



Attributes/Values When Dealing with Chronic Medical Conditions

If, I have seen farther than others, it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants, Isaac Newton, 1676.

I believe I have seen more, understood more, because I have figuratively been lifted on or climbed on the shoulders of mentors and role models. I have had opportunity to be exposed some remarkable Giants, role models/mentors who have kindly mentored my career and life.

Luck has been described as being ready to take advantages of opportunities. There are times when we are presented with opportunities to work and learn from “Giants” from no effort of our own. There are times we need to create opportunities and seek and search for role models or mentors.

I was recently diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis. This diagnosis is not amenable for my life style of participating in ultra-endurance exercise events. Now is one of those times of passage into a new paradigm in terms of healthy exercise. I asked myself, who is a role model or mentor that I can learn how to deal with a chronic medical condition? Who do I know or who can I meet who has succeeded with managing the limitations this disease? Who can I seek out to be a mentor or role model?

As a physical therapy clinician I have been exposed to many clients who have done remarkably well handling complex chronic medical problems. What were the attributes or values they demonstrated? This is a list of attributes or values I observed in patients with chronic and complex medical conditions, and that I think would be good to have dealing with complex chronic health problems.

- Comfortable with ambiguity
- Curiosity to learn more
- Assertive and comfortable asking questions
- Resourceful
- Patience and acceptance of things that can't be changed
- Diplomacy in dealing with family members and healthcare workers
- Independent attitude a desire to be actively involved in problem solving, accepting responsibility
- Positive attitude
- Humor
- Humility

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- Comfortable adapting to change and stress

If, I cannot find an individual with Rheumatoid Arthritis who has succeeded, I can look for an individual who has succeeded managing complex chronic medical conditions. Alternatively, if I cannot find a giant whose shoulders I can stand on, I can strive to demonstrate the above attributes and become a role model or mentor.

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