator programme run by Dent Global, and most importantly the business coaching which has changed my life courtesy of Brad Flynn, from Action-coach International, which is a Brad Sugars company.

I would also like to pay tribute to the most inspirational business owner I know: Jake McLuskie from Positive Existence Personal Training. He has proven to me that one person can change the world if you think big enough.

If you are after some extra reading and resources, after completing this book I urge you to learn from the best, as these are the guys who taught me what I know, which has included some career-changing experiences. Find great mentors, and learn as much as you can from them. Don't hesitate to ask for their help.

DEDICATIONS

For Gerowyn and James for inspiring me at home.

For my team at Scarborough Physio and
Health for inspiring me at work.

First published in 2017 by Nick Schuster
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All inquiries should be made to the author.

National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication entry:

Creator: Schuster, Nick, author.

Title: Becoming the ultimate physio.

ISBN: 9780992480127 (paperback).

Subjects: Physical therapy.

Conduct of life.

Well-being.

Leadership.

Printed in Australia by McPherson's Printing
Project management and text design by Michael Hanrahan Publishing
Cover design by Peter Reardon

The paper this book is printed on is certified as environmentally friendly.

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FOREWORD

As the CEO of the peak body for the profession, I continue to admire the contribution that physiotherapists make to the community.

Quite often, they are unsung heroes – always happy to take a back seat whilst their craft is administered to millions of Australians each year.

There are just over 30,000 registered physiotherapists in Australia and each one of them has a thirst for knowledge, strives for clinical excellence and, most importantly, is solely focused on the health and wellbeing of the consumers of their services.

Physiotherapy does not discriminate and has amazing cut-through in our society.

At times, I'm in awe of the power of the profession.

There are so many challenges and opportunities in the current Australian healthcare system, which isn't perfect, but by global standards is well regarded. From my perspective, unlocking the power and reach of primary care physiotherapists will enable the

system to operate more effectively and efficiently, and potentially alter the health profile of Australia permanently in a positive way.

A record number of young physiotherapists are entering private practice – this can be a daunting but very rewarding experience.

The private practice of the future will exhibit a number of qualities. Our research at the APA suggests the critical factors for future success include offering a broader range of services, focusing on the consumer and outcomes, being responsive to the changing needs of the workforce, possessing business acumen, connecting with technology and, finally, partnering in teaching, training and research.

To this end, the value of lifelong learning for all healthcare professionals cannot be emphasised enough. As part of a profession based on safety and quality, the desire to learn and to continue to improve is critical in upholding the collective “brand” of physiotherapy that has been carefully developed for over 110 years in Australia.

When I reflect on my ongoing leadership journey, there has never been a ‘light bulb’ moment where leadership has simply turned on. In my view, the ability to keep an open mind is just as important as formal education, a broad range of experiences and strong peer and mentor support. However, my biggest leadership lessons have always come from volunteering experiences on various committees, groups, organisations and NFP boards. The lessons that are learnt from these settings are so rich and have great application across so many environments. There is a huge demand for volunteering in Australia and it can provide you with so much in terms of leadership and becoming the Ultimate Physio.

I applaud and admire contemporary physiotherapists like Nick who have a thirst for ongoing self-improvement but, more importantly, are willing to impart their knowledge to others within the broader physiotherapy community.

FOREWORD

Enjoy the read. I urge all health professionals and consumers to continue being vocal advocates for physiotherapy in Australia.

Cris Massis

CEO

Australian Physiotherapy Association

INTRODUCTION

THE ULTIMATE PHYSIO

WHY DID I WRITE THIS BOOK?

As an experienced physio I have come across some incredible people who have also chosen the physio profession, from the best and brightest young minds in our country, to the young up and comers forging a pathway and creating new models and concepts within our profession, to the experts at the top of their game teaching us all how to be better physios.

I have identified that the vast majority of us chose physio for one reason: we love helping people. We could have become doctors, dentists, lawyers or businesspeople. But we put our desire to help people and to be the best physios we can be above money, status, social rewards and prestige.

FOR PHYSIOS ...

But there is a problem with this. Physios in Australia today are more disillusioned than ever. We operate in a significantly “bottom

heavy” model where you reach your maximum potential very early in your career. This is leading to physios working very hard, not seeing adequate rewards for their efforts, and thinking, “Is this all there is?”

At what stage of your career does this happen? For some people this happens after only five years, but the evidence points towards a strong dropout rate between the ages of 35 and 40.

I don't feel like this.

Why?

I have done more work on myself than on my technical skills.

You will spend so much time during your physio career caring for and helping other people that sometimes you will forget to take care of yourself. I am a naturally selfish person. What a terrible thing to be... or is it? Consider this radical concept: what if you took care of yourself first, then you could take better care of your patients and all of the other people in your life?

When you fly, the airline cabin crew will tell you in an emergency to put your own oxygen mask on first before trying to help other people. So why do we as physios try to put everyone else's masks on before putting our own mask on, and end up suffocating as a result?

If you are not happy it is nearly impossible to be great at your job and also be satisfied and fulfilled in your life. In this book I will teach you how to be the best physio you can be and, more importantly, to be the best person you can be, which is the basis for living a life of purpose.

My goal is to create career physios. Ultimate physios. I have never liked the concept of changing careers six or seven times in your life – I feel it's a waste of precious time and skills. Why not enjoy what you already do better and put that experience to good use?

FOR CLINIC OWNERS...

So you are a clinic owner. You have a team of physios, a solid business, and a stable caseload of clients who sing your praises. You know what you're doing, right? How can this book help you?

If you are the type of clinic owner who takes personal and professional growth seriously then I believe this book has much value for you and your team members. If you are anything like me, you are far from perfect. You have learned to do everything your way, which may work for you but is not necessarily the best way. Sometimes you can find that as the clinic owner no-one challenges you because you are the boss, but I have personally found that the more my team members challenge me, the more I grow and improve as a leader and – more importantly – as a person.

This book will help you become a better physio, a better businessperson and a better leader. I have learned that leadership starts with you – if you are not in charge of yourself, should you really be let loose to be in charge of other people? You need to learn more about yourself before you can be a great leader, and this is an area where many of us fall down – we try to fix everything and everyone around us, without fixing ourselves. This book will make you consider some of these deeper issues that you face every day in a completely new and different context. I have been thinking this way for about five years now, and I firmly believe that to be the best physio I can be and the best clinic owner I can be I need to become the best person I can be.

My experience has led me to determine that most physios – and especially younger physios – have the same challenges, and this book will help you to identify and overcome these.

This book can also help your team. I'm sure that as a business owner you always have a million things on your plate (I'm in that situation too), and you likely cannot give your team as much time as you would like to regularly mentor them, help them manage

their complex patients, and generally listen to their problems and challenges.

THE PROBLEMS WITH BEING A PHYSIO

I have been a physio for 14 years. I love what I do – the rush I get from seeing people at their worst, helping them with a major health problem which is holding them back physically, mentally and emotionally, then seeing them grow as their pain recedes and they return to normal life is one of the best feelings I get in my daily life. But, I often feel I am one of the lucky ones. You see, there's a major problem with physiotherapy today. This is the problem that causes physios to leave our profession in droves: our career peaks very early, and does not progress exponentially like most other professions.

Let's have a look at the typical career path for a physio. When I studied physiotherapy I lived on campus at the University of Queensland in a residential college, which I loved – I enjoyed the study, and the lifestyle was great. There were so many bright and aspirational people studying all sorts of degrees: law, pharmacy, business, accounting, engineering, dentistry and medicine, among many others.

We studied these degrees in parallel, and we all looked forward to graduating, entering the workforce, and proving ourselves in our chosen profession. However, in my final year of physio I started to have doubts about my chosen career. I heard the law students talking about getting their first job as an intern, working their way up as an associate, then senior associate, with the aspirations of eventually taking on partnership in a law firm. The medical students talked about being a resident, and then a registrar in a hospital, then a qualified doctor, then potentially specialising in their chosen field of medicine. This made me think – when you graduate as a

physio, what's next? Where do you go from there? There are no different tiers within the physio profession, and no corporate ladders to climb. You are either a physio or ... a physio.

After starting my career I became acutely aware of this. The first couple of years I learned so much, but I did feel like I was slipping into a comfortable groove, like my favourite chair. The problem with getting into a comfortable groove is the danger of becoming *too* comfortable. So, I started observing physios all around Australia when I did my professional development. There were junior new grad physios, mid-level physios, and experienced physios.

Many of the experienced physios I met seemed to be quite jaded. They were generally clinic owners or senior physios in their places of work. They worked very hard, and often seemed overwhelmed by the volume of work they had to do – treating the patients and taking care of the business and staff. On top of this they were responsible for office administration, balancing the books, building referrer relationships, replacing staff who left (all too often, it seemed), and somehow having a personal life also.

The next bit struck me pretty hard. When leaving the conferences I would get in my beat-up Mitsubishi Magna, and I would look across and see some of these more senior physios driving cars similar to mine. Speaking to these dedicated physios, their income didn't seem to reflect the amount of energy they were expending. On further investigation I found that these very capable physios were only charging a tiny bit more than me for a consultation in their clinics.

After going to university with all of these students who were going into professions that charge rates upwards of \$200 per hour in medicine, engineering, accounting and law, I soon saw that physios were caring and charitable people who seemed to provide care at the expense of their own happiness. These people did not value themselves enough.

What makes things worse is that our profession has no clearly defined career pathway. If you do happen to follow the specialisation pathway that the Australian Physiotherapy Association has outlined and you become a specialist physio then you may feel you have earned the right to bump your consultation fees up, and I agree that you have that right, but do your patients understand your extra qualifications and why you are charging more? The average person understands the tiered-fee difference between a GP and a medical specialist, and also the fee difference between a solicitor and a barrister, but not one person I have surveyed fully understands the qualification difference between a physio and a specialist physio.

This leads to us as physios continually having to justify to our patients, and more importantly to ourselves, why we try to charge fees that are above the average expected fees within our profession, and this can wear you down after a while.

SO, WHAT DO WE DO?

When the profession you work in does not have a progressive career pathway, you have three options.

The first option is put up with the status quo. You will work your career away as a physio, be happy some days and not others, but my biggest concern for you is you may finish your career wondering about what may have been. Was there a better way, could you have done something differently, or should you have chosen physiotherapy at all?

Option two is to quit and try something else. Move on and study medicine; completely change your career; go and perhaps sell your soul and become a medical sales rep to earn more money, or try to create wealth and financial security through traditional means such as investing in property and shares like everyone else does. If this is you, maybe you will feel that you shouldn't have been a physio in the first place or that it was a good stepping stone to somewhere

else, but the physiotherapy profession has likely been robbed of a potentially great physio who had the potential to influence people's lives for the better.

Option three is my favourite: learn to know yourself and what you stand for. Learn to value yourself. Once you value yourself and your unique knowledge you are more likely to find your calling and add value to thousands of people's lives. When you are adding value to people's lives you can evolve your physio career into something that works for you, and it helps you to see the unlimited possibilities available to you working in an evolving profession like physio.

Option three is what *Becoming the Ultimate Physio* is all about.

BY THE NUMBERS

I want to start explaining how bad the problem is in our profession by throwing some stats at you from the Australian Government Job Outlook page.¹ This page gives demographic information about different professions, and I compared the physiotherapy profession against the mean. The mean age of a physio in Australia is 35, compared to the mean average of a worker in any occupation, which is 40.

Let's look at these figures in some detail. The average split for an occupation in Australia for workers aged under 45 versus workers aged over 45 is a 60–40 split, which means 40% of workers in the average occupation are over 45 years old. In physio, this split is 80–20, which means that only 20% of people working as physios in Australia are over 45. So what happens to your career when you reach the age of 45 that makes so many physios leave the profession? Let's use medicine as a comparison: 42% of medical practitioners are aged over 45. What about law? The figures show that 37% of solicitors are over 45. And 31.6% of accountants are over 45. So either our profession is killing us or we have such a great

1 <http://joboutlook.gov.au/occupation.aspx?search=alpha&tab=stats&cluster=&code=2525&graph=AG>.

desire to retire at age 45 that few of us physios make it in our career past that age.

But, there is one other way to interpret this statistic, and this is that our physio job market is being flooded with graduates. I believe this is definitely the case. When I graduated in 2003 from the University of Queensland, we were the only physiotherapy university graduate cohort in Queensland. Currently in Queensland there are two physiotherapy university courses in Brisbane, two on the Gold Coast and one in Townsville. I could extrapolate this to estimate that there are approximately four to five times as many physios graduating now compared to 2003.

In a job market flooded with young physios but without a clear career pathway, we have been significantly lacking leadership in the private practice space. There is a group within the APA called Physiotherapy Business Australia, but this is the only private practice-focused group, and this group is almost specifically geared towards business owners.

There are certain leadership programmes available through physio franchise groups here in Australia, which I have completed and have found beneficial. While I'm glad that I came across these professional and personal development programmes, I am surprised at the lack of non-franchise staff completing these courses given the high quality of the material.

My intention is to bring all of these issues together for you as the reader. (And I would like to be guided by you as to whether the material in this book is beneficial, and what else you want and need to know in the future, as I don't plan on stopping here – the next step is adapting this material into a practical course.)

Becoming aware of what you need to do and who you need to be is the first step in becoming the ultimate private practice physio, but hands-on experience and living it is the essential step to make the necessary transformation to leading yourself, your patients,

your fellow physios and your community. Let's go on this journey together, and form strong bonds with like-minded physios with the benefits of promoting our profession, differentiating ourselves from the chiropractors, osteopaths, exercise physiologists and massage therapists, and most importantly living a life of happiness, significance and purpose.

MY VISION FOR PHYSIO

They say in business you have to have a vision. The purpose of a vision is to be able to lead from the front, make good decisions in alignment with achieving your vision, and inspire people around you to share in your vision.

Does the physiotherapy profession as a whole have a vision? The Australian Physiotherapy Association's vision is a good one – that the whole community recognises the full benefit of physiotherapy (from their 2015–17 Strategic Plan). But what does this look like? The clearest way to define what a vision is is to close your eyes and imagine a real-life situation that mirrors your vision.

I have a vision for physiotherapy in the private practice setting. Customer service surveys I have performed with current and previous patients in my clinic have told me that 9 in 10 people come to my clinic for pain relief, for a number of different injuries and complaints. My vision for physiotherapy in private practice is simple – that a person in pain calls a physiotherapist for help, rather than any other profession. Simple, but achievable.

Currently, when people are in pain they may call a GP clinic, physio, chiropractor, massage therapist, acupuncturist, osteopath, or many others. I believe we as physios are best equipped in terms of our skillset to be first-contact practitioners for people in pain. We have very thorough assessment skills and familiarity with a wide range of neuromusculoskeletal and general health conditions which allow this. In the modern Australian health landscape of shorter

GP appointments, we have the real ability to help get to the bottom of why our patients are in pain, and to make a real difference to their lives. Generally we are also really great at referring on when needed for further investigations and GP or specialist intervention.

My vision has a second part, and this is relating to my statements above regarding physios not valuing ourselves sufficiently. When we don't value ourselves it's hard for our clients to value us. Conversely, doctors value themselves. They study long and hard to get where they are ... and don't we know it! The confident way they communicate with their patients leads me to believe that they value themselves, and hence their patients value them – their advice, their recommendations and their time.

My vision is for us as physios to be valued in society in the same way doctors are valued. This is a big vision, and it must start with us. We have so much to offer to people suffering pain and injury – we just need to believe it and communicate it confidently to patients.

PHYSIO IS CHANGING

Physiotherapy is a very young profession – in its current form it has only been around for approximately 100 years. For the bulk of those years, physios worked in hospital-type settings.

When I finished my physiotherapy degree at the University of Queensland I was part of a graduate cohort of approximately 80 people. The bulk of our training was geared towards working in hospitals, as was the bulk of our final prac year of work experience. We had a reasonable amount of training in musculoskeletal therapy, but not really enough to be confident in a private practice upon graduation.

I really didn't feel well prepared to work in a private practice when I graduated, but I got by. I'm not sure if you have had these

feelings as well, but among other physios I know who work in private practice I'm certainly not alone.

At university there is not much mentioned regarding private practice. In saying this, we do have a very good grounding in anatomy, biomechanics, and everything you need to be a good physio, but we have no grounding in how a private practice actually runs, the different elements of private practice, how to succeed in this setting, and how some of the skills we require to succeed in private practice are different from those in a hospital.

One very basic concept of hospital versus private practice that is distinctly different is the concept of patient discharge, which is a hospital philosophy and some would say the main goal of your intervention with your patient in hospital, versus a patient becoming a lifetime client in private practice, and you see them for help with various injuries and ailments throughout their life. If more young physios were trained in relationship building at university this would dramatically increase their chances of success and satisfaction early in their private practice career.

The physiotherapy profession is changing. The majority of physios these days are employed in private practice. Our training needs to change to reflect this trend, to make sure the physios of tomorrow know how to succeed in private practice.

MENTORING IN PRIVATE PRACTICE

For the first five years of my private practice career I didn't have a mentor. I have now been a physio for 14 years, and I have had four different mentors, and this number is growing every year.

Like many students, when I first graduated I was naive but I thought I knew everything. How wrong I was! Straight after graduating from your degree you will have brass confidence. But you are given a harsh reality check when you start your private practice career.

The benefits of having a mentor as early as possible in your career are significant. A good mentor will help to accelerate your development as a clinician, will help you develop the “bedside manner” that is so sorely needed when dealing with members of the public who are seeking your services for advice regarding their health issues, and very importantly, will assist you to avoid making the same mistakes that they made as a junior practitioner.

When I was a young physio I tried hard to help people with their problems. I did lots of research into their conditions, I did several professional development courses every year to learn new techniques from the experts in my profession, and I had a thirst for knowledge.

If I had a mentor then I would have had an expert directing me in my professional development, and steering me towards the courses that were most valuable to me. But most importantly, I would ideally have had someone who was in the next room over from me throughout the day – someone who I knew was looking out for me, who I could bounce ideas off, who I could discuss my challenging patients with, who would motivate me and guide me towards a common vision and set of goals.

This is the mentor that I am trying to be to my staff today. It is a role I greatly enjoy. The vision of our clinic is for the Redcliffe Peninsula – the beautiful area where our clinic is located – to be the healthiest and best place to live in Australia. I firmly believe in this vision, and I work hard to make sure my staff act on a daily basis with this vision in mind.

When you are looking for a mentor, you need to make sure that your chosen person has shared values with you. If your mentor is a hard worker, you need to be prepared to work very hard. If your mentor is unwavering in their ethics, you had better be the same. If your mentor is visionary with lots of great ideas, you need to impress them with ideas of your own.

Conversely, if your chosen mentor does not have the qualities you wish to develop as a private practitioner, I would advise you to seek out someone who does. There are plenty of wonderful private practice owners and physios who would be happy to share their wisdom and experience with you.

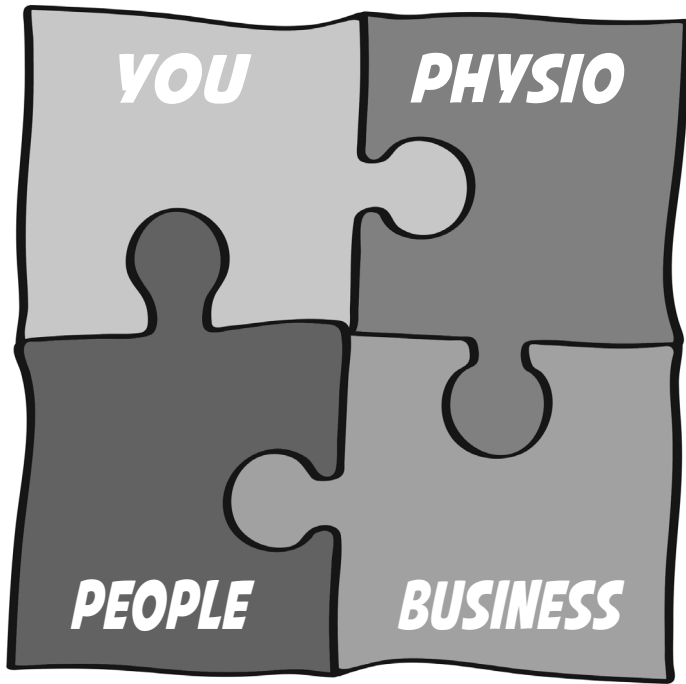
I do believe that our busy daily workloads are definitely a barrier to the mentor–mentee relationship. But this is just the practicalities of working in a business. Often the more mature the business, the more time for mentoring the practice owner will have. Practices that are in their infancy, or alternatively in phases where they are undergoing growth or expansion, require young physios to work more independently on a daily basis.

I always wish I had more time for mentoring with my staff. But sometimes I look at my diary and one of my loyal patients has just hurt themselves, and needs my help. Sometimes I have to put out a small “fire” at work, as we practice owners need to deal with so many operational issues in our businesses: landlords, rent, phones, insurance companies, salespeople, accountants, the major health funds ... the list is as long as my arm.

THE PHYSIO SUCCESS QUADRANT

As an experienced physio, business owner and people person, I am going to introduce you to the four key areas in which you need to be successful to be the consummate professional in the private practice setting. This concept is called the Physio Success Quadrant. We will be revisiting this throughout the book. The four key areas are:

- 1 **You**
- 2 **Physio**
- 3 **People**
- 4 **Business.**



Only when this powerful quartet comes together can you be a truly successful private practice physio. Proficiency in two of the key areas will make you a good operator, but it is only those who can master all four who will become highly successful physiotherapy practitioners, with a long and growing list of patients waiting to see you.

Many physios I know are good at either physio and people, or physio and business; in fact, I believe the bulk of physios are proficient at two areas. It is rare for a physio to be good at physio, people *and* business. These people are generally the leaders in our industry, owners of large clinics and drivers of our profession. Very few of us are aware of the existence of the first point: you. I believe the key

area of *you* is where we all must start, and without this falling into place the others are useless – like a map that gets you to the wrong place because your starting point was wrong.

I will teach you inside knowledge on each of these four areas, and I will expand into serious detail to answer the burning questions which I'm sure are floating around in that health practitioner brain of yours.

Why do I do what I do?

I love physiotherapy.

I mentioned earlier the incredible feeling I get from helping someone overcome a complicated health problem. The more people you help, the better your life becomes. The happier your life becomes, the more people gravitate towards you and the more lives you positively influence. From this influence comes opportunities, new ideas, partnerships, relationships with key people of influence, and satisfaction in your profession and your life that you did not think possible.

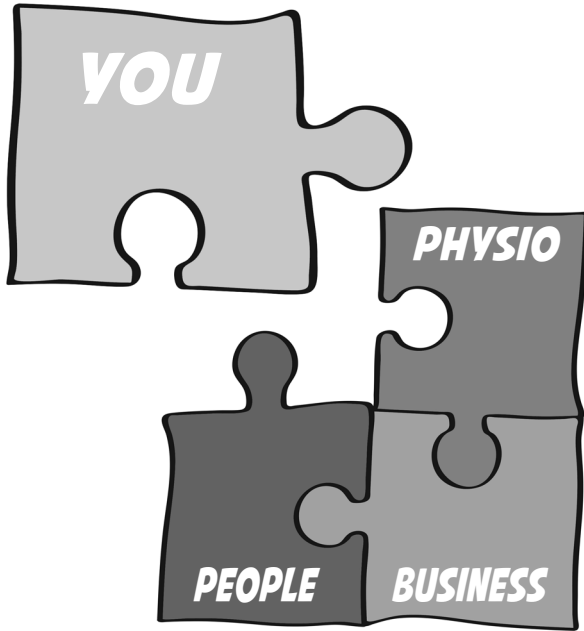
Oh, and I forgot to mention, quite a nice living as well. After all, we all have to put bread on the table, don't we!

So, let's get into it ...

PART



you





HOW TO BE HAPPY AS A PHYSIO

WHAT IS HAPPINESS?

What is happiness? It can be many things, and it can be defined extremely broadly: some people want status, others want success, money, time, to be loved and adored, and so many other things. The list of possibilities is endless.

During my many conversations with my business coach about happiness, we have agreed that being happy coincides with living in a state of peace and spending as much of our lives in the present moment as we can. But this is often the hardest thing to do in this modern life of distractions, worries, stresses, fears and uncertainties.

Being happy for me is a choice that I make every day, but I have also learned it is impossible – and even unhealthy – to be happy all the time, or to strive to be happy all the time.

I would also differentiate between being *positive* and being *happy*. I take a positive mindset into my day, but – like you – I have things come up during the course of an average day that challenge

me, surprise me, distract me, and generally detract from my state of happiness.

As physios we have some obvious things that should keep us happy: our patients, our relationships with them, the positive results they achieve with our intervention, and how this makes us feel. Compared with many other professions where you don't have as much personal interaction or nurture such meaningful and lasting relationships, we are in a really good situation. I know many doctors whose day is usually littered with trauma, tragedy and suffering. I would not want to be a doctor for all the money in the world.

WHAT IS HAPPINESS TO YOU?

If you are striving to be happy in life, the first thing you need to do is determine what happiness actually means to you. I'm happy when I am living by my highest values (I explain below what this means to me). Doing what you love is another way of explaining this, although sometimes it's hard to be able to do exactly what you love as a profession. I love golf and surfing, but I sure as anything am not that great at either, and could not earn a living from these things I love doing.

Two things that stop many people from being happy are their own limiting beliefs and not living according to their values. Let's have a look at each of these.

OVERCOMING YOUR LIMITING BELIEFS

Don't believe everything you think. This statement has never been far from my thoughts ever since I truly learned what it meant. It's possible that your thoughts are actually holding you back. Let's see what you can do about this.

I have a great mentor; he is my business coach and his name is Brad Flynn. I owe much of my success to his teachings. One area that Brad has drilled me on over the years is becoming consciously aware of limiting beliefs. It never ceases to amaze me how many limiting beliefs I have, and when I meet other physios and speak with them I can see how their limiting beliefs affect their progress as well.

An example of one of my biggest limiting beliefs as a clinic owner of a multidisciplinary allied health clinic is the mistaken belief that “no-one can do physio as well as me when it comes to my patients”. This is a belief that most clinic owners share, and as your physio career progresses and you help more and more people, your great results with your patients can further feed and strengthen this limiting belief.

Let’s now consider the most commonly held limiting beliefs that physios have, especially early in their careers:

- The patient does not value what I have to offer due to my lack of experience.
- I can only provide value if I do heaps of manual therapy and give heaps of exercises.
- My patients won’t want to give me their hard-earned money for what they may consider to be a service inferior to that of a senior physio.

I have identified these three beliefs as the most common limiting beliefs in the clinical lives of young physios I have mentored, employed and surveyed. The problem is these beliefs will reinforce themselves as we find examples of where they are true in our lives. There is, however, a way to blow these beliefs out of the water using the following exercise.

Exercise: Overcoming limiting beliefs

Here is my step-by-step process to overcome a limiting belief:

- 1 Identify the belief and write it down.
- 2 Write down examples of when this belief has been true in your life.
- 3 Write down examples of when this belief has been untrue in your life. Find more examples of when this belief has been untrue than when it has been true.
- 4 During your clinic practice, identify specific occasions when your limiting belief is being proven to be false – this will happen regularly once you are aware of what the belief is.

DISCOVERING YOUR HIGHEST VALUES

One thing has changed my career and my life in a more significant way than anything else that I have ever learned. This one thing has given me purpose, made me happy, helped me understand who I am and what I am on this earth to do, and helped the people closest to me understand me better.

Figuring out what I value most (what I refer to as my “highest value”) has caused such a great shift in my thinking. Until I did this I enjoyed my physio work and my role as a clinic owner, but I felt unsure about my bigger picture in life.

Interestingly, it is common for us to be able to spot another person’s highest values much more easily than we can identify them in ourselves. When we are living to our highest values we are energised, inspired, and we generally don’t require external motivation and managing to get us to do the things we need to do.

I will give you a very simple example. Take the late Steve Irwin. One of his highest values was clearly wildlife conservation – the way he spoke about wildlife, the energy he had, the time and money he spent on protecting wildlife, and the huge goals he had to protect large areas of land in North Queensland from development were all indicators of his highest values.

My highest value is positively influencing people. I do this daily through treating patients, mentoring my team, interacting with referrers and businesspeople in my community and posting on my Facebook pages – and I hope that I am positively influencing you as you read these words.

When I am acting according to my highest value I feel like time stands still, I am completely in the moment, I have huge amounts of energy, and I am inspired. Naturally this is a feeling that is worth replicating and trying to achieve as often as possible for as long as possible.

The founder of this concept is a mentor who has taught me so much about myself; he is an American behavioural expert by the name of Dr John Demartini. In my courses aimed at helping physios become leaders we go deeper into the topic of values, and personally this is the most valuable learning I have done in my career to date. It has given me direction, and the satisfaction that I am on the right path in life – the path I was meant to follow.

My courses “Be the Ultimate Physio” and “Train the Ultimate Physio” discuss this concept in much more depth, and I can honestly say that the exercises based around determining my values have been the most beneficial personal development exercises I have done.



DISCOVERING WHO YOU REALLY ARE

Do you know who you are? What a stupid question. Of course you do. You are a person who displays honesty, integrity and other such qualities – at least this is the response I hear most often. But does this really mean anything more than just lip service?

Let's see how you can find out more about yourself and others ...

PERSONALITY PROFILING

DISC profiling has helped me understand more about myself and my natural strengths and weaknesses, and has also helped me better understand my patients and my employees. I would like to credit Jason Smith, owner of the Back In Motion franchise group, for introducing me to the concept of DISC personality profiling during his Iceberg Leadership courses.

DISC profiling is a simple series of questions that determine whether a person is: a) introverted or extroverted; and b) people

focused or task focused. Now many people say to me they are concerned that such a method could lead to “pigeon-holing” people and treating people all the same, but over the years and after conducting DISC profiles with hundreds of current and potential team members at my clinic, I have found that this profile gives me a fairly instant snapshot into unique elements of a person’s personality, as well as their strengths and their fears.

I will now describe to you the four different DISC personality types:

- **D:** an extroverted, task-focused person. ‘D’s tend to consider themselves leaders and frequently end up in leadership positions. They are outspoken and tend to be people in society we perceive to be dominant. Their skills are leading and getting things done, their weaknesses are they can lack empathy and concern for others. To get the most out of a D just get out of their way. A D’s greatest fear is being taken advantage of. If you are a D, you probably just want me to summarise this book in five pages so you can get started on the most important parts without delay.
- **I:** an extroverted, people-focused person. ‘I’ people are the life of the party, and tend to attract people as the centre of attention. They are great at connecting with people and telling stories, and they tend to also be great salespeople. It’s all about people for the I personality. Their main weakness is they have difficulty finishing things they start. To get the most out of an I, make it all about them, but do not reject them openly as this is their greatest fear.
- **S:** an introverted, people-focused person. If you know an ‘S’, they tend to be a rock – very stable, reliable, predictable and routine in their lives. S personalities are great for listening professions such as physio. They may seem stand-offish, but

they just want to get to know you better before opening up. To get the most out of them you need to give them stability, certainty, and allow them to establish a routine. Beware of changing things too quickly or too often, as this is their greatest fear.

- **C:** an introverted, task-focused person. ‘C’ personalities are detail-oriented people who are often great with words or numbers. Being introverted, they tend to take time to build relationships with people, but what they lack in verbal communication they more than make up for in thought – their brains go at 100 miles an hour. They tend to be exact, black-and-white sort of people. They are great at finishing tasks, as it’s their strength, but god forbid they have to stand up and talk in front of a crowd. To get the most out of them, give them detail, rules, systems, structures and checklists. But be careful of criticising them – this is their greatest fear.

So these are the four personality profiles in the DISC profile. The best part of DISC profiling from my perspective is the simplicity. I also use DISC profiling for patients as I will generally tailor my communication with them based on a quick assessment of their DISC profile.

How should you use DISC profiling? Firstly, apply the DISC process to yourself and see what you think. Does the profile match elements of your personality? You could then also do a DISC profiling exercise with your partner and people close to you, as I have found it helps them to know more about themselves too.

However, DISC profiling’s greatest value in my opinion is with your team and employees. It helps you to better understand your colleagues, and their strengths, weaknesses and preferred communication styles, which is invaluable in running a business. DISC profiling is another focus of The Ultimate Physio courses, and is

particularly relevant for physio clinic owners, to get to know your team better, how they communicate, and what makes them tick.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING VULNERABLE

We physios can be a very guarded lot. We all want to be the best, the smartest, to fix the most patients, to have the most knowledge, the best hands-on skills, the most successful practice. Rarely are we prepared to be vulnerable and to say that someone is better than us at something, or admit we don't know the answer to something we really should know, or acknowledge that we may have forgotten something we learned years ago that we don't use in our daily practice and may not have needed to use for years.

I've learned a lesson about how to be happier every day in my physio career, and it has *nothing to do with physio*. It started to happen when I began to very honestly answer my patients' questions with three very scary words for a physio: "I don't know".

THE POWER OF SAYING 'I DON'T KNOW'

Now, for anyone in the health profession those three words are very hard to say. You would think as a patient they are also very hard words to hear, but I will tell you they are much easier words to hear than, "You're wrong", "It's all in your head", "You're just going to have to learn to live with it", and many other assertive comments that mask the fact that sometimes as health professionals we should be saying that we don't know.

When I started saying this to patients, what I initially felt was a dent to my pride. *How could I not know?* I have successfully treated thousands of patients with a huge variety of presentations, and some with very challenging problems.

But I've learned that if you tell a patient "I don't know", sometimes it can free you from your fear of giving them the wrong

diagnosis, the wrong plan and the wrong advice. For many patients who ask me questions based on future outcomes regarding their condition, I will tell them I don't know exactly how their condition will play out, but based on their progress and with my intervention we can construct a really good plan to help them achieve their goals and live a life without pain, which we can modify as needed as time passes.

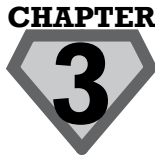
Many physios and business consultants in the physio space will tell you that you need a solid treatment plan with the patient committing to a block of treatment up front, but this block booking based on predictions has never really worked for me. I will still make sure my patient receives a high level of service, and I'm definitely not afraid of being accused of over-servicing as I do see my patients frequently and they get great results, but my predictive skills are not as good as some of these physios who block book, and I am not afraid to admit this. Yes, patients do want a plan, but in my experience the further into their treatment I can commit to timeframes the more accurate I can be.

But back to being vulnerable.

In my life as a physio I admit that I may not be the best physio in the world and there may be other physios who are better than me. Admitting this frees me from the shackles of needing to compete with every other physio around to be the best, which allows me to focus on myself and how I can improve as a physio, clinic owner and – most importantly – as a person, rather than constantly comparing myself to someone else who I may perceive as having better skills, communication or results than me.

So how can you start to be vulnerable in a safe environment? Start being vulnerable to yourself. If you don't know the answer to something, don't kid yourself that you do. Be brave enough to say to yourself, "I'm not sure", then go and research and find your best answer to the question asked. Once you are comfortable being

honest and vulnerable with yourself, you can start to do so with others, including your patients. Be honest with people and they will detect how genuine you are, and you will feel more comfortable in your own skin. This is a really big step towards being happy.



PLAYING ABOVE THE BAR

I almost didn't write this chapter, but on reflection I feel it is my responsibility to you to do so, and I'm glad I did as this is a rule to live by if you want to succeed both as a physio and in life generally.

In life we all encounter problems, mistakes and challenges. As a clinic owner, leader of a team and a father, I encounter more of these than most. How we act and behave through difficult times is a mark of our true character.

ABOVE THE BAR

If you want to be a person of truly great character, who people trust and respect, then you must learn to live above the bar:

Ownership

Blame

Excuses

Denial

You will notice there is only one word above the bar: ownership.

OWNERSHIP

Let's start by considering what ownership actually is. We learn about this concept when we are young through our parents, or at school. As an adult in business it has a completely different meaning.

Ownership in my physio and clinic owner journey has continued to evolve over the years. At the heart of this concept I am responsible for everything that happens in my clinic and in my life, both good and bad. When our clinic doesn't have enough new clients, the problem is not "the economy". When my team are not happy, or not performing as well as I would like them to, it is not their fault. When my business's bottom line is not good enough, it is nobody's fault but mine.

That's ownership.

I have realised the benefit of truly owning my problems and challenges. To truly own a problem is to acknowledge it, which means being vulnerable. After acknowledging the problem, I can work through a solution, sometimes alone and sometimes with help.

Have you ever treated a patient who doesn't seem to be getting better as quickly as both you and she would like? The first step in taking ownership of your care of the patient is acknowledging to yourself and to her that you may need to do something different. What does this conversation look like? For starters, it's not an easy one, but I can assure you it is much better than if you keep rebooking her and one day she just doesn't turn up for her appointment, and you never see her again.

Some of the best physio-patient relationships I have formed over the years start with me treating someone, not getting great results, owning their treatment pathway, changing my approach, and then seeing results for them.

PLAYING ABOVE THE BAR

So start to own up to some of the challenges in your life. Not getting great results at work? Your responsibility. Your finances are not in order? Your responsibility. Not as fit as you want to be? Your responsibility. Career not where you want it to be? Up to you to change it – nobody's fault but yours.

BELOW THE BAR

Let's now discuss below the bar behaviour. Unfortunately many people are more familiar with this type of behaviour than ownership.

BLAME

We have all blamed someone for something before, me included. If a patient is not getting better, is it because he hasn't been doing his exercises?

Instead of blaming his lack of recovery on not doing exercises, how about mutually finding a way for him to enjoy or see the benefits of these exercises so that he actually does them? Or getting him into a gym so he has extra accountability rather than giving only home exercises?

Blame is rife in our society today. The worst thing is, frequently we don't lay blame on others, we blame circumstances – the economy, the job market, competitors, even the weather (as sometimes my clinic is quiet on rainy days). Blaming others or circumstances is a way for you to deflect your problems, mistakes and challenges, so you don't have to face them.

EXCUSES

Excuses – we all have them. Think of the last time you ran late to an appointment. Did you come up with a reason (also known as an excuse)? Too many red traffic lights, stuck behind a slow car,

couldn't find a parking space? Those are all excuses. Our patients throw these at us on a daily basis as well, especially regarding their home exercise programmes.

How do I feel when someone throws an excuse at me? Often I just roll my eyes. Sometimes I smile and nod, but more often than not I challenge them on their excuse in an effort to help them see that they need to own their problem.

If someone is late to an appointment I would rather them simply apologise and say that they will not do it again, rather than hearing all of their so-called reasons.

When someone throws an excuse at you, they often start their sentence with the word "but". A concept I borrowed from Paul Wright is I have a "yeah, but" hammer in my consulting room. Every time I say the words "yeah, but", I give myself a whack on the head with this big inflatable hammer. People must think I'm crazy, but it stops you using the word "but" all the time.

Start to catch yourself using the word "but". When do you use it? Do you use it much? What are the situations in which you use it? You may be surprised. Reducing use of the word "but" in my vocabulary has helped me own more of my problems and solve them.

DENIAL

The most offensive of all below the bar behaviour is denial. No, denial is not a river in Egypt. (I just became a Dad, so I just threw my first Dad joke at you. I promise there won't be any more in the book.)

Denial is not only deflecting or excusing a problem or mistake, it's pretending it never happened. Denial is most applicable to mistakes, especially small ones. If you have a big problem in your life it is hard to pretend it doesn't exist. It's much easier to deny small problems.

Many people will deny out of fear – the fear that they may be punished due to a mistake or problem they have created. In my business this couldn't be further from the truth. In my business, when a mistake is made I need to know about it. Our team discusses the mistake, owns it, and as the clinic owner I own everyone's mistakes, and we learn from them.

Mistakes are how we learn. What I consider to be a negative element of school is that when we are learning, mistakes are considered to be bad. This social conditioning can often make us fearful of making mistakes. My Business Coach Brad Flynn has a great saying: "you win some, you learn some". I think of this saying every time I make a mistake, and believe me I make plenty, although I do my best to learn from them and to not make the same mistake repeatedly.

Do not fear making mistakes; they help you grow.

* * *

Owning your mistakes, problems and challenges frees you from them as you can work on them. If you blame, make excuses or deny, the problem or mistake can follow you around until you own it. So, be honest with yourself: where do you play life – above or below the bar?

I do my best to play above the bar, but I don't always do so (notice what I just said is an excuse – the statement began with my least favourite word!).

Exercise: Catch yourself when you say the word “but”

What is the context?

Are you making an excuse or justifying an action or behaviour?

Stop, and reframe the sentence.

Make sure you take ownership of the problem, challenge or mistake.



BE, DO, HAVE

In our physio careers – and in our lives – we all want to have something. That something can be success, happiness, money, status, recognition, love, credibility, or many other things.

I'm sure from time to time you have thought about what you want to have in life. A very common thing that almost all of us want to have here in Australia is the great Australian dream – your own home.

I need to pay credit to my business coach and good friend Brad Flynn from Actioncoach International for this whole chapter, as I have learned this concept from him, and it is one of the most valuable and applicable concepts I have learned in my life. Brad teaches that to get what you want in life, there is a simple formula you need to follow:

$$\text{Be} \times \text{Do} = \text{Have}$$

So what you have in life is the result of multiplying what you do and who you are (“be”).

What do I mean by this? Let's have a look.

‘DO’

I'm going to assume that you know what the “do” component refers to – *doing stuff*. To address the “do” part of the equation briefly, I would like to discuss the two types of tasks that we do in life:

- urgent tasks
- important tasks.

Urgent tasks are things that need to be done now – answering the phone when it rings in your clinic, treating a patient at her scheduled appointment time, a team meeting, interacting with a person who comes into your clinic to make an appointment, and so on. These tasks are sometimes scheduled and sometimes unplanned, but regardless you need to do them as they are urgent.

The second type of task is the important task. Important tasks are things that you generally need to schedule or plan. Urgent tasks tend to trump important tasks, but important tasks are by nature ... important. In a physio clinic, think marketing, complex case management, team mentoring, team building events, financial and statistical analysis, and so on.

Tasks will fall into one of four categories:

- **Non-important, non-urgent tasks.** Limit these trivial and wasteful tasks. This includes things like surfing Facebook or the internet for hours. Try to eliminate these tasks from your average day if you want to get more done, especially if you are spending hours rather than just minutes on these.
- **Urgent, non-important tasks.** Delegate these tasks and minimise your personal investment in them. These tasks

you don't actually have to do, as long as you have someone to delegate them to, which you can do given they are not important to you but may be to someone else. Think of a task a physio doesn't like doing but an admin staff member may enjoy; such as completing the bulk of patient details in your paperwork.

- **Urgent, important tasks.** Manage these tasks according to necessity. If a patient, team member or key stakeholder in your clinic needs something done, do it in a timely manner, as soon as you are able. These tasks for a clinic owner include fighting fires in your clinic and dealing with minor crises. For instance, in 2014 while I was on holidays, my clinic flooded and my awesome team helped to limit the damage – this was the definition of an urgent, important task.
- **Non-urgent, important tasks.** These are generally planning tasks. The key with these tasks is to align them to your values and focus on your strategy.

My challenge to you is, when we spend the bulk of our time at work “doing”, we gravitate more towards urgent rather than important tasks. Next time you are at work I would recommend considering whether you are spending your non-patient contact time in the most efficient way possible.

A good resource to help you establish if you are doing the right things at work is a spreadsheet called the “time audit”. Credit for the time audit goes to my business coach, Brad Flynn from Action-coach. The time audit helps you to list all of the tasks you do in a day, which you can then categorise into one of the four categories of urgency and importance as listed above.

You can find the Time Audit on the resources page at www.ultimatephysio.com.au.

‘BE’

I hope you read some of the endorsements at the front of this book. These endorsements come from some of the true leaders of the physiotherapy profession, especially in private practice. If you read these endorsements carefully you will see that these giants of the physio profession haven't just focused on the “do”, they have focused on the “be” element in their lives.

Looking back at my career as a physio and a clinic owner so far, I have made one big error that I'm going to enlighten you on, in the hope you don't make the same mistake.

The problem is, most physios and clinic owners I know make this error too. If you keep making this error you will most likely burn out, or look back at certain parts of your career with regret, having wished you took more risks, made more impact, did more of what you love, found your purpose, or worse still got out of the physio profession sooner!

What is this critical mistake?

Too much “do”, not enough “be”.

Going back to our model of $Be \times Do = Have$, if your “do” score is one million and your “be” score is zero, you won't have what you want to have.

But how do you “be”?

To “be” you need to grow as a person. You need to learn about who you really are and what drives and motivates you. You need to understand your strengths and weaknesses. You need to find your true purpose, and live a life of significance, happiness, and being present in the moment as much as you possibly can.

In the past five years I have learned more about myself than in the 30 years prior. How have I done this? Leadership, management, and personal development education. The significant amount of work I have done on my “be” has led to me now teaching these

concepts to physios and clinic owners, as I have observed that our traditional educational model has left us – as well as other medical and allied health professionals – severely lacking in this area.

I believe there is a direct relationship between the higher and more specific our technical knowledge (“do”), and the challenges we face in learning and accepting new concepts and learnings that challenge our existing beliefs (“be”).

I read at least one book on business or personal development a week. I listen to audiobooks in my car on the way to and from work. I do a nice blend of physio, business and personal development courses – generally five to six major courses a year. I have mentors who help me with business, physio, personal development, and I even have a head coach (my psychologist).

Now I’m not suggesting you must go the whole hog, but at least consider which of these options for personal growth fits with who you are, your lifestyle, and what you want out of life.

But I urge you, find out what your true purpose is, before your life passes you by.

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