



The phrases resound throughout the annals of social media regularly. Owning our profession. Disrupting PT. Solving PT. Transforming society. It all sounds great, doesn't it?

As much as I agree wholeheartedly with the premise underlying all of these phrases, I fear that they are becoming nothing more than hollow words, platitudes upon which we hang our professional hats while our profession is defined by those outside the profession and not from within.

Physical therapists would probably agree that in a clinical environment, you have to crawl before you walk, and you have to walk before you run. The same applies to our professional woes.

Nothing of value comes easily. However, the ramifications of the failure to do so are even worse.

You have to own before you can disrupt. You have to disrupt before you can transform. If you put things in the proper order, the long-term potential is huge.

Self Image: Before we can own the profession, we must address our self image. We are a profession in need of a cognitive behavioral intervention or two or ten.

Written by Allan Besselink
Friday, 06 February 2015 00:06

A prime example is perpetuating the myth of direct access in all 50 states. I keep asking how Texas fits that definition. I keep asking if anyone has asked a patient lately. While it sounds good, it is a blatant fallacy to a consumer. This is self-sabotaging behavior, a hallmark of low self image.

Another example is the logical fallacy of access being useless if we aren't reimbursed. Reimbursement isn't a necessity before access - it will become a secondary effect of it. Autonomy is autonomy; how you are getting paid for it is a separate issue. This is yet another self-sabotaging behavior.

While we're at it, we also need to own the harsh realities of our legislative world. Simply raising more money won't win the battle - not when you are working against lobbying powerhouses that will ALWAYS have more money in the legislative coffers. Period. While whining about the need for more money, we fail to make a concentrated effort amongst consumers themselves. Consumers equate to votes for, or against, legislators. Again, self-sabotage.

Just Say No: Owning the profession then evolves into a need to stand up and say "no" - to those who continue to define our profession from outside. As the saying goes, "If you don't stand for something, you will believe in anything". We talk a lot about our value, but then we won't stand up for it when push comes to shove.

You need to have enough people within the profession that will stand up for what they believe in. Sadly, I don't think we are anywhere close to critical mass on that yet.

Disrupt, Solve, Transform: Ownership is critical before you can even ponder disrupting PT or solving PT. How can you disrupt when you don't own what you are trying to disrupt? And even if you have found some sliver of answers for any of this thus far, then how are we ever going to transform society with what we have left?

Or Else? Yes, we need to crawl before we can walk, and we need to walk before we can run. Right now, the profession is in the crawling stages, full of talk and lovely platitudes and meetings full of hope and light. We are experiencing some serious developmental delays. There are some hard choices to be made. There will undoubtedly be some short-term pain before we attain the long-term gain.

“If you don’t like change, you’re going to like irrelevance even less.” (General Eric Shinseki)

If we don’t own it soon, if we don’t have the courage for Vision Now, we will forever lose the ability to disrupt. Transformation will become an afterthought. And so will we.

Photo credits: [abesselink](#)

Related Articles By Allan Besselink

- [Vision Now: A Physical Therapist Manifesto](#)
- [Vision Now Revisited: Being And Becoming](#)
- [The APTA's Vision 2020: My 12 Year Report Card](#)