

The John Massengale Paper

WHAT WOULD MASSENGALE RECOMMEND? WORDS OF WISDOM FOR A PROFESSIONAL FUTURE

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Submitted September 2020; Accepted in final form October 2020

Thoughts of Massengale

I know I am being presumptuous to state that I know what John Massengale would recommend concerning a professional future. I am really making a rather large guess, an informed guess though, as to what he would recommend based on what I know about John Massengale. I am not a stranger to Dr. Massengale, I knew him personally. I did not, however, study with him, or serve under him in one of his two university positions (chair at Eastern Washington, or Dean at University of Nevada, Las Vegas). However, I sat on a committee with him now and again in the old SHAPE organization, American Alliance of Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance, and of course here at WSKW (Western Society of Kinesiology and Wellness). I knew him as most colleagues do of each other during the same vintage professional era. We came of age professionally when play, competition, and athletics was a charming sister of physical

education, not the ugly stepchild that they have become in the modern era of kinesiology¹.

The Beginnings

John Massengale grew up in Pontiac, Michigan, and played high school ball there, before playing football at Northwest Missouri State University, where he studied physical education and sociology. Not atypical for many male athletes during the time – most all athletes were aligned with physical education, because their coaches held a teaching position in physical education. Having a coach who taught in physical education was motivation to do the same: major in physical education.

I grew up in Ohio pre-Title IX – in which there was no sport for girls in school, so I snuck down to the Czech Sokol² Beer hall and played there – though my parents would have literally died if they knew I walked through the beer garden to get to the gymnasium and playing fields. I learned to do gymnastics and to play softball there – and one game never ended – we played it for four years on a dusty, dirty, field

¹ See my article Sharon Kay Stoll (2012) The effects of athletic competition on character development in college student athletes, *Journal of College and Character*, 13(4). DOI: 10.1515/jcc-2012-1939

² The Sokol movement was based on the notion of a strong mind in a strong body. The Sokols was a nationalistic institution born of a need for patriotism in the old Czech region of Austria-

Hungary in 1862. Expression of the movement was found in lectures, libraries and theatrical performances at mass gymnastic festivals called slets. Sokols continued as an organization through all the turmoil of the European World Wars and eventually groups migrated including developing in the US. Slets appeared as late as 2017 in the US and the next is scheduled for 2021 outside Chicago. <https://american-sokol.org/about-us/>

that had an 8% decline. If you could hit the ball, you usually got a homerun. I could hit the ball.

I went to the College of the Ozarks³ and majored in both physical education and English. Physical education because the men were better looking, and all theory classes were coed. English because all PE teaching majors had to have another teaching major or minor – I was good in English and my father would never have agreed to a major in PE. So, I never told him about PE. However, more importantly than good looking men, Shakespeare's Sonnets to the Portuguese, and occasionally telling my father a white lie, I was blessed. I got to play in the women's physical education program. We played and competed in field hockey, soccer, basketball, speed ball, archery, volleyball, badminton, and softball in class activities as well as in a robust intramural program. I have numerous medals from those heady days of intramural competition. The women's physical education classes were intense. We had to pass proficiency tests in all the activities, e.g., basketball, soccer, volleyball, archery, badminton, speedball, be able to referee all the games in those activities using DGWS rule⁴s, and become referee certified. I left a lot of blood and skin on the field of play and loved every minute of it. I was well prepared to be a girls' physical educator.

First Professional Positions

After college and his baccalaureate degree, John took a job in Kansas City and was a high school coach and physical educator from 1963 to 1967, as well as earning his master's degree. Obviously, he could juggle a lot of hats at one time.

I did not juggle an academic hat, but I had a lot of hats in the air. After my master's

degree (M.Ed) at Kent State University in 1970, I took a job in Akron, Ohio, and coached four girls' sports and taught physical education to girls (7 classes a day with 70 girls in a class). By 1973, and post Title IX, I did battle with the men's wrestling coach to win gym time to coach girls' volleyball and basketball. That hat in the air resulted in much angst to win equal access and even somewhat equal pay. The good news is I won that battle and equal access and somewhat equal pay occurred. I never got to the salary range of the sexy sports, boys' basketball and football. I coached a lot and was rather successful – a state title in gymnastics; city championship titles in volleyball, track & field, and gymnastics.

But just like John, I knew there was more that I could do to serve. Being a coach and teacher is satisfying beyond words – even to this day, when I am contacted by former athletes, the love that was there is still there and the conversations begin and end with our athletic journeys together. However, academia was calling.

John received his doctoral degree at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, while at the same time working as an assistant football coach and adjunct instructor of physical education.

I went a bit more on the academic route and was a graduate assistant and research assistant at Kent State University studying history and philosophy of sport. The years at Kent were the academically exciting years when subdisciplines were being created and I met and presented with the best of the best at the International Philosophic Society for the Study of Sport, later called the International Association of the Philosophy of Sport. I met and presented before scholars such as Warren Fraleigh⁵,

³ CofO is now the University of the Ozarks, located in Clarksville, Arkansas.

⁴ DGWS, Division of Girls and Women's Sports which developed and distributed all rules for all girls and women's sports. DGWS was a subset of the American Alliance of Health, Physical Education,

Recreation and Dance. Later DGWS was subsumed under National Association of Sport and Physical Education, one of several associations within AAHPERD.

⁵ Fraleigh, W. (1985). *Right actions in sport: Ethics for contestants*, Human Kinetics.

Bernard Suits⁶, Carolyn Thomas⁷, Scott Kretchmar⁸, Miller Brown⁹, Drew Hyland¹⁰, William Morgan, and Klaus Meier¹¹. I, like John, kept my hand in coaching, and assisted in the famed Rudy Bachna Kent State's Olympic Gymnastics program¹².

John somehow earned his doctorate in two years; it took me four – I apparently was a bit slower on the draw. John then took a job at Eastern Washington University as both a coach and assistant professor; in less than 6 years he was a full professor.

I took a job at Idaho and won full professorship in 9 years – again a little slower – but my coaching days came to an end – no longer was there an option to coach and teach. Rather, at Idaho, unlike the mentorship under Massengale, there was a distinct delineation – in fact, all coaches were expunged from the professorate. Two years before my tenure began at Idaho, my department chair gave all

(1985). Former chair and professor at Brockport State College.

⁶ Suits, B. (2014). *The grasshopper-: games, life and utopia*. Broadview Press. Dr. Suits is considered one of the founders of the Philosophy of Sport and was a general philosopher who took up the mantle of how we use words and what do they mean, such as competition and sport.

⁷ Thomas, C. E. (1983). *Sport in a philosophic context*, Lee & Febiger Dr. Thomas actually once upon a time taught at the University of Idaho focusing on physical education service classes. Her phenomenological work in sport is probably some of the best.

⁸ Kretchmar, R. S. (2005). *Practical philosophy of sport and physical activity*. Human Kinetics. Retired from the Pennsylvania State University. He is, in my opinion, the best of the best writing about philosophy of sport. He was trained in physical education and practices sport and activity still daily.

⁹ Brown, W. M. (1980). Ethics, drugs, and sport. *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, 7(1), 15-23. A philosopher from Trinity College, Hartford, CT.

coach/instructors an ultimatum – either stay in the professorate or go to athletics. Most went to athletics, a few stayed in PE, and a few were terminated.

My experience was a marketed change from John's journey, who continued to coach and teach, and then became the athletic director while also becoming the chair of the department for several years. Unfortunately, he met the same expunging that I mentioned above. He went on vacation, and when he returned found that the university president hired someone else as the new full-time athletic director. He took it rather well¹³. I doubt that I would have. He stayed in the department of physical education as a full professor.

Professional Expectations of Service

Both of us, in our journeys, were mentored and knew the importance of being involved in professional organizations at the local, state, regional, and national levels. We

His first work on the importance of ethics in sport in relation to mandatory testing is a must read.

¹⁰ Hyland, D. A. 1990. *Philosophy of sport*. Paragon House Publishers. A former basketball player at Princeton, he received his advanced degrees in Philosophy. His work is always word reading, because he played the game.

¹¹ Morgan, W. J., & Meier, K. V. (1995). *Philosophic inquiry in sport*. Human Kinetics. Bill Morgan and Klaus Meier were the first to compile an anthology directed toward philosophy in sport. A well collected edition with very articulate and helpful chapter introductions.

¹² Rudy Bachna was an Olympic Coach (1956) and had a long and successful career coaching both men and women at Kent State University. See <https://omeka.library.kent.edu/special-collections/items/show/23>

¹³ Steve Estes, in writing an obituary for PHEAmerica tells this story. I believe it is true, Steve and John worked together often on scholarship projects. See: Estes, S. (2014). PHEAmerica. <http://www.pheamerica.org/2014/john-massengale-professional-leader-colleague-and-visionary/>

came through the educational system when classes like Organization and Administration of Physical Education and Athletics and Physical Education Principles for Professional Students and Principles of Physical Education¹⁴ were taught as part of the curriculum. We were expected to attend local and regional meetings and in college were expected to take part in the Physical Education Major's and Minor's clubs. In my case, I was expected to join the Women's Recreation Association (WRA) and was expected to serve in some capacity. I ended up not only being the president of our local chapter in college but also being the State of Arkansas WRA president – not by choice so much as by mandate, in which I chaired the state WRA convention with seven colleges and universities attending.

What was the WRA? Before Title IX with no competitive opportunities in sport or athletics available for women, we women physical education majors competed against ourselves and then competed against other physical education majors throughout the state college system. We would meet for a day of play – yes that is right: a day of play. You must remember that this was a period in which women physical education college professors argued against the male competitive model in which men had scholarships and played a competitive season against other men at other colleges. The women physical education professors believed that the male model was basically corrupt – and was not a model to be followed. There was also this Puritanical belief, not necessarily supported by any research, but rather supported by myth passed down, that too much exercise damaged the reproductive organs. I was told by my high school physical education teacher that I should not play basketball like the boys, or my ovaries would fall out. My father, a dairy farmer, set me straight when I asked him to affirm what I had learned

that day. He said, “Sharon, did your ovaries fall out when we chased the cows last week. Did the cows’ ovaries fall out when they were running?” This man, with a 7th grade education, then offered a defining philosophy that I have followed all my professional life, “Don’t let someone put limits on what you can or cannot do. Make the decisions for yourself. Use that brain that God gave you.” In college, I took that philosophy and joined everything I could, and learned as much as I could – and I learned to lead and to question. Leadership was expected of us all – even in a time when leadership opportunities were based on a different model.

Being a professional in the 1970s was founded on the same leadership mandate – we were expected – not just mentored – but expected to serve. We looked for ways to serve. We were involved. We cared and more importantly those individuals who mentored us expected us to serve. There were no excuses.

To give an illustration, when I got to Idaho and got my first paycheck, I literally sat down on the curb outside the pay voucher office and cried – I did not know how I was going to make it. I made more money as a high school teacher and coach than I did as an assistant professor. The very next day, my chair informed me that I would be attending several professional meetings and that I was to “get involved”. I said, “I don’t know how, I don’t make enough money to do anything.” Her response was, “Well figure it out; you have to.” So, I took extra jobs teaching Western Swing and Ballroom Dance and worked summer school teaching children’s gymnastics. And, interestingly, the extra work and professional involvement did improve my salary – maybe not a lot but enough that things were better.

¹⁴Written by Jesse Feiring Williams, Delbert Oberteuffer. Jesse Feiring Williams was a physical education philosopher, before they were called philosophers. Delbert Oberteuffer, from the Ohio

State University, also was known as a physical education professor who wrote about principles – how physical educators should behave, should teach, and set standards. -

The Profession Serves

So, what was the service that John Massengale supported? And what did we do in service? The service was to do whatever you could to ensure the future of the discipline and to become a part of the profession. We were prepared in the discipline (the body of scientific and artistic knowledge supported by research and scholarship) and could serve the profession (the vocation of teaching and coaching) in so many ways. We were taught through the discipline the importance of play and learned to play. We were physical educators – we educated through the discipline of the physical as Thomas Wood and Rosalind Cassidy¹⁵ would argue. We were also at the same time professionals through our teaching and coaching - for John at least. My collegiate profession was teaching.

Service, as interpreted at the time, was “wanting” to make a positive difference. We all were taught throughout our educations and careers that there was nothing more important than giving back to the profession and discipline. “Giving Back”? We were taught that what we learned came from a sacred trust of other educators and professionals and once we learned the material, we had an obligation to share the material to those who came after us. We learned about the importance of play in developing good citizens who are fit and healthy. We had a moral duty to do so. We were challenged to practice our discipline through teaching but also through our personal practice. We played, competed and taught others to do likewise.

¹⁵ Wood, T. D., & Cassidy, R. (1927). *The new physical education: A program of naturalized activities for education toward citizenship*. Macmillan. Wood and Cassidy were peers of Jesse Feiring Williams and Delbert Oberteuffer. Most all physical education majors throughout the United States took classes in physical education, where these writers authored the text books. The mantra was always the same – citizenship through physical education and teachers taught physical education as prescribed.

John Massengale was an example of such an individual. In reading commentary about him from individuals he mentored, he practiced all the above. It was who he was. It is who we are.

Today, Expectations Are Not The Same

Unfortunately, times have changed, and I am afraid not for the better. I read an article in *Rolling Stone* by Wade Davis¹⁶, an anthropologist on social change, about the illusion of American exceptionalism. I did not agree with much of what he said, except for his commentary that within the last twenty years the US has become a nation of individuals who are only focused on self and have lost the notion of community responsibility. The concept is not a new one. Robert Putnam wrote of the same dilemma in his 2001 piece: *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. Putnam argues that the financial burden of the post-modern world has placed such a stress on the family and individual, that service no longer exists. People are just working and working to make enough to get by. Organizations that had a service component, The Lions Clubs, Kiwanians, Elks, and even the Sokols are struggling to exist – few people join and thus the organizations are presently run by older adults. The organizations’ existence is limited to a few remaining life years of these individuals.

Unfortunately, this reality of life engulfed the university and college system and service was no longer charming or expected. A caveat here, service is always expected of the professoriate to do the work of the college and university to a small degree, but service to the

¹⁶ Davis, W. (August 19, 2020). Covid has reduced to tatters the illusion of American exceptionalism. *Rolling Stone, Op-ed*. <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/covid-has-reduced-to-tatters-the-illusion-of-american-exceptionalism-writes-rollingstone-in-op-ed-11597781594>

profession is not respected or expected. The purpose of a university professor is first and foremost to do research and secure grant dollars¹⁷. In fact, a professor can be a less than average teacher with no training in the teaching profession and little to no knowledge in the art of teaching and all is well as long as that professor writes, publishes, and garners some grant dollars. With such a purpose, faculty members learn very quickly that the only way to survive and be promoted is to research and publish and seek those illusive grant dollars. The upshot of this problem is there is no expectation of students in the discipline to become a part of the profession of teaching and coaching. Students study kinesiology and some forms of subdisciplines of kinesiology. Student clubs of physical educators, exercise scientists, or kinesiologists lack direction and no self-respecting professor is going to mentor one. Instead, if the club exists at all, it is led by a clinical professor, or perhaps by a graduate student passing through the institution. In my time as a student, WRA was mentored by the head women's physical educator of our department. Her name was Lavada Qualls¹⁸. Mrs. Qualls did not just suggest we lead, she pretty much shoved us into it. My experience becoming the State of Arkansas president of

WRA was just that experience – she saw my abilities and I was put to the task. It was a mastery of teaching exceptional leadership. I learned from her and I use her technique with all of my doctoral students – they will lead, and they will write, and the expectation is for each is to make a difference.

John and I had several conversations about this at WSKW with other professionals who saw the decline and fall of service. Basically, we wrung our hands and cried against the tyranny and oppression of such a system; Paolo Freire¹⁹ would be so proud of us. Unfortunately, academics have little power these days to change the corporate structure for several political reasons²⁰.

Hopefully Massengale's Suggestions Support the Following

However, my task in this paper is not to focus on the negative but to offer some positive advice, hopefully, that Dr. Massengale would support for an active professional future. So, below find a few salient points on how to be a productive and successful professional in Kinesiology.

First and foremost – get out and play. I did not say make sure you work out every day²¹.

¹⁷ Many exception works are available on this topic including, Frank Donoghue's 2018 *The last professors: The corporate university and the fate of the humanities*. New York: Fordham University, .

¹⁸ Lavada Qualls was an assistant professor at the University of the Ozarks, Clarksville, AK for over thirty-five years from the early 1960s to her retirement in the 1990s. She is still very involved with the University and has sat on numerous Alumni committees. Even into her 80's she is serving and leading. <https://ozarks.edu/news/eight-alums-honored/>

¹⁹ Freire (2018) wrote the definitive text on oppression in teach, called *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, Fourth Edition, Bloomsbury Academic. Of course, I am stretching the analogy here since Freire's work was directed toward the oppression of the underclass and the underprivileged and minorities of the world.

²⁰ Benjamin Ginsberg (2013). *The fall of the faculty. The rise of the all-administrative university and why it matters*. Oxford University Press. Until very recently, American universities were led mainly by their faculties, which viewed intellectual production and pedagogy as the core missions of higher education. Today, as Benjamin Ginsberg warns in this eye-opening, controversial book, "deanlets"--administrators and staffers often without serious academic backgrounds or experience--are setting the educational agenda and faculty mutely accept because they are released from such duties as service and even teaching to write, publish, and garner grants.

²¹ I obviously believe that it is imperative to keep oneself fit and healthy. As Kenneth Cooper, founder of the Cooper Clinic, and the father of the Aerobic movement, would say for a long and healthy life, follow all the accepted protocols for a healthy, active lifestyle and choose your parents wisely <https://podcastaddict.com/podcast/24513>

I am arguing instead that you need to make play an active important part of your personal life and professional philosophy. R. Scott Kretchmar has written passionately and rather well about the importance of play²². I believe that you should play daily – enjoy movement for the glory of moving not for its scientific psychological and physiological benefits – but for the majesty and joy for moving. Get outside and if you are a competitor, find a group to compete with; if you are a dancer, find a dance group or dance in the street; I personally love to garden, play with my dogs, work with my horses, walk in the woods, and enjoy the beauty of the outdoors. Play calls to me and my playing is essential to who I am in all that I do. I believe we should play out, not work out. Play should call to you – and you should hear that call, and answer.

Keep a sense of humor about you. To be successful in any professional life, one needs to enjoy the experience and find the humor. In our profession, we work and play with people – and people are funny. We are funny. Focus on the fun of the job – that metaphysical joy that comes with being around active people and inspiring others to be active. Laugh out loud. If you are enjoying what you are doing, everyone who works with you, studies with you, and researches with you will also find a joy – and that combined with play makes life worth living. I have learned that a smile even when giving someone bad news, tempers the response from the listener. Smiles show a sense of care and consideration – and people will follow you anywhere if you know

22 For example, in his 1996 work, *Movement and play on higher education's contested terrain*, *Quest*, Kretchmar argues for the place of play as an academic pursuit. In his 2007 "The normative heights and depths of play," *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, he works through a philosophic argument for the merit of play. Kretchmar is probably our most proficient writer on the subject of play and its importance to the profession and to the soul of the individual. Many more examples of his work exist.

²³ While the concept of servant leadership is a timeless concept, the phrase "servant leader" was

what you are doing, have a plan, and show you care about others.

Make service a priority in your professional goals. I believe Kinesiology is basically a service-focused profession. My peers may not agree, however, I believe that our clients, whether students, athletes, or individuals in training at fitness facilities, depend on us to serve them well. They expect us to have their best interests in mind, they expect us to be prepared, and they expect us to be educated. I argue that we have a duty to serve them well. I also believe that our profession asks us to be servant leaders. Servant leadership is a philosophy and set of practices that enriches the lives of individuals, builds better organizations, and ultimately creates a more just and caring world²³. The best test of a servant leader is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived? (Greenleaf, 1977)

Stay committed and give back. Just a few months before Dr. Massengale passed he was at our WSKW meeting. He physically looked tired and aged, but his mind was as sharp as ever. I know he had a cabin somewhere on a river, and he liked to travel to the Florida Keys. He could have just retired there and disappeared as most all retirees do. But not John, he was at WSKW talking with people, talking with students, reading student research papers, and asking

coined by Robert Greenleaf in *The servant as leader*, (Robert K Greenleaf Center, Inc.) an essay that he first published in 1970. He said, "the servant-leader is servant first...It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. This conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is starkly different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions...The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the variety of human nature."

questions. He was no longer a chair or a Dean of a program. He had retired from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, but he had not retired from being a professional. He was still invested and was still an important voice for the profession. He was a servant leader and a model who lived his life well and followed the suggestions, I note, above. He was deeply committed to what we do as the greater discipline and as a profession. If you want a life well lived stay committed and give back. In 2000, a more charming term was coined – Pay It Forward²⁴ – a fun movie about a social studies teacher who gives an assignment to his junior high school class to think of an idea to change the world for the better. And, that’s what we should do every day in our profession. Don’t quit or fall into the morose of old age and the notion of being useless. John Massengale was an example till the end of his life. He Paid It Forward with gusto, humor, wit, and kindness.

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The Final Thought - Serve

John Massengale would want you to consider the importance of service – well, maybe, not consider – he would, if he were your mentor, push you forward and expect you to serve. Service for him was the key to leadership and a professional service. I agree. Make a difference and become involved in the profession. You will never regret the growth and the experience and those you serve will never regret learning and working with you because you served the profession.

Do not fall into the abyss of focusing only on monetary success and gaining salary increase. Serve because you can; serve because you care; serve because you can make a difference.

References

Greenleaf, R. (1977). *Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power & greatness.*: Paulist Press.

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[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pay_It_Forward_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pay_It_Forward_(film))