

## What's your Grade for 2011? Where are you Headed in 2012?

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It is truly an honor to script the first editorial for the Journal of Novel Physiotherapies. As evident in the table of content and the Journal homepage, the Journal of Novel Physiotherapies will provide our profession with an international perspective, to improve the functional status and quality of life for patients through 'novel' procedures. Thus, I am using this forum to share an issue that impacts many professions and individuals. Specifically, doing less than your best! As a seasoned physical therapist (PT), an older PT, I have become opinionated on what makes a good PT. This editorial will enable us to reflect on 2011, encourage you to self-assess and assign a "final grade" for the year, and inspire you to establish goals for 2012.

From your perspective, what makes a good PT? What is your final grade for 2011? Select 10 things you feel are critical for you to be a "great" physio. To make things simple, I will help with developing the grading rubric, see Table 1. Assign a maximum value of 10% for each of the criteria. A "10" is self-rewarded if "excellent" without any recommendations, a "9" for "good," could improve a little, an "8" if "fair," room for improvement, and "<7" "poor" performance. You can use my rubric or make up your own.

By far number 1 is, "putting the patient first!" The patient's needs must exceed my personal needs when I am caring for them. I need to be the advocate for the patient. Even when I am busy, I need to take those extra minutes to request a consult or advocate for my patients to receive necessary services. So how did I do for 2011? I give myself a "10," not bad!

My number 2 criterion is "doing the right thing!" This criterion is all encompassing from adhering to the law, being ethical, not over charging, making sure the units billed reflect the services provided. Okay, I think I am pretty good here but I struggle with keeping track of the minutes I spend with patients. Was it 35 minutes or 26? I'll give myself a "9!"

Criterion 3 is, "involvement in your professional organization." As a PT, I am dependent on my professional organization, the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) to serve as my voice to advocate for the growth of this profession in US. Similarly, there

are other associations in other countries, the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy in the United Kingdom, the Australian Physiotherapy Association, or the Physical Therapy Association of Thailand, to name a few. How involved should I be? This depends on how you define a "10." There are many levels of involvement from membership to delegate to officer. But, am I doing my best serving my association? All right, definitely room for improvement here. Guess I know where I need to grow, an 8!

"Show me the evidence, life-long learning" is criterion number 4. When I started working as a PT, we received very specific orders for hot pack, ultrasound for 3 minutes at 1.5 w/cm<sup>2</sup>, and the massage. Fortunately, our profession has grown significantly and we have evidence in a multitude of areas of clinical practice and there is an emphasis on clinical research as seen with the development of this journal, the Journal of Novel Physiotherapies. Staying the course by incorporating professional reading is critical for meeting criteria 1 and 2. If I do not commit to life-long learning, I will not keep up with the advancements in this profession, I won't be able to put the patient first or do the right thing. Okay, an "8"!

Criterion 5 builds on 3. The APTA has 7 core values that define professionalism for the PT. These include accountability, altruism (devotion to the interest of the patient), compassion/caring, excellence, integrity, professional duty, and social responsibility. Social responsibilities? Social responsibilities incorporate the social responsibility between the PT profession and the societal needs (adapted from APTA, Practice and Patient Care, Professionalism, <http://www.apta.org/Professionalism/>, accessed December 15, 2011). I looked at the websites for several physiotherapy associations around the world, each association appears to have a code of professional values and behaviors. Hmm... "9!"

At the worksite how is my role? "My role at the worksite" serves as criterion 6. Do I treat the new graduates with respect and mentor them? Or, do I hold myself above them? Do I respect the people who clean up after us or do I pretend they are not in my scope of vision? Do I support the cause, the purpose of the program, the clinic? Do I willingly pitch in to help others on the team? Okay, I think I've got this one, at least 90% of the time, "9!"

Besides my professional life, I must also have a personal life; criterion 7, "the personal side." Sometimes I am so wrapped up fulfilling my many professional responsibilities that my family, friends, and faith take a back seat. I need to live by putting my beliefs,

	Criteria	Excellent 10	Good 9	Fair 8	Poor <7	Comments
1	Putting the patient first	10	9	8	<7	
2	Doing the right thing	10	9	8	<7	
3	Involvement in professional association	10	9	8	<7	
4	Show me the evidence, life-long learning	10	9	8	<7	
5	Core values of a professional	10	9	8	<7	
6	My role and interactions	10	9	8	<7	
7	The personal side	10	9	8	<7	
8	The science of healing, the art of caring	10	9	8	<7	
9	The everything else	10	9	8	<7	
10	Self-reflection	10	9	8	<7	
Total	Add up your total points and get a total score.	B - 86%				Total score

Table 1: Self-Reflective Grading Rubric for 2011.

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faith first and the recommendation of Mary Kay Ash, “never forget, your family should always have priority over your work.” Hmm...do I really need to assign a grade to this? Okay, not the best here, I struggle to meet the many demands... Unless I take care of my personal side, I cannot do my best for the patients. Okay, another 8.

According to the APTA, PTs are experts in “the science of healing and the art of caring,” which, is criterion 8. Critical to not forget this – as PTs we are a hands-on profession, we touch our patients, we spend time with our patients, we listen to our patients. Do I demonstrate empathy and respect for every patient? It is truly an art form to observe master clinicians listen to their patients, demonstrate empathy and respect, and truly care for the patient. Okay, what is my score on the rubric? I can easily attain a 10 in the patients I like but what about that annoying patient who does not listen to my advice and shows up late for every visit? Do patients see me as the caring empathetic person or the annoyed busy clinician who does not have time to listen to their needs. Hmm... another 8!

I call criterion 9, “the everything else!” I value and respect people who work hard, are conscientious, responsible, humble, maintain a sense of humor, provide service outside of the work setting. That is a lot of “everything else!” Yes, I am conscientious, responsible, definitely a hard worker. One principle I found on the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy’s website is the principle, to “take responsibility for their actions.” If I forget a patient and let them wait, I need to take responsibility for that and not blame it on overbooking or other...

How about humility as part of “the everything else” criterion? If I state I value humility in people, I can’t exactly put a 10 for criterion 9; but, I am not a braggart; I’ll give myself a 9!

Self-Reflection is the last criterion – that’s what this is all about, it is taking the time to be introspective to identify my strengths and limitations, and develop. I can’t be too bad at this, after all that is the focus of this editorial. What are my strengths? My weaknesses? Where do I need to focus my energies? Where do I need to grow? Okay, I have this one covered. I know where I need to do to grow professionally as a PT. Criterion 10 exceeds self-reflection and requires developing goals and a plan to meet those goals. I self-reflect and make goals, but I definitely do not identify the steps I need to attain my goals. Each year, my weaknesses remain my weaknesses. Hmm... another 8?

The concept of self-assessment is not a new one. Socrates is the first referenced for self-reflection to know thyself. Knowing myself, I give myself a B or 86% for 2011! Only through self-reflection, can I chart a course of where I need grow. To quote Cicero, no one can give you better advice than yourself. What criteria do you use to evaluate and judge others? Use the same criteria to evaluate yourself and chart your course for excellence, an “A” in 2012!

To end with 2 other favorite quotes, “it is a sin to do less than your best” (Bob Jones, Sr) and “we must become the change we want to see” (Mahatma Gandhi). Good luck in achieving change and excellence in 2012!

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