

My First Half-Century in the Iron Game

8

The most generally accepted criteria for judging the value of a study published in a scientific journal is the number of times it is used by other authors of later articles on the same subject as a reference. If a study is referred a total of ten times it is considered important; and most published articles are never used as a reference by later authors, are written, published, read by few if any people and quickly forgotten. If you did nothing else apart from reading twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, it would be impossible to read all of the literally millions of supposedly scientific articles that are published every year; which is just as well, perhaps, because most of them are pure rubbish.

The study that has been most often used as a reference by other authors was written by Dr. Tom DeLorme and was published in a medical journal in 1944; since then it has been used as a reference more than 10,000 times. Dr. DeLorme is now seventy-six years old, is the Medical Director of Liberty Mutual Insurance Company (the largest payer of Worker's Compensation payments in the world) and is totally disgusted with the current mess in his chosen profession. On the phone today he told me that in his opinion ... "In the overall field of medicine, less than a dollar's worth of benefit is produced by every hundred dollars of expense; and, in the field of rehabilitation for spinal pathology, as now practiced by the company he works for, the benefit is less than one cent for each hundred dollars that is spent, the program is utterly worthless."

Unfortunately, he is right.

DeLorme started lifting weights when he was sixteen, in 1932, was so successful that he was selected as a team member in the 1936 Olympic Games. In 1944 he was a doctor in the military and was ordered by the Surgeon General to survey (discharged from service) a large number of wounded men; but, in defiance of a direct order, he set out to rehabilitate these men by using weightlifting exercises, and was very successful. His 1944 article describes this rehabilitative experience.

While DeLorme still has the title of Medical Director for Liberty Mutual, their rehabilitation facility is actually under the control of a female physical therapist who is convinced that she knows everything about rehabilitation but in fact knows less than nothing. This woman asked me to install a MedX Lumbar-extension machine in their facility about two years ago (but this was not her idea, and in fact she was violently opposed to the idea); so we did install the machine, whereupon the woman in charge stated that it would be too hard for a woman to operate the machine.

So we sent Jacki Tucci to Boston, Jacki being both female and very small (about 100 pounds in weight), and she spent a full week trying to communicate with the woman in charge of Liberty Mutual's facility but with little in the way of results from her efforts. Jacki spent several years operating MedX machines at the College of Medicine of the University of Florida and has performed several thousand testing exercise procedures. Jacki is now halfway through her second year of medical school in Gainesville, and an article was written by her about the use of MedX equipment was published in last month's issue of the medical journal SPINE. So she knows what she is doing.

But the physical therapist in Boston had what passes for a mind in her case already made up and ignored Jacki. When I later sent her a bill for the equipment she wrote back to say that they did not like the equipment and asked me to remove it.

So I wrote a letter to the Chairman of Liberty Mutual with a copy to his top lawyer, telling them that they were making the biggest mistake in the history of insurance (which they were) and that they had better consult with their Medical Director, DeLorme, and not be influenced by the physical therapist.

Then a female "junior" lawyer wrote back to tell me that their "experts" had decided that the machine was of no value to them.

So I wrote back telling her just how stupid her experts actually are, and added that while disgusted I was not surprised; also told her I should have expected such a result, and quoted the Bible ... "Cast not pearls before swine."

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That decision on their part will cost Liberty Mutual hundreds of millions of dollars over the next few years. Somebody once named such bureaucrats “Abominable No Men,” they automatically say no to any suggestion because that is the “safe” decision, sometimes called CYA (cover your ass).

Long after both Tom DeLorme and I are dead, our equipment will be in use by practically everybody in the country, because the potential saving is literally enormous, something on the order of a savings of eighty billion dollars a year in this country alone. But in the meantime billions of dollars will continue to be wasted and millions of people in pain will go without meaningful treatment because of people like that woman in Boston.

But according to Clinton the government is now going to straighten this mess out, right? Sure.

When talking to lawyers, politicians, or “experts” it is a damned good idea to keep one hand on your wallet and the other hand on your gun. Better yet, avoid them entirely.

As a very appropriate close for this article I want to republish a short editorial that I wrote for IRON MAN more than twenty years ago, “The Beginning, or The End?”

The Beginning - or The End?

(First published in May, 1972)

Guest Editorial by Arthur Jones

Voting for politicians that tell you what you want to hear has all but destroyed civilization – giving in to outrage in the hope of avoiding trouble has all but destroyed freedom – and looking for the “easy” road to success in bodybuilding has all but destroyed the actually great potential value of weight-training. Which perpetuates the politicians, please the perpetrators of outrages, and pads the pocket of a pack of predators in the field of bodybuilding.

And now I am going to set all of this to rights, right?

Sorry, I’m afraid not. In my carefully considered opinion, I don’t think things can be set to rights; I think we are very near the end of civilization – of the beginning of a new, never-ending, dark age. Some few people are aware of the problems, and even see the obvious solutions; but far too many other people have been led much too far down the primrose path of false promises. Which, quite frankly, to me, is amusing – I think most people deserve just what they are getting, and are about to get; and believe me, they will get it – in the neck. For me, as an individual, my time is almost gone – and I do not regret its passing; a hundred years from now, no living person will remember me, and few, if any, living people will even be aware that I ever existed – a thousand years from now, it is highly unlikely that there will be many, if any, living people to remember anything, least of all the name of an obscure individual in the then distant past, or the fact that such a concept as “freedom” ever existed. Which, in a way, is unfortunate – since it just might be that I represent the last example of an actually “free” man remaining on this planet. There are, of course, millions of people who call themselves “free” simply because they have chosen to shirk their responsibilities – little realizing, or caring, that this freedom has been purchased by the tightening of the bonds of others. But having accepted and met my responsibilities as best I can – and no man can do more – I can be, and am, free in an actual sense. Freedom must be purchased, and I have paid my dues – freedom must be fought for and defended, and I will carry the scars of my battles to my grave – freedom must be sacrificed in return for security and I have refused to pay that price.

The six decades during which I have lived have been, in many ways, perhaps the most interesting period in history – this being true primarily because transportation had advanced to a point where it was possible for me to roam the world without spending most of my life “enroute,” but not to the point where the interesting features of the world had been destroyed by the influx of tourists. But that era is all but finished, another ten or fifteen years – at the outside, twenty – will finish both my life and any few remaining opportunities for real freedom; so I will have lived during a fortunate period in the history of mankind.

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The above being true, as it is, do you think that I really care what happens during my few remaining years. My parents are long dead, most of my real friends are either dead or so near death that their passing will surprise neither themselves or me, the big herds of elephants are gone from the Africa that I once knew. “Big Brother” is coming – and has already arrived in many places – and, quite frankly, my days of wishful thinking are far behind me.

But, if that is also true (as it is), then why do I bother with attempts to get a few points of simple logic across to a very small group of people – who, for the most part, have been so brainwashed by commercial interests that they don’t even want to hear the truth – and who do I care what such people think anyway? Many readers, of course, will readily answer that question to their own satisfaction with no slightest hesitation, “... in an effort to serve my own commercial interests.”

Hogwash. During the last year alone I have turned down three filming propositions that would have earned me more money than I can possibly make from my interests in the weight-lifting field during the entire remainder of my life. “Then,” some readers may think, “I am already so wealthy that I don’t care about money – and am, perhaps, only interested in amusing myself?” Hogwash again. Think what you like, believe what you will, the simple truth of the matter is that I enjoy work – people like me have recently been diagnosed as “workaholics,” as good a label, I suppose, as any, and a far more polite one than some that have been hurled at me.

During the last thirty years, most of the worthwhile characteristics of civilization, no small part of the Earth itself, and practically all of the benefits of progressive exercise have been so perverted that almost nothing of value remains; the problems are known, but are ignored – the answers are available, but are denied – primarily, it seems, because far too many people are interested only in avoiding controversy or are unwilling to face up to difficult solutions.

In the fields of greatest importance to most people, politics, sociology, and the environmental sciences, I can do nothing to help anybody, not even myself, and I am fully convinced that the people who might be able to do something in these areas, won’t, in fact, do anything of any slightest value to anybody, not even themselves – instead, they will hesitate, procrastinate, pass the buck, form committees, investigate, occasionally release ambiguous reports of absolutely no value, stall, lie, shirk their responsibilities, and blame other for their own mistakes. At this stage in the history of mankind, if you ever hope for anything different from politicians or the people in charge of the scientific community, then you are a fool, purely and simply.

The wolves of politics and science cannot be avoided – eventually they will pull us all down, and themselves with us; but dodging in and out around the feet of the wolves are jackals of commercial interest – and you can avoid them – But, human nature being what it is, most people won’t avoid them – instead, most people will continue to look for “easy” solutions, thus making themselves prey for the jackals.

My sphere of possible influence is thus limited in several ways; by the very nature of my present work, I am limited to a possible audience of people interested in weight-training, actually a very small part of humanity – secondly, because I hold out no hope of “easy” solutions to difficult problems, many weight trainees will turn away from my words in search of some “secret to instant, effortless success” – and thirdly, many trainees who realize that no “easy” solutions exist may still be left in doubt because they fail to understand the actually simple physical laws that I have been writing about for the last two years in Iron Man. My potential audience is thus limited to some few thousand weight-trainees who do at least understand the basic physics involved – and it is for these few that my articles are intended; if I attempt to write articles of interest to even the average trainee, then my selection of subjects would be limited in the extreme – limited to hogwash, the same hogwash that has been printed a thousand times, the type of hogwash of no value to anybody, hogwash that generally isn’t even true.

So if you are interested in hogwash, then read somebody else’s articles – my articles are intended for men, men who want to hear the truth and are not afraid to face up to hard solutions to their problems, and if you think my articles are hogwash, then put your money where your mouth is. I have been known to make wagers for money, and I will back any of my statements with my cash, or my life. I used to think that most people were unjustifiably biased against bodybuilders as a class – but now I realize that the actual state of affairs in bodybuilding circles today is far worse than most people

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even suspect; which is a cryin' shame, because progressive weight-training could be, and SHOULD be, of very great value to almost everybody, and might be if it were not for the antics of the very people who should be doing everything in their power to promote weight-training.

“And now I will change all of that, right?”

Wrong. The very most I can even hope to do is to try to reach a tiny minority of humanity – and even if I can reach them, the most I can then hope to do is to direct their thinking into a logical direction.

The above editorial was written about eighteen months after the first sale to a customer of a Nautilus machine, but already that company was growing very rapidly; when I sold Nautilus, less than sixteen years after I started it, the annual level of sales was more than a thousand times as high as I had hoped for when the company started. So at least some things got better during following years; but most things, as I predicted in that editorial, went straight to Hell.

The Vietnam War could have been ended, and won, in less than half an hour if this country had ever really gotten serious about it; instead, thousands of men died and trillions of dollars were wasted with nothing in the way of benefit in return.

Jimmy Carter asked ... “Why not the best.” Then gave us the worst; gave away the Panama Canal, permitted Castro to clean out his prisons and lunatic hospitals and dump all of these former prisoners and inmates on us. As if we needed more.

The Arabs seized oilfields found, developed and paid for by us, inflated the price of oil to a ridiculous level and have been steadily extorting the rest of the world into bankruptcy ever since.

The Japanese took our ideas, and with the help of their government built better products at lower costs than American industry (forced to constantly fight our government) was able to produce. Then sold those products to us while making it all but impossible to sell American products in Japan. And we continue to put up with this.

Reagan took office promising to reduce the cost of government, but instead raised it to the highest level in history.

Most of our major cities have been destroyed, education has gone down the tube, the drug problem has become far worse, and our problems with Russia are far from over; people in both West Berlin and the former East Berlin are already clearly saying ... “give us our wall back.”

Medical problems that most people believed had been eradicated have returned on a much larger scale; malaria is now killing millions of people a year and new strains of malaria that cannot be controlled by medication are appearing. AIDS has arrived and may turn out to be the worst plague in history; probably will.

The legal system in this country is nothing short of an outrage; we have about 4 percent of the world's population and 96 percent of the world's lawyers. The Criminal Justice System is just as bad; has absolutely nothing to do with “justice” but certainly is “criminal.”

So the things I predicted in that editorial came to pass; but hold on to your hat ... “You ain't seen nothing yet.” The worst is still to come. Or, as they said in the old song ... “Enjoy yourself, enjoy yourself, it's later than you think.”

Having read the above, a friend remarked that it is “depressing.” So I asked him ... “What do you want, lies?”

In my opinion, “the Bonfire of the Vanities,” by Tom Wolfe, is one of the best books ever written; but when heard that they intended to make a film from that book I remarked that it would be a disaster, and it was a disaster.

Today things must be “Politically Correct,” or cannot be stated; if you ever made the mistake of publishing as they say in court, “The truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth,” they would run you out of the country, or lock you up in a booby hatch.

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Several people have tried for years to get me to write an autobiography, and in 1968 I made the attempt in that direction; I wrote 734,000 words in the first draft, then rewrote the whole thing another ten times, but never published it. Did not publish it because it was “the whole truth,” and that is not acceptable today. What I have written, and what I will write, in these articles is, to the best of my knowledge, totally true; but it is not the “whole truth.”

Another book, “Something of Value,” written more than thirty years ago, when made into a film was so distorted that it had nothing in common with the book, was another disaster.

One pitiful aspect of the situation is the fact that many of the people who are publishing articles and books are clearly aware that their statements are not true. But while I cannot tell you the “whole truth,” at least I will tell you no lies.

As I was writing the last sentence above, my phone rang, a call from Europe with very good news; the party calling was Willem Zeegers, a medical doctor from Holland. About two years ago this doctor and his partner, another doctor, together with their wives and sister of one of these doctors who is a physical therapist, attended a school conducted by the University of Florida School of Medicine for the purpose of teaching proper clinical use of MedX equipment.

Following the school the female physical therapist spent several weeks working in the medical clinic of Mike Fulton, M.D., in Daytona Beach, using our equipment for the rehabilitation of a large number of patients with spinal pathology. Then she went to California and has been working there for the last year and a half under the supervision of Vert Mooney, M.D., in the Department of Orthopedics and Rehabilitation of the School of Medicine of the University of California, San Diego, treating spinal pathology with our equipment.

Research funded by the government of Holland had clearly established that all of the treatment protocols being used for spinal pain were utterly worthless for their intended purposes (all except MedX protocols, which were not studied there), so these two doctors informed the government about what they had learned here and asked the Dutch Government to provide \$4,000,000.00 in funding for research to be performed there using MedX equipment. The call today was made to inform me that the Dutch Government has approved this research request; formal approval will be given in writing within the next ten days and the study will start within about four months.

Since similar research involving thousands of patients with chronic spinal pathology has already been performed in several locations in this country, with outstanding results, we already know what the results will be in Holland; and if the results are as good there as they have been here, then MedX equipment will be awarded the distinction of being “the only acceptable” equipment for this purpose in Holland and at least two other European countries; then will spread like wildfire throughout the world.

So, sometimes, things do go right even when a government is involved. Not often but sometimes.