

Nautilus Bulletin #2

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Personal Involvement

Thirty-odd years ago, I was very interested in physical training – but knew almost nothing about it; now I find myself in the position of still not knowing much about the subject – but I do, at least, realize that the surface has only been scratched, and that most of the recent so-called progress has actually been retrogression. And while such an awareness can only be fairly called "negative knowledge," it is knowledge of a sort.

Coming from a family of medical doctors, my personal opinion of doctors was understandably influenced by such a background – and for many years I defended doctors against anything that I took to be unfair or biased accusations; until I finally learned that all doctors were not quite like those I had known – it came as quite a shock to me, for example, to learn that all doctors don't work eighteen to twenty hours a day, seven days a week. Much in the same vein, I used to defend bodybuilders against statements that I considered biased – because, up to a certain point in time at least, the bodybuilders that I knew were reasonable people, and my opinion of bodybuilders as a group was naturally influenced by such personal experiences; but eventually I was in for another shock – when it finally became perfectly clear that many of the charges aimed at bodybuilders were all too true.

Since then, I have frequently remarked that it is a shame that body building is wasted on bodybuilders; there are exceptions, of course, but it seems that one encounters such exceptions with constantly increasing infrequency – and I have finally reached a point where I look upon all bodybuilders with great suspicion, until and unless they have proven themselves on an individual basis. I no longer expect bodybuilders to be reasonable people – I now expect the opposite, and I am seldom surprised anymore.

Thus I am now obviously biased against bodybuilders – but I am at least aware of this bias; and I have not permitted my opinions of individuals to distort my viewpoints on the subject of body building itself. A simple but full listing of the insanity's being currently practiced by thousands of bodybuilders would run to a length of several hundred pages – and since it is not my purpose to detail such outrages, I will devote very little attention to them; but again, I simply cannot ignore them – so a few of them will be mentioned, although I will not attempt to detail such practices.

While it is perfectly true that my personal opinions are of no interest to others, it is also true that these opinions influence my judgment to at least some degree – and that these opinions, and my reasons for holding them, do become matters of importance to others in a few instances; secondly, some of my firmly held opinions simply cannot be supported – in some cases I "know" the facts, but I cannot explain how I know them. In such cases I will clearly indicate that my statements are merely opinions – but will attempt to explain them in instances where explanations are possible.

If the above mention of insupportable opinions seems too vague, I will point to the following example as clear proof of the fact that all of us commonly make use of such opinions – as we should; how, for example, would you describe a smile to a man born blind? Yet you recognize a smile, and an almost infinite variety of subtle variations in smiles; a friendly smile, a malicious smile, a doubting smile, a sly smile, and many other smiles with distinct meanings – all of these you recognize at once, but do you know how you recognize them? And of more direct importance, should you ignore such knowledge – simply because you can't explain it? I think not; but in an effort to be as objective as possible, my opinions – supportable or otherwise – will be labeled as such.

The Arthur Jones Collection

As recently as two years ago – because of my personal bias against bodybuilders, and because I did not then wish to connect my name with a subject as controversial as body building – I offered the results of my work up to that point to a friend of mine in California, as a free gift without strings. "Publish it," I told him, "under your own name; do with it what you will and take full credit for it."

At that time, he wasn't interested; probably because he considered anything I might have done in this field of no possible value – but, for whatever reason, he declined. Now – two years later – this same individual is apparently doing everything he can in a effort to discredit my work; but not because he still considers it to be without value – quite the contrary, he is now fully aware of at least the commercial value, and together with a number of associates he is momentarily engaged in efforts to pirate something that he was once offered as a free gift.

None of which should have been surprising, I suppose – but all of which merely added to my bias against bodybuilders as a class; nor was my opinion of this same individual improved when he unhesitatingly connected his name with a current fraud – simply because it offered a commercial opportunity.

If my writing is to be honest, at least some of this personal bias must come through – and under the circumstances, I think it should; if some people find it offensive, then sobeit – but if even a few sincerely interested young trainees are prevented from becoming involved in the outrages so common in the field of body building today, then my purpose will have been served.

The benefits that can be produced from logically outlined and practiced weight-training are simply impossible utilizing any other existing method of physical training; this being true – and it is true – the very real value of weight training is firmly established. But it does not follow that such a potentially productive method of physical training is being used in anything even approaching a logical manner – and certainly not on a wide scale. Twenty years ago, most of the then recognized "experts" were mistaken in many of their conclusions – but by and large, they were at least sincere; today, the situation is far worse – little or nothing in the way of actual progress has been made during the last twenty years, and in the meantime involved commercial interests have been successful in their attempts to brainwash most currently-active bodybuilders into an unhesitating acceptance of outright frauds.

As I recently remarked to Mr. Peary Rader, the publisher of Iron Man Magazine, ". . . I think it is about time that somebody stood up to be counted." The following is an attempt in that direction.