FROM THE PRESIDENT’S DESK:
SDPA in Action:
Recognizing the Difference between "Action" and "Motion" Translates to Real Progress

Dear Readers,

In my recent newsletter to members, I spoke on the theme for the Society of Dermatology Physician Assistants (SDPA) for the remainder of the leadership year...action. While I spoke on this theme, I began to realize the word “action” is not a simple concept. Who would have thought that a word we all learned the meaning of in elementary school is more complex than we likely ever thought.

The theme of “action” was a natural one for the current position of our organization, yet I was inspired by a quote by the famous John Wooden. John Wooden, who is considered the greatest National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) basketball head coach of all time, is a household name in my sports-centered family. His success as a basketball coach is evident by his wins and championships, but even more memorable was his ability to inspire. He said, “Never mistake activity for achievement.” This quote served as inspiration but also sparked a desire to dive deeper into the meaning of “action.”

Have you ever stopped to think about the difference between action and motion? The concepts of “taking action” and “being in motion” are often used interchangeably, and until now I never considered their differences. However, they are actually distinct entities. Taking action involves deliberately and intentionally engaging in activities that are directly related to achieving a desired goal. According to James Clear, author of #1 New York Times Best Seller *Atomic Habits*,1 motion is useful and often necessary, but it does not have the potential to produce a result by itself. It is best summarized as spinning your wheels. Action is behavior that has the ability to produce a result.

For instance, I can write down ideas for my quarterly editorial and that is motion. Writing it, then having it published is action. It’s important to recognize the difference between these two concepts because being in motion can often feel productive, but it can actually be a form of procrastination or avoidance. It can lead to a false sense of productivity and a lack of real results. Clear says motion can serve to avoid acute stress or even failure. Until now, I never thought of motion as a negative concept, but we all know procrastination does have negative effects. Research shows procrastination can lead to high levels of stress. Procrastination can lead to health issues such as insomnia, digestive problems, muscle tension, and related illnesses.2

To avoid falling into the trap of being in motion, it’s critical to set clear goals, develop a plan of action, and take deliberate steps toward achieving those goals. This may involve prioritizing tasks, breaking them down into smaller, more manageable steps, and holding yourself accountable for making progress toward your goals. I find giving myself a hard deadline is the best way to hold myself accountable and push me.

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**SDPA STATE AFFILIATE EVENTS**

- **Michigan Dermatology Physician Assistants (MiDPA)**
  - MiDPA's 17th Annual Conference
    - April 15, 2023
    - Somerset Inn
    - Troy, Michigan
    - [https://midermpa.com/annual-conference/](https://midermpa.com/annual-conference/)

- **Florida Society of Dermatology Physician Assistants (FSDPA)**
  - 2023 New Wave Dermatology Conference
    - May 18-21, 2023
    - The Vinoy Renaissance St. Petersburg St. Petersburg, Florida
    - [https://fsdpa.org/new-wave-dermatology/](https://fsdpa.org/new-wave-dermatology/)

- **Alabama Society of Dermatology Professionals (ASDP)**
  - ASDP Annual Fall Meeting 2023
    - September 28, 2023 - October 1, 2023
    - The Grand Hotel
    - Point Clear, Alabama
    - [https://www.aldermpanp.org](https://www.aldermpanp.org)
to action. You may find other steps useful. Whatever it is, try to be consistent in that plan across all goals and it will become a positive habit toward success.

When working toward your goals, keep these two words in mind. By recognizing the difference between “action” and “motion,” you can make real progress toward achieving your objectives. Remember, Clear says “motion will never lead to a final result. Action will.”

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