

Being The Best

Imagine this: you have an appointment for an ongoing wrist problem and arrive to be greeted by two therapists. You like them both and ask each if they are any good. One shrugs and bashfully says, "I'm ok," the other smiles confidently and says, "I'm the best". They both charge the same price and you like them both. You are tired of your ongoing problem and don't want to have to keep paying for treatments which don't seem to be helping. Which therapist are you going to try first?

I guess the answer depends on what you think about people who say they are the best and what you think being the best means. When I was growing up it was considered being 'big headed' if you said you were good at something. If you thought you were the *best* at something you would have been told to stop showing off. But that was then. Now I'm much more confident telling people when I think I'm good at something. After all, there are loads of things I'm not so good at (mathematics, singing, swimming, to name but a few!).

Feeling that you are really good at what you do inspires confidence in your clients. It makes you feel good and encourages everyone around you to feel good. Being the best doesn't mean you have all the answers. One of the things that makes a great therapist is knowing when to refer a client, knowing when your treatment is *not* being effective, that you need to refer to someone more skilled than you or with completely different skills. Much of my work now involves helping to train massage therapists in advanced skills. I believe I am one of the best trainers in town. I have a set of criteria by which I judge myself, and I know what I need to do in order to maintain that belief.

Being the best means different things to different therapists. For one, it may mean getting as many qualifications as possible in order to offer a broad range of treatments, for another, it may mean concentrating on one discipline and focusing on that. What does being the best mean to you? How could you be the best at what you do? Would being the best mean treating more clients or fewer clients? Would it mean working more hours or fewer hours? Do you need to get more qualifications, or is it time to stop studying and to practice more? If you were the best at what you did, what would you need to change in your life? Would you need more space? Your own clinic? Transport? More people to work with? Fewer people to work with? Perhaps you'd need to improve your knowledge in one area? Or perhaps its time to start sharing your knowledge with others, passing on what you have learnt?

Being the best does not mean burning yourself into an early grave with work and study. It may mean taking time off from work to spend on other activities, helping to make you a more balanced person. It may mean focusing on what you *really* want from your work. Perhaps you tolerate the weather here but really want to work or study in a sunny climate? Perhaps you work with humans but really want to work as an equine aromatherapist or canine masseuse? Perhaps you love studying and you want to be the best student in town!

Let's pose another question: whom do you think, in the long term, is likely to have the most clients, make the most money, or generally be most satisfied with themselves, a therapist considered to be mediocre or a therapist considered to be one of best? We often hope that business will grow through referrals. There's a quicker way to grow your business than that: If you are good at something, you don't need to brag, but you do need to let people know, don't wait for potential clients to ask you, *tell* them! How many leaflets have you flicked through advertising massage and have you noticed how they all look pretty much the same? Why not tell it from the heart and let the world know how good you are?

One of the reasons I adore teaching is that on *every* workshop I host I meet fantastically skilled therapists. Each is good at something, whether it be communicating, networking, applying deep pressure, knowing which oils to use, having a great knowledge of anatomy, sharing their knowledge, demonstrating, or picking up new skills. You are already great at *something*. What is it? Is it time to own up to it? What else do you wish to be really good at? What do you need to do to make that happen?

If you are interested in finding out more about your own potential, I recommend a great double audio tape with lots of thought-provoking questions called Thinking Big, by Brian Tracy. Three things I do best are teaching advanced massage skills, walking big dogs and getting ideas. Please write and let me know three things you are good at!

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