

The Twenty-Fourth Delphine Hanna Commemorative Lecture 2015

The Cardinal Virtues and Kinesiology

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*What is a good kinesiologist? Is it possible that the ancient and medieval tradition of the Cardinal Virtues sheds light on this question? The four Cardinal Virtues of prudence, justice, courage, and temperance are so called from the Latin *cardo* meaning “hinge.” The Cardinal Virtues are said to be the hinge upon which all the other virtues rest or turn. They are the foundation of good character. If this is right, then the answer to the question posed is simple. The good kinesiologist is prudent, just, courageous, and temperate. Therefore, to move the field forward, even on a practical level, kinesiologists must give due attention to the virtues.*

Keywords Kinesiology, physical education, sport philosophy

*Because contrary to the wisdom of the bumper sticker,
it is not enough these days to simply QUESTION AUTHORITY.
You’ve got to speak with it, too. (Mali, 2002)*

It is clear from the conference theme—Tradition, Transition, and Transformation—that the 2015 NAKHE conference is about addressing both the past and the future. Here is how I would characterize the mission of this year’s conference: NAKHE’s leaders want to *reflect* upon the past, in hopes of *navigating* the choppy waters of the unsettled present, so as to *chart* a clear path to the future. This is not a new concern. In fact, many of the previous Delphine Hanna Lectures have focused on some aspect of this concern for *charting* a path forward.

Many answers for how this ought to be done have been offered. These include calls for an “enhanced national presence” (Dunn, 2009, p. 277), for the importance of problem solving and “strategic planning” (Buck, 2014, p. 142), and for an “interdisciplinary perspective” (DePauw, 2010, p. 345). Although fine in themselves, focusing on such recommendations is not without danger. For, if taken by themselves, that is, absent first principles, they become essentially technocratic solutions. Technocrats believe that the way forward for kinesiology lies in the implementation of what French sociologist Jacques Ellul (1997) called “technique.” Ellul understood technique to be the hyper-rationalization of practices in pursuit of maximal efficiency. So understood, success in kinesiology becomes a matter of things,

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such as better management and design of curriculum, or of marketing the discipline more effectively, or of improving graduate student formation, or of increased scientific credentials purchased through the publication of ground-breaking research. What the technocratic vision of these proposals has in common is the belief that the future of kinesiology can be assured through better organization. As a result, the chief virtues of kinesiology become utility and efficiency, for they are the means by which we can *demonstrate progress*.¹

The limitations inherent in this mindset should be apparent, for it constricts truth to that which is tangible and reduces success to productivity. In fact, the pursuit of any larger understanding of truth can seem a time-wasting barrier to progress. As Andrew Hawkins argued in his 2011 Hanna Lecture, “We have become so pragmatic, that asking the big questions seems to get in the way of getting the job done” (p. 261). Ellul (1997) put the same idea this way:

Technique is the extreme development of means. Everything in the world dominated by technique is a means and only a means, while the ends have practically disappeared. Technique does not develop towards attaining something. It develops *because* the world of means has developed. . . . At the same time, there is a suppression of meaning, the meaning of existence, the meaning of “why I am alive,” as technique so vastly develops its power. (p. 40)

Although all of these goals for “reform,” or “interdisciplinarity,” or “leadership” are fine as far they go, they should not be considered sufficient in and of themselves. If and when they are considered sufficient, kinesiology will have become mere technique. Therefore, a larger vision of the meaning, purpose, and place of kinesiology in the academy and the world at large is necessary. Kinesiologists must be robustly concerned with truth. This *should* be an obvious and uncontroversial point. For even a commitment to the emancipated version of truth I have been describing, assumes a particular understanding of the good, the true, and the beautiful—namely utility and efficiency.

Yet, in the final analysis, the reduction of the good to the productive is incoherent. For if production is to have any real value, it must have an end, a purpose, a *telos* beyond itself.² Productivity must be in service of some larger good. Furthermore, just as efficiency is always open to the objection “to what end?” utility is always open to the objection “useful to whom?” Absent some objective conception of truth, utility is impossible to distinguish from the will to power, where calls for efficiency simply mask the desire of the powerful to defend the principle that “might makes right.”

Therefore, absent a passionately articulated vision of the common good, grounded in truth, utility and efficiency reign supreme. In such situations, mission statements and visions quickly dissolve into vapid cant, that is, a vague and groundless optimism in progress for progress sake. Once the naiveté and emptiness of such a position is exposed, an explicitly nihilistic philosophy takes its place, where belief, enthusiasm, and passion are either considered passé or mere masks for the will to power.³ This is, I believe, the condition we will find kinesiology in if we emphasize “technique.”⁴ Absent first principals, passionately held, we are stillborn.

I intend to propose a different path. Kinesiologists cannot simply rely on technocratic adjustments, or curricular decisions, or growth in research prowess to move the discipline forward. As important as those things can be, and believe me, I know from experience how important they can be, they are not enough. They are necessary to the philosophy of kinesiology but they are not sufficient. So that I am not misunderstood, let me point to two

examples of what I mean. One which I have lamented from the outside and one in which I was directly involved.

First, the University of Michigan, my alma mater, has dropped its physical education (PE) major for the fall of 2015 in favor of a non-teaching degree in health and fitness (Camilli-Whisenhunt, 2014). I have no doubt that the leadership of Michigan means well. This is clear from the fact that in an attempt to save the program, Michigan engaged in a vigorous but failed marketing campaign to find more physical education students. Moreover, the fracturing of curricula between different majors within kinesiology made enrollment numbers in the PE program a serious concern. If a PE class is only for PE majors, then it is hard to hold classes once your number of majors drops into the single digits, because you will not have enough other kinesiology students enrolled to justify offering the course. These are real problems that needed to be addressed. Michigan addressed them as best they knew how.

However, I must admit I am nevertheless deeply troubled by the decision. For whatever the motivation, whatever the “situation on the ground,” the result is the same: a retreat from the front lines; an abandonment of those most vulnerable and most in need of our teaching, our coaching, and our example; a capitulation, a surrender to cultural trends, in pursuit of greater efficiencies, productivity, and prestige elsewhere; in short, an embrace of technique.

Why do I use such harsh language, when I am admittedly distant from the situation? Because of the weak, shallow and pragmatic rationale used to justify the decision.

It makes little sense to cite government statistics that, “the percentage of schools offering Physical Education at least three days a week has significantly decreased” (University of Michigan School of Kinesiology, n.d.a., p. 1). Similarly, the claim that enrollment in the major has “steadily declined” carries only pragmatic weight (University of Michigan School of Kinesiology, n.d.a., p. 1). After all, the fracturing of curricula was a choice—or set of choices—not an inevitability.

Finally, how can a school that prides itself on consisting of the “leaders and the best” believe that it is in any way relevant that “Michigan State and Albion [College] have discontinued their Physical Education programs” (University of Michigan School of Kinesiology, n.d.a., p. 2)? Whimsically, one might ask: “When has Michigan ever taken their marching orders from Michigan State?!” More seriously, simple logic dictates the following: The fact that something occurs is no evidence of its goodness. “Everybody else is doing it” is simply not a legitimate rationale to drop physical education.

Let me be clear. The curricular and enrollment problems at Michigan were real. As a practical matter, it may have been too late to save the program. Perhaps their hands were tied. I do not claim to know. What I do claim is this. As a matter of philosophy and as a matter of precedent, this decision was a disaster.

Why? Because it is a perverse inversion for kinesiologists, of all people, to argue that a lack of physical education in the schools *justifies* dropping the major. The lack of physical education in schools should suggest just the opposite.⁵ If you believe what you are doing is important, if physical education is a vital good, then fight! If what we do matters, then these facts regarding disarray and decline are nothing more than a call to action. The solution to low enrollment is in principle simple, even if in practice it is hard. We must recruit more students, we must inspire more students, and we must *LEAD!* Dammit! We have to stop acquiescing! If we do not have pride in our discipline, if we will not stand up for ourselves, no one will!⁶

We are fighting an uphill battle. We cannot tire, and, as my second example indicates, we cannot give up. As many of you know, I was trained as a sport philosopher at Penn State University, and I teach at Marshall University. For 7 years at Marshall, I have tried, in both

word and deed, to stand up for a well-rounded and broad discipline in which the humanities are taken as seriously as the sciences. Nevertheless, despite all my efforts, I recently had to fight back a proposal to combine our sport ethics and sport law courses. This was put forth as a way to save credits in a time of tight budgets and shrinking faculty lines. In short, it was seen as greater efficiency. It was a change justified not by a sound philosophy of kinesiology but by technique.

To hear such things from one's own department, after years of work, is tiresome and disheartening. It is tempting to throw up one's hands and give in to despair. "How many times," one asks, "must I fight these battles?!" The answer is as simple as it is hard to put into practice: *as many times as they arise*. So, I stood and I fought. I argued for the vitality of sport ethics in an age of cheating and academic scandals, as well as the vitality of sport law in an age of NCAA lawsuits, concussion lawsuits, and Title IX lawsuits. I argued, therefore, that our students needed more engagement with these sub-disciplines not less. I pointed out that just as one could not do justice to exercise physiology and biomechanics in one course, one could not do justice to sport ethics and sport law in one course. These arguments and the others I raised won the day because *I stood up* and vigorously defended the importance of keeping these classes independent. In fact, I am convinced it was vigor not logic that saved the courses. The point is a modest one. Win or lose, whether the winds are blowing for or against us, we must continue to stand up.

What each of these examples indicates is that the future of kinesiology will rest upon *character*. It is the good or bad *character* of kinesiologists that will shape the future of our discipline. Ultimately it is our virtues and vices, your virtues and vices, and my virtues and vices that will shape the future of the field. The reasons this is so are quite simple. The discipline of kinesiology is not only *made up* of people, the discipline of kinesiology is *about* people. It is *human* movement that we study. *The implications of this truth are wide and deep*. Let me reinforce just one. The success or failure of curricular reform, both in terms of passage and implementation, rises and falls on the good sense, that is, the character, of those faculty and administrators involved.

Kinesiology is dependent upon character. The discipline needs *good* kinesiologists to teach, conduct research, and serve the discipline. It needs a conception of the *good* person by which to cultivate the next generation of *good* sport managers, athletic trainers, exercise scientists, and physical educators. Technocratic efficiencies absent *good* character cannot be progress in anything, except perhaps a horrifying progress in evil. After all, efficiency is amoral. A commitment to efficiency alone *cares nothing* for right or wrong.⁷

This, then, is the key question: What is a *good* kinesiologist? I am convinced that the ancient and medieval tradition of the Cardinal Virtues sheds light on this question. The four Cardinal Virtues of prudence, justice, courage, and temperance are so called from the Latin *cardo* meaning "hinge." The Cardinal Virtues are said to be the hinge upon which all the other virtues rest or turn. They are the foundation of *good* character. This, then, is my answer: The good kinesiologist *is* prudent, just, courageous, and temperate.

Therefore, I believe it is incumbent upon kinesiologists to examine the Cardinal Virtues, in depth, in search of basic understanding and in search of answers to two important practical questions for the field: (a) What do prudence, justice, courage and temperance look like in kinesiology? and (b) How, if at all, can we cultivate and pass on these virtues to those who will quickly follow and then replace us as the caretakers of kinesiology?

To accomplish this goal will require that we proceed in the following manner. First, it will be necessary to individually define, examine, and clarify each of the virtues. Second, within each examination, the virtues will need to be applied to kinesiology. How, for example, does prudence inform kinesiology? Why is prudence necessary to be a good

kinesiologist? Finally, I will close by examining the vexing question of whether or not virtue can be taught. Can virtue be cultivated within our discipline, or are such character traits merely innate?

In attempting to illuminate the Cardinal Virtues, I will of course be relying on the broad Platonic, Aristotelian, and Thomistic tradition which identified and cultivated the conception of the Cardinal Virtues. More specifically, I will focus on the work of the great German Thomistic philosopher Josef Pieper whose definitions of the virtues I will follow closely. Yet, before I do so, I must make one brief digression. For in my experience, “Aristotelean literacy,” both within the discipline and academy at large, is not what it once was. Scholars are either ignorant of his philosophy or have only been exposed to caricatures. I think it would therefore be wise to lay out the skeletal structure of Aristotle’s ethical philosophy. Hopefully, this will avoid any misunderstandings of the relevance of the Cardinal Virtues for leading a life well lived.

Aristotle begins the *Nichomachean Ethics* (2002) by examining the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic goods. He argued that all actions “aim at some good” (1094a), some of which are ends in themselves and some of which are means to other ends. Ultimately, Aristotle argued, all actions aim at happiness, or as it is sometimes called, “human flourishing.” There are three common definitions of happiness: pleasure, honor, and contemplation. Aristotle then rejected the first two options and argued that contemplation is the best definition of happiness, for it best matches up with human beings nature as “rational animals” (1098a).

As rational animals we are called to live in accord with reason by pursuing and cultivating those excellences, that is, those virtues which are in accord with our nature (1098a).

We develop these virtues through habituation. Habit, however, is not an end, but the means by which we produce the *hexis*—the active conditions—which make up our character (1104b). To put it succinctly, if a little too simply, Aristotle argued that we become what we practice. Maturity depends on the development of good habits.

It should be clear then that the stock objection that Aristotle’s defense of habit means he is advocating a philosophy which is not self-aware, authentic, or critical is far off the mark, for he is not advocating mindless rote repetition, but rather the development of character through practice. The goal of habituation is to build the skills necessary to live toward the world. Through habituation, we develop the *hexis*, the active condition of *being* prudent, or just, or courageous, or temperate. It is character, not mere reflex, which Aristotle advocated.

Of course, if there is any truth to the Aristotelian position, then it is vital to examine and understand the nature of the virtues we seek to cultivate. For just as one cannot cultivate the skills necessary to be a basketball player, or square dancer, or swimmer, without knowing what basketball, dance, or swimming are, one cannot cultivate prudence without knowing what the virtue of prudence is. It is, therefore, to such an examination of the nature of the Cardinal Virtues that I now turn.

Prudence

One who does not know how things really are cannot do good; for the good accords with reality. (Pieper, *The Christian Idea of Man*, 2011, p. 13)

Prudence is the ability to see reality for what it is and the willingness to act upon it. As Pieper (1966) insisted, “He alone can do good who knows what things are like and what

their situation is” (p. 10). As such, prudence is—even among the other Cardinal Virtues—the “first of the virtues” (Pieper, 2011, p. 13). Prudence, in its very nature, makes the exercise of justice or courage or moderation possible and therefore deserves more attention. Pieper (2011) explained the idea this way:

The prudent person looks, on the one hand, at the objective reality of things and, on the other hand, at will and action. But he looks first to reality; and by virtue of and on the basis of his knowledge of reality he decides what is to be done and what not, and how it is to be done and how not. And so in truth all virtue is dependent upon prudence. (p. 14)

What then is our prudential situation in kinesiology? What is the objective reality in kinesiology? I would like to make several claims, some of which I am sure will garner wide agreement, and some of which I have little doubt will be controversial. In fact, “the contested nature of claims” is one prudential reality I think must be admitted. But before I digress to defend that claim, let me briefly outline the prudential claims I want to propose regarding kinesiology. Broadly speaking, there are only two. First, as already hinted at, we are temporary caretakers of kinesiology. This insight, though mundane, is important, for it is often forgotten. It is forgotten, I believe, because we are in state of denial about an even more fundamental reality, our own mortality. Second, there are schools of kinesiology. The search for consensus in kinesiology is—generally speaking—a mistake. We do not all believe the same things about kinesiology. Although common ground does exist, and should be pursued where possible, the different schools of kinesiology are irreconcilable. We must not be afraid to passionately defend our convictions, even when doing so implies that others are wrong.

To be a kinesiologist is to be a steward—to recognize one’s inheritance, to maintain it, to attempt to improve it, and to pass it on. Stewardship relies on prudence, for good stewardship demands that we distinguish “what it is worth caring about a very great deal, from what it is worth caring about a good deal less, and both from what is not worth caring about at all” (MacIntyre, 2009, p. 178). Recognition of our mortality can help us soberly assess what is worth caring about. Our salaries, positions of authority, honors and awards, our curricular disagreements, our professional jealousies, and personal shortcomings, will all be soon forgotten. In the end, our power, prestige, and reputation mean very little; this is not to say that one should never care about such things. Rather it is to insist that prudence demands that we refuse to care about them a “very great deal.”

Many of you may know that the root meaning of the word *secular* is not irreligion, but rather temporality. *To speak of the secular is to speak of the present age, a present age which is—whether we realize it or not—always passing away.* The French philosopher Remi Brague (2013) recently pointed out a less well known but related meaning. Secular can also mean a century, which was understood classically to be the limit of a human lifetime. This is why it was said that no one saw the Roman *ludi saeculares*—or secular games—more than once. For they were only offered once a century. Brague, then expounds on the import of this alternative meaning:

The ancient usage draws on the fact that a saeculum, a century, is the temporal limit of living memory. It is the halo of possible experience that surrounds the life of the individual. I can keep a remembrance of my grandparents and, more seldom, of my great-grandparents. What my grandfather told me I can tell my

grandchildren. I can reach back two generations and forward two, but rarely more, to a period spanning what amounts to a century. (p. 28)⁸

This is, I believe, what Delphine Hanna had in mind when she insisted that “I do not want my biography written. If my work was worthy it is still in progress” (Oberlin College, n.d.). While the impact of what we have done will endure, *what we have done* and *who we are* will, in very short order, be known only to God.⁹

The point could be made another way. Our most important work, be it personal or professional, is to cultivate the next generation, for we all will quickly be replaced. Our culture and our discipline will survive only as long as we are willing to confidently and unapologetically pass on the truths we have inherited.¹⁰ This is an inherently interpersonal task. It is not a matter of technique but of relationships. Ethicist Timothy Fort (1990) put it this way: “[O]ur goal must not be to change everyone, but to be an example to the person working next to us” (p. 25).

We are temporary caretakers of kinesiology. We have inherited the discipline and we will leave it behind. Our vision must extend before and beyond the century of our own lives. What will we leave behind? What should we leave behind? The truth is—and this leads me to my second prudential insight—it depends upon whom you ask. The simple fact is there are different schools of kinesiology.

The first school of kinesiology is *scientific kinesiology*. The premier concern for proponents of this school is the generation of scientific credibility for the discipline through the production and dissemination of data based experimentation. Mark Latash (2008) beautifully summarized this school of kinesiology when he wrote that “The main challenge of motor control (and kinesiology in general) seems to be turning it into an exact science, just like physics” (p. 27). The emphasis, therefore, is upon hiring the best researchers, for the best labs, to procure the most grant money, all in hopes of proving kinesiology’s scientific chops.

This school reaches back into the founding days of physical education, and you can hear echoes or see intimations of it in many of the early leaders of the discipline (Twietmeyer, 2012). Although there is considerable merit to the idea of increasing scientific rigor in kinesiology, it is not without significant limitations. Here, I will only mention one. As philosopher Doug Anderson (2002) has shown, a scientific philosophy of kinesiology tends to ignore the human components of kinesiology. In the search for “useful generalizations in the form of descriptions, statistical relations, and natural laws” (p. 90), the subjective experience of moving well is lost. As a result, individual experiences are drowned under an avalanche of data. People are reduced to generalizable laws or principles or mechanisms. The cultural foundations, upon which all human endeavors rest, are lost from view.

The second school of kinesiology is *therapeutic kinesiology*. The premier concern for proponents of this school is using kinesiology to solve problems. The emphasis therefore is upon the application of sound management principles to contemporary problems, such as health, self-actualization, and social justice. Solutions will be found by using education to address the sociological, psychological, and cultural roots of inactivity. Scholars in this school tend to focus on socio-cultural issues, such as inclusion and identity, or on public health issues, such as the obesity crisis or the environment.

Again, although there is obvious merit in solving problems, I believe there are significant limitations to this approach, on both the socio-cultural and public health fronts. The primary socio-cultural danger of this approach is an attitude of triumphalist advocacy, where the assumptions of the late post-modern academy regarding human nature, psychology, and morality are not so much argued for, as they are simply taken for granted

and then imposed upon others. Such an attitude of presumption ends up being anything but inclusive. Such an attitude inflicts problems upon people, which they themselves do not believe they have (Rittelmeyer, 2014).¹¹

As Henrich, Heine, and Norenzayan (2010) have shown, the behavioral science upon which much of this self-confidence rests comes for a very narrow pool of research subjects. In fact, “a randomly selected American undergraduate is more than 4,000 times more likely to be a research participant [in social psychology research] than is a randomly selected person outside the West” (p. 63). Conclusions based on such non-random sampling can hardly be said to be universal. This reality, they argue, indicates that it is the Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic (WEIRD) societies that are the outliers. WEIRD assumptions may be right, but they should not be presumed as self-evident.¹²

This insight certainly does not disprove any truth claims made from within WEIRD societies, but it does expose the pretense of assuming one’s arguments have an unquestionable scientific veneer. As such, therapeutic kinesiologists who take up sociocultural issues should be more sensitive to both traditional and non-Western criticisms. They should take seriously and address the legitimate, even if mistaken, concerns of those whom with they disagree. Finally, they should admit they are not dispassionate social scientists but passionate advocates *who believe in* “critical theory,” or “feminism,” or what have you.

There are problems on the public health front as well. First, as Kretchmar (2005) pointed out, in a technology-driven society such as ours, physical activity will inevitably be seen as an inefficient and distasteful way to address problems, such as obesity. Instead research will focus on medicinal, surgical, and genetic ways to solve the problem. This is, of course, exactly what we find (Nestlé Group, 2014; Parry, 2014). It seems possible then, that in relatively short order, the claim that exercise is necessary to stay healthy will seem absurd, especially from within the now-dominant “medical view of health.”

Most important however, is the limited intrinsic value of health. Health is a vital foundation for all that we do, but it is itself insufficient for human flourishing. No one puts, “I led a healthy life!” on their tombstone. Instead, health, as important as it is, is understood as a means by which we pursue the other goods of life. If kinesiology is going to be a vital rather than tertiary aspect of American education, we must show how we are about goods other than health.

The third school of kinesiology is *ludic*, or *liberal arts kinesiology*. The premier concern for proponents of this school is the examination and development of kinesthetic skill. The emphasis therefore is upon understanding and building the place of kinesiology in human culture. Kinesiology, though legitimately pursued from different angles and sub-disciplinary perspectives from within this school, *is about one thing*: the importance of physical activity to human flourishing.¹³ From the point of view of ludic kinesiology, the problem with the other schools is not science or the desire to solve problems. It is distraction—a shift of focus away from the heart of the discipline. As Ron Feingold insisted in his 2013 Hanna Lecture, we ought to “focus on instilling a love for a physically active lifestyle” (p. 392).

This is, as you might have already suspected, the school I endorse. It is also, I believe, the smallest of the three schools I have mentioned.¹⁴ I endorse ludic kinesiology for theoretical, practical, and idiosyncratic reasons. Here I will expand only on the idiosyncratic, as I believe it ties together my two points regarding prudence in kinesiology and also points toward the next virtue to be examined, justice.

Ludic kinesiology has made my life better. Play, games, and sport have been one of the great reminders to me throughout my life that *life is a good thing!* Running, jumping, kicking, and throwing have been great joys in my life! I grew up in a family where play,

games, and sport were central aspects of family life. My father was a physical education teacher, coach, and professor of kinesiology, so we were never far from play opportunities, nor were we ever short on instruction, whether it was to “follow your shot” or “keep your eye on the ball.” I grew up in a neighborhood full of unstructured play which included, among other things, capture the flag, driveway basketball, tackle football, laser tag, baseball, ice hockey, and bike soccer. Yet, I also engaged in structured play, be it in physical education class or by participating in youth soccer, baseball, or basketball.

Soccer was my primary organized sport through elementary and middle school. Once I got to high school, my attention shifted to baseball. During my freshman year, I was the starting centerfielder for much of the season. Although it would be hyperbole to say “I hated every minute of it,” I was deeply unhappy participating on the team despite the significant playing time I received. Although I am sure that the typical problems of teenage awkwardness and socialization so prominent in the early years of high school played a role, the primary reason was much simpler to identify. For during almost of all my time patrolling center field, I was the DCF, the designated centerfielder; that is, I rarely, if ever, was allowed to hit. How a 9th-grade baseball coach, whose primary goal should have been pedagogy rather than lineup optimization, could rationalize such a decision, I do not know. Suffice it to say that it succeeded in only one thing, *driving me away from the game*.

The point of relaying this story, is neither voyeurism, nor to deliver a scolding. The point is that our behavior toward each other matters.¹⁵ One’s enjoyment, disposition, and participation in kinesiology is greatly influenced by the mood, temper, competence, and goals of those women and men in charge of our teams, leagues, parks, and physical education programs. The same is true, of course, regarding our labs, lecture halls, and offices. Sound practice will encourage and build kinesiology, while poor practice will discourage and weaken kinesiology. The fact, for example, that *any* 5-year-old kids, whom are all bubbling with excitement at the idea of running, jumping, kicking, and throwing, become middle-schoolers who sit on the sidelines because they “forgot” their gym clothes tells us something is terribly wrong. Far too often, our practice has been unsound.

Prudence makes clear that kinesiology, and the physical activity of which it is made, is a *cultural reality*, which is passed on from one person and one generation to the next. Furthermore, kinesiology is rooted in the larger culture which either values or denigrates it. Kinesiology cannot be decontextualized from that culture without becoming mere technique. The transmission of culture is necessarily dependent upon authority and tradition. We have to be taught to love kinesiology, but the success of this teaching rises or falls upon how well or how poorly we kinesiologists treat our charges, students, and players. Cultivation of this love in the next generation—even if it damages our reputation—is one of those things about which we should care a “very great deal.”

To succeed, we must treat those we hope to convert, as we ought to. We must treat them the way they deserve to be treated. If kinesthetic skill makes for a better life, then to deny that skill to others because of complacency, incompetence, or insecurity is to harm our fellow man. It is to fail to treat him as we ought. If this is right, then the growth of kinesiology relies upon justice.

Justice

Justice is the virtue which accords to each and every man what is his due. (St. Augustine, 1958, p. 469)

Pieper (1966) began his examination of justice with the insight that “All just order in the world is based on this: that man give man what is his due. On the other hand, everything unjust implies that what belongs to a man is withheld or taken away from him—and once more, not by misfortune, failure of crops, fire or earthquake, but by man” (p. 44). Justice is an inherently relational virtue, which regards our duties to each other (commutative justice), the community’s duties to the individual (distributive justice), and the individual’s duties to the community (legal justice) (Pieper, 2011).

What, then, given these considerations, does justice demand in kinesiology? Much could be said. I am particularly tempted to discuss the elderly, the infirm, as well as those with disabilities or special needs. However, given the time constraints and the fact that these areas have garnered the attention of others in the discipline, I will focus on only one aspect of distributive justice, what writers have increasingly called the “sports industrial complex” and its relationship to the two prudential insights we have already examined.

The sports industrial complex can be understood as the developing culture of sport in America, which desires the professionalization, commodification, and utilization of all forms of organized sport for the purposes of garnering revenue, attention, power, and prestige. The problem here is not the presence of commercial interests as such, nor is the problem the pursuit of excellence. The problem is an imprudent skewing of priorities. Rather than pursuing excellence for its own sake, we pursue it for the attention, accolades, trophies, or scholarships it will allegedly produce. Rather than pursuing profit as a means to improve the quality, reach, or safety of sport, we use sport merely to maximize revenue. The sports industrial complex turns sport from pastime into technique.

The injustices that result are myriad. In youth sport, children are sifted, categorized, and evaluated too soon.¹⁶ In fact, meaningless evaluations, because they are done so soon, are conducted with the utmost seriousness. What sense, for example, does it make to have a competitive golf tournament—such as the Callaway World Golf Championships—for 6 year olds? This tournament draws participants from around the world, despite the fact that, as ESPN reporter Tom Farrey (2008) pointed out, “the kids are still too young to fill out or tally up a scorecard” (p. 12). The injustice, of course, is that we are not treating children as children.

Children are also unjustly left behind because of this mindset. This results when they do not have the talent or funds necessary to participate on elite, travel, Amateur Athletic Union (AAU), or select teams.

The costs involved are not trivial. The *San Francisco Gate* (Killion, 2013), for example, reported recently that “dues at elite volleyball clubs can run \$3,500, with another \$3,000 required for travel” (para. 9). As Farrey (2008) pointed out, this mindset, and the costs involved, leave behind the “late bloomer, the genetically ordinary, the economically disadvantaged, the child of a one-parent household, the physically and mentally disabled, and the kid who needs exercise more than any other—the clinically obese” (p. 15).¹⁷ Youth sport based on this model shrinks rather than expands access. If the insights of ludic kinesiologists regarding the meaning and joy potentially available in sport and physical activity are correct, then this is a great tragedy.

This mindset is only furthered in big-time college athletics, where the goal of winning, revenue, and attention, justifies greater and greater demands on the athletes as well as a mindset that education is reducible to eligibility (Liber Steeg, Upton, Bohn, & Berkowitz, 2008). Finally, PE, intramurals, and local recreation are denigrated and left behind for sexier, more elite, and prestigious leagues, options, majors, or requirements.

This attitude has all but overrun sport management, where management no longer means administration—in the broad sense of running all aspects of an athletics

organization, department, or league—but rather mere business. Consider again my alma mater, the University of Michigan. Their 12-member sport management advisory council is designed to facilitate Michigan’s “vision of achieving excellence in undergraduate *sport business* education” (emphasis added; University of Michigan School of Kinesiology, n.d.b., para. 1). The council consists of six professional sport executives, three executives at major sport marketing firms, one TV executive, the president of the Live Nation ticket agency, and a financial manager (University of Michigan School of Kinesiology, n.d.b.). There are no YMCA directors or Ann Arbor parks and recreation employees or adapted sport coaches, nor are there any parents or athletes. The sports industrial complex has not just taken root, it has taken over. Is there any wonder why physical education struggled to maintain itself at Michigan? It does not fit the model being espoused. There is no prestige in teaching “average children” to square dance or to run, throw, and kick well, because prestige is being measured against the standards of technique.¹⁸

A mindset similar to that of the sports industrial complex can also beset faculty, where the Holy Grail is obtaining a highly paid position in a doctoral-granting research-intensive institution and buying out one’s teaching time through grant money and the research prestige that makes the grant money possible. Again, there is nothing wrong in principle with such positions or with grant money. The danger comes when one imprudently puts either above teaching. As Jacques Barzun (1959) lamented nearly 60 years ago, “the highest prize of the teaching profession is: no teaching. For the first time in history, apparently, scholars want no disciples” (p. 130). The problem, of course, if my prudential claims are on target, is not just that our students deserve us, *they need us*. Likewise, if we have any interest in the future of kinesiology, *we need them*. Therefore, as a matter of justice, teaching must be a *focus*.¹⁹

Challenging the sports industrial complex, at our institutions and within American society at large, will be difficult. There are many who have a vested interest in the status quo. So will insisting on the fundamental human importance of physical education. Too often we have wilted in the face of skeptical colleagues, scoffing administrators, or a public culture over run with “dumb jock” stereotypes. Nevertheless, justice demands that we find the *courage* to act.

Courage

Stop trusting in man, who has but a breath in his nostrils. Of what account is he? (Isaiah 2:22, NIV)

Pieper (2011) defined courage succinctly. Courage is the “readiness to accept harm for the sake of realizing the good” (p. 23). It is a willingness to suffer—even unto death, if necessary—for the sake of the truth. This implies something very important. Those who aspire to be courageous must seriously ask themselves the following question: What is worth laying my life down for? Of course, it might be said that the stakes in kinesiology will rarely, if ever, rise to that level. True. But that is the point. If we have not established which goods are worth dying for, how likely is it that we will be willing to suffer lesser indignities, such as lost job opportunities, for the sake of realizing such allegedly trivial goods? The converse is also true, if we are unwilling to suffer relatively minor harms for relatively minor goods, it is safe to say we will refuse to endure great suffering in the defense of the highest goods.²⁰

As Pieper (1966) pointed out, it is only with great difficulty that we “divest ourselves from the influence of the prevailing atmosphere” (p. 112). It is much easier to get in line—to

go along to get along. This is why it is so important to reflect seriously on one's principles. Because it is hard enough to stand up for the truth, even when we know, in full confidence, what the truth is. What hope is there for courage if we have been paralyzed by doubt?

What role, then, does courage have to play in kinesiology? Obviously courage is applicable in the sorts of situations I have been discussing, regarding standing up for PE, or the humanities in kinesiology, or the willingness to point out the corruptions found in youth or intercollegiate sport. But I can think of three other examples worth brief mention. The first is grade inflation. According to the *New York Times* (Rampell, 2011), "about 43 percent of all letter grades given were A's, an increase of 28 percentage points since 1960" (para. 3). Holding firm against this rising tide of congratulatory mediocrity will require courage.

Second, is the pressure to publish. Studies suggest this pressure has led to an increase in fraud. While hardly the tsunami that is grade inflation, fraudulent research is on the rise. Rates have risen in the sciences from "fewer than 10 fraud retractions for every 1 million studies published" in the 1970s to, "96 retractions per million in 2007" (Associated Press, 2012, para. 2). While this may occasionally require a kinesiology researcher or graduate assistant to find the courage to directly resist participating in fraud, the more likely cause for courage will be whistleblowing, that is, identifying and condemning fraud when it occurs while serving as reviewers, editors, or colleagues. The integrity of our research, even the most empirical, relies on something that cannot be measured: good character.

Finally, there is the perennial problem in athletic training, that of coaches pressuring trainers over return-to-play decisions. The ethical stakes here have risen with the frightening new evidence regarding the frequency and danger of repeated head trauma in football (Fainaru-Wada & Fainaru, 2013). According to a *chronicle.com* investigation (Wolverton, 2013), 32% of trainers at big-time programs said that coaches had influence "over hiring and firing decisions for their position," while 52% "had felt pressure from football coaches to return a student to play faster than they thought was in his best interest medically" (sidebar). Again character is key, first for the coach and then for the athletic trainer. Just as a good coach needs to be willing to lose games to defend the safety her athletes, a good athletic trainer needs to be ready to lose his/her job to defend the safety of his/her athletes.

The bottom line regarding courage is this: Truth must come before material success, trendiness, or reputation. As philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre (1984) pointed out, "notoriously the cultivation of truthfulness, justice and courage will often, the world being what it contingently is, bar us from being rich or famous or powerful" (p. 196). Although money, fame, and power are not bad things, they become so when they are considered the most important things. Real success therefore depends upon a *temperate* use of goods, in service of that which truly deserves our love, affection, and devotion.²¹

Temperance

Know Thyself. Nothing in excess. (The Temple at Delphi)

According to Pieper (2011), temperance (or moderation) is a matter of not allowing one's "desire for possessions and enjoyment to become destructive and repugnant to his being" (p. 7). This means that our understanding of human nature is vitally important. To know what is good or bad for a man to do relies upon a previous commitment regarding what a human being is. This is what the injunction "know thyself" at the Temple at Delphi meant. We need to know what we are and what we are not, in order to know what we ought to do. Pieper (2011) puts it this way, "ethics is about a right conception of man" (p. 4).

This is why Aristotle insists on the importance of contemplation to happiness. Man is rational by nature. Therefore, it is incumbent upon human beings to consider good and evil in relationship to “the image of the good person” (Pieper, 2011, p. 4). St. Augustine (1958) took it even further when he insisted that our only real happiness rests in the truth itself, that is, God. For even the most well-lived life will succumb to death while being constantly vulnerable in the meantime to disease, decay, injustice, and misfortune.²²

Even if one disagrees with either or both of these assertions regarding man’s path to happiness, it is easy to recognize the necessity of addressing these metaphysical questions. Ignoring them does not lessen their importance or make them go away. Yet, a pragmatic commitment to efficiency and utility via the means of *technique* leave such questions not only unexamined but incomprehensible. As Ellul (1997) insisted, the emphasis technique places on means necessarily creates a “suppression of meaning” (p. 40).

Despite modern denials of the relevance of temperance,²³ even the most cursory examination of human or personal history clearly indicates that we all struggle with excess, in pleasures such as food and sex, as well as with extrinsic goods like money, possessions, and power. Furthermore, we often tend to react to these problems by swinging from one extreme (excess) to the other extreme of puritanical deficiency. St. Augustine (1958) is again instructive: “The things of earth are not merely good; they are undoubtedly gifts from God” (p. 328). Temperance, therefore, encourages asceticism only insofar as it cures an *abuse* of some good which, *through that abuse*, harms human nature.

One such abuse, common in our technocratic age of progress, merit, growth, and achievement, is the vice of pride. Talking about pride is decidedly out of fashion. However, this vice is real and deeply imprudent. For pride implies something wholly untrue. It implies that “I am the center of the universe.” Speaking from experience, I can assure you that pride takes many forms in the academy and kinesiology—most commonly in intellectual impatience with our students, in an unwillingness to admit we were wrong, in an unwillingness to admit we do not know, in an unwillingness to say we are sorry, in an unwillingness to be unpopular, and in an unwillingness to acknowledge our debt to others.

How then do we combat pride? In struggling to combat my own pride, I have tried to follow Pope Benedict’s (2009) insights. In *Credo for Today*, he argued quite profoundly that we must achieve a “Copernican revolution in our own lives” by “no longer seeing ourselves as the center of the universe, around which everyone else must turn, because instead of that we have begun to accept quite seriously that we are one of many among God’s creatures, all of whom turn around God as their center” (pp. 10–11). Temperance requires recognition of the fact that the good is larger than ourselves or our desires.

Can Virtue Be Taught?

Therefore the virtues come to be present neither by nature nor contrary to nature, but in us who are of such a nature as to take them on . . . (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1103a25)

Each of us are one among many. Our example matters to those around us. We inherit traditions and pass them on. As such, although we are not mere products of socialization as so much of post-modern theory suggests, socialization does matter. In fact, it matters a great deal. Although one cannot create a great athlete, all aspiring athletes have their natural talents molded and shaped by the coaching they receive and the ensuing habits—whether good or poor—that they develop. Everyone has athletic potential that can be cultivated. It is

an inherent part of being human. Similarly, the Cardinal Virtues are an inherent capacity of human beings and must therefore be cultivated.

Are some of us more prone to courage or prudence or justice or moderation than others? Of course. But that makes cultivation more important, not less. For the buttressing of the culture, the cultivation in virtue which we receive may make all the difference when we are called upon to do the right thing. Just as a good athlete will shoot poorly if taught poor form, a potentially courageous person will, more often than not, embrace timidity if taught to do so.

If this is true, it should be clear why I am convinced that it is virtue that will move kinesiology forward and vice that will hold it back. Technique is not enough. We cannot cultivate virtue if we do not admit the necessity of such cultivation by admitting that we are temporary caretakers of kinesiology. Moreover, there are schools of kinesiology which all advocate incommensurate *prudential* evaluations of the field and its place in the world. It is *imprudent* to pretend otherwise. Claims to truth matter, for the different schools of kinesiology do not and will not cultivate the same things.

I am fully convinced that ludic kinesiology is what should be cultivated in kinesiology. In my experience, this is the minority position. Yet, whether in the minority or the majority, whatever gets put into practice, be it scientific, therapeutic, or ludic kinesiology, each and every school's vision will chart a different path forward. As such, we need to be open and honest about our disagreements. For example, the plausibility and power of my criticisms of the University of Michigan will depend in large part upon which school of kinesiology one subscribes to.

I expect those who are convinced I am wrong to tell me so. I expect those who agree with me to feel free to say so. In all such discussions, whether the commentary and reactions are positive or negative, the goal is *truth*. Rudeness, nor belligerence, nor condescension, nor flattery has any place in kinesiology.

This requires, of course, that we allow space for dissent, that is, for real disagreement, especially on controversial issues. Furthermore, *justice* demands that kinesiologists acknowledge that we have duties to our fellow man. Duties which we as kinesiologists have often failed to live up to.²⁴ Making such an admission relies upon *courage*. For many of our sins are not only unacknowledged, they have popular support. Pointing them out will therefore usually garner criticism rather than praise. Finally, the *temperate* kinesiologist knows that although his/her job matters, *other things matter more*. There are more important things than kinesiology. Kinesiology must be seen as, and taught as, a part of a larger whole.

Yet, is not all of this an impossible task? What is the tipping point for institutions? How does one individual change the course of a behemoth? More importantly, an honest look in the mirror quickly inclines one to say something like this, "Given my weaknesses, my vanities, my temper, my despair, my frustrations, and my pride, . . . how can I possibly live up to the standard of the Cardinal Virtues?" Such a critique is biting and powerful, because it cuts to the heart of the matter. All of us who are honest must admit feeling that we, like Hamlet, are not quite up to the job:

*The time is out of joint. O cursèd spite,
That ever I was born to set it right!* (Act 1, Scene 5)²⁵

A frank examination seems to show that the problems are too big, that our weaknesses are too strong, that our foolishness is too common, and that our character is too shallow.

Nevertheless our character is vital. The principalities and powers of this world can take many things by force. Our possessions can be taken from us. Our family and friends can be taken from us, as can our reputation, our livelihood, even our very lives. All of these can be taken from us. But our character—that is *always surrendered*. Here is the reality: The future of kinesiology depends upon cultivating rather than surrendering our character. The quality of our coaching and teaching, the integrity of our research, and the health of our discipline all depend upon *good* kinesiologists. Struggling to *be* good is something we should care about a “great deal.” Given our weaknesses, what then can be done? What answer, if any, can be found? Following Christian tradition, I would point beyond the Cardinal Virtues to the Theological Virtues, to faith, to hope, and to love, . . . but that is, unfortunately, another paper.²⁶

Acknowledgment

This lecture is dedicated to my father, Dr. T. Alan Twietmeyer, from whose example I first learned what a *good* kinesiologist *is*.

Notes

1. What we are progressing toward and why we should want to achieve such progress is rarely defined.
2. Ron Feingold (2013) made a similar point in his Hanna Lecture when he warned against the increasing calls for accountability and the likelihood that such calls will result in a stunted and emaciated version of success which celebrates “data for data’s sake” (p. 387).
3. One practical result of this is the unwillingness of so many of our students to be committed passionately to anything.
4. It could be argued that this is the condition we find kinesiology in now.
5. Consider, for example, what the reaction would be to statistics that suggested poor literacy in our schools.
6. Unfortunately, it seems clear that many in the discipline do not see physical education as a vital area of kinesiology.
7. “The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries abandoned the idea of spiritual or intellectual happiness in order to have this material happiness, consisting of a certain number of essential consumer goods. And hence, in the nineteenth century, happiness was linked to a well-being obtained by mechanical means, industrial means, production” (Ellul, 1997, pp. 34–35). The key point being—of course—the rejection of the importance of spiritual or intellectual happiness. There is nothing inherently wrong with improving the estate of man. The problem is the reduction of man to his “stomach.”
8. Brague’s overarching point is even more profound: Secular society is impossible. . . .
9. A profound implication of this insight is that we should act in light of eternity rather than succumb to peer pressure, academic trends, or the “tide of history.”
10. Charles Murray (2012) has amply demonstrated what happens when the transmission of such cultural capital collapses.
11. This is often the result of identifying “problems” through top-down data-mining: “Much as mountains are climbed, so statistics are used if they are there” (Moynihan, 1965, p. 14).
12. The danger that must be avoided is over-confidence. The social scientists must learn to turn their lens upon themselves. As Bruno Latour (1993) insightfully pointed out, a sound anthropology must confront not only the beliefs of others which “do not touch us directly” for “we are always critical enough of them” (p. 92). Instead academics must be willing to confront, by *the same critical standards*, their own cherished beliefs which they consider to be “the true

knowledge to which [they] adhere totally.” If and when this is done, academics will stop endorsing the naïve idea that although: “Error, [and] beliefs, could be explained socially” the “truth remained self-explanatory” (p. 92). Any real explanation must consider both truth and falsity by and through the same standards.

13. Here is what I (Twietmeyer, 2012) am envisioning when I say “physical activity”:

Kinesiology is a human discipline, born of, and reliant upon the embodied, curious, political and rational nature of human beings. The field examines physical activity from a myriad of scholarly perspectives, with physical activity being understood not as an abstract or literal moniker, but rather as the placeholder term for culturally significant and recreative movement forms. Games, play, sport, exercise, dance (among others) are central to who we are and what we do. If physical activity is understood in this way, then the field is as reliant upon “ethics” as much as it is reliant upon “biology.” Human *kinesis* is a function of all aspects of the human person whether those aspects are physiological *or just plain logical*. Kinesiology is neither a pure science nor solely a member of the humanities, but rather a field that necessarily encompasses both. (p. 20)

14. This is a function of the congruence of the first two schools with the utilitarian and technocratic assumptions of our age.
15. The end of C. S. Lewis’s (1949) great sermon *The Weight of Glory* gives this same idea a spiritual perspective:

All day long we are, in some degree, helping each other to one or other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilization—these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit—immortal horrors or everlasting splendours. (pp. 45–46)

16. Worse yet, they are valued not for who they are, but for what they can or cannot procure for the team, coach, or school.
17. I would add only one more, the child from a large family, which cannot afford the expense or the logistical challenge of providing elite opportunities for multiple children.
18. Physical education is not the most efficient means to promote a “healthy lifestyle” (University of Michigan School of Kinesiology, n.d.a., para. 9). Technique demands a rationalized, universal, measurable, and bureaucratic approach, which results in “a more comprehensive program” (para. 5) of “health promotion” (para. 9).
19. According to Polanyi (1962),

To learn by example is to submit to authority. You follow your master because you trust his manner of doing things even when you cannot analyze and account in detail for its effectiveness A society which wants to preserve a fund of personal knowledge must submit to tradition. (p. 53)

20. Discussions of courage always remind me of one of my favorite poems, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* (Eliot, 1920):

Should I, after tea and cakes and ices,
Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?
But though I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed,

Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald) brought in upon a platter,
 I am no prophet—and here’s no great matter;
 I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,
 And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker,
 And in short, I was afraid. (lines 79–86).

21. The medieval concepts—see Pieper (2011)—of *Ordo Amoris* (discerning and prioritizing our loves) and *Ordo Timoris* (discerning what is really worth fearing) shed important light on this idea.
22. See Book XIX, chapter 4.
23. From Rieff (1966):

In fact, evil and immorality are disappearing, as Spencer assumed they would, mainly because our culture is changing its definition of human perfection. No longer the Saint, but the instinctual Everyman, twisting his neck uncomfortably inside the starched collar of culture, is the communal ideal, to whom men offer tacit prayers for deliverance from their inherited renunciations. Freud sought only to soften the collar; others, using bits and pieces of his genius, would like to take it off. (p. 8)

24. Our failings are many. Here are a couple that I think are incontrovertible. First, the collapse of physical education is happening on our watch. Second, our defense of physical activity classes as a necessary part of undergraduate core curricula has been far too tepid.
25. It is similar to the feeling one gets the first time one teaches and sees 40 or 60 or 80 eyeballs looking to you for answers.
26. Ellul (1997) stated:

Christian Hope does not, as is too often said, consist in believing in humanity. It is precisely the contrary. Christian Hope means being convinced that we will not go along completely on our own. It is an affirmation of the love of God . . . Hope will then simply be the fact that because God is God, because God is love, there is always a future. (p. 89)

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