

Qualifying Clients

By Chris White

In September 2005 Men's Health featured an article about how many people are getting hurt by their personal trainers. No surprise if you ask me! When you stop and look around it's obvious why. Gyms use to be sacred places where health and vitality were the norm (I'm speaking mostly about pre-1900's). Now they're nothing more than oversized, overcrowded meat markets pushing garbage food and garbage training. Moreover, the personal trainers working in these gyms have very little education and skill, yet place more stress on people than any other 'health care' profession. Image if you went to your doctors with chronic fatigue, constipation, and low back pain and the next thing you knew you were lunging down the hallway with forty pound dumbbells in each hands.

Clearly personal trainers don't possess the education to effectively qualifying their clients. The typical client has no business being in a gym training the way most trainers train them. It seems obvious to me there is stark contrast between *who* our clients are and the type of people our gyms are designed for.

Consider that 85% of Americans are on at least one prescription medication. In 2002 three billion medical drugs were prescribed. These drugs are toxic to the body and must be processed by all of the systems of detoxification (i.e. liver, kidneys, skin, etc.). When you exercise on these drugs with major side effects you are literally playing with client's lives. Yet how many train even know their clients are taking medical drugs?

We use a software program called Mosby's to create full medical reports for all clients taking prescription drugs. This software is great because it will fully detail all of the side effects and even cross-reference side effects when two drugs are taken simultaneously. More often than not we find most of our clients complaints are written right in the drug report. Moreover, many of these drugs actually create the problem they're intended to treat.

The first thing we teach our Level I coaches is to how to qualify their clients. By that I mean how to identify what level of training intensity is

appropriate when medical history, nutrition and lifestyle factors, and mental-emotional-spiritual factors are all taken into consideration.

So often professional trainers, coaches, and therapists adopt narrow perspectives and biases toward their chosen specialization. I know this because at one point in my own career I was guilty of the same linear thinking.

In other words, there is a common tendency among fitness professionals to see themselves as hammers. And when clients come to us to improve their health and well being, rehabilitate an injury, eliminate pain, or get fit we automatically see them as nails, prescribing what we know, not necessarily what that client needs.

Think about it. When you speak to a chiropractor about musculoskeletal pain they generally believe that most conditions can be alleviated by spinal adjustment. When you speak to a massage therapist about the same conditions they are quick to prescribe bodywork and soft tissue modalities, Fitness professionals are no different. No matter who our client is we do not hesitate to throw them into the fire with squatting, lunging, dead lifting, running, kettle bell work, etc.

Some of my best results come when I send clients somewhere else first (i.e. chiropractic, Reiki, acupuncture, or nutrition and lifestyle coaching). In my opinion, the future of health on this planet lies in the hands of those who possess the skill and education to effectively identify who our clients are. This will require a new breed of practitioner, one who doesn't necessarily specialize, but who understands a wide range of treatments and how they fit into the client's overall picture puzzle of health.

Unfortunately, specializations have compartmentalized our health care system to such a degree that we now have doctors who only study the knee, the shoulder, the neck, and the foot. This compartmentalization backs us into a corner. This is a travesty in my opinion. Specialization is nothing more than knowing a whole lot about very little, usually without regard for the organism as a whole. It is no surprise that people are seeking the advise of holistic practitioners more and more, as the conventional medical model is not working. If you need proof just do a quick Internet search on the number of people with chronic disease, orthopedic injuries, and generalized fatigue. As we get more and more specialized and more technologically advanced we

continue to get sicker and sicker. Clearly we are too close to the forest to see the trees.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the fitness industry. Trainers hate to ask the hard questions. I'm here to tell you your client is more complex than you believe. The body you see in front of you, their personality, effort, recoverability, and level of progress is a combination of several multidisciplinary factors, most of which we chose to ignore because it's much easier to just prescribe squats, dead lifts, and lunges executed at high intensities than it is to try to understand *why* this client is tired all the time, stressed, can't lose weight, or is unhappy with their body.

Tolerance and Type of Exercise Prescription

Supreme Health and Vitality

- Fulfilling a life of purpose (“I”)
- Strong family and friend relationships (“we”)
- Co-creating love *for* the world (“all”)
- Mind-Body-Spirit Consciousness
- Meditation, Breathing
- Organic foods, metabolic balance
- Spring Water
- Balance of catabolic and anabolic processes - Homeostasis
- Functional Movement - Fitness

Wellness, *Dis*-ease Free

Death and *Dis*-ease

- Unhappy, victim-mentality, driven by fear, anger, hate, and judgment
- Anxiety, fatigue, pain
- High stress - work, family/friends, finances, etc.
- Processed foods, fast foods, GMOs,

