

Hopeless in Texas... ! You have no idea... !

by Ken Hutchins

In June of 2014, I moved to Texas. I began taking clients in a local supposedly “SuperSlow®” facility on June 19. My beloved brother—now deceased due to cancer at age 55 and then-owner of the facility and ardent supporter of my work—asked me to tell his other “instructors” that I was proud of the work they do. I refused.

In mid-July, I was approached at the facility by the wife (The Wife) of a local internal medicine physician. He was locally reared in the community, is friendly to the facility and has referred his wife, mother, and others to exercise there. He has medically treated me, and I like him. He is the doctor for several of my family members.

The Wife is a nurse practitioner and was soon to start a special program at her husband’s clinic to address obese patients. She stated her intent to refer some of her patients to me. She suggested we get together to talk sometime soon.

I set an appointment with her. Then she canceled, leaving town to go to an obesity seminar.

In the meantime, I decided to verbally present to her an expanded version of the Preliminary Considerations in such a way that she might learn the ideals of a properly conducted workout environment as it pertains to safety and privacy. I mentioned this to The Wife once she returned, and she indicated that she wanted her husband to hear it all as well, although I had originally mentioned that I might just, at first, talk to her, the (his) patient schedule notwithstanding.

Before I go on with this story, I alert the reader that I must avoid naming the involved characters. Therefore, I will use the following descriptors:

Doctor #1—Locally Reared Primary-Care Physician (already mentioned).

The Wife—Nurse Practitioner and Wife of Doctor #1 (already mentioned).

Doctor #2—Primary-care Physician and Partner of Doctor #1 and Local Celebrity.

Doctor #3—83-year-old pediatrician-client with

a back condition.

Doctor #4—Friendly sister-in-law dermatologist of Doctor #1.

Over the month of July, I occasionally saw The Wife as she came into the facility to coexist (my derogatory term for exercise) with her paid companion (PC) (my derogatory term for deplorable instructor, although SuperSlow certified by me). Then, I observed her talking throughout her workouts as though she was there to get her hair done. Her workouts were completely secondary to her need to socialize. No attempt was made by her or her paid companion (PC) to keep her head aligned or to maintain a modicum of control in the exercise movements.

The Facility Environment. Unfortunately, her behavior was/is the rule in this facility. Much more, it is indefensibly defended and proudly promoted as, “We have a different culture here” or “people come here to be noticed and to meet people.”

They also become incensed if a competitor in the area claims to promote SuperSlow exercise protocol. When a *The Perfect Workout* facility opened about 20 miles south of us, these four instructors pressured my brother to find a way (legal, marketing, etc.) to cast dispersions on this competitor for dropping the names of Philip Alexander, MD, Ellington Darden, PhD, yours truly, SuperSlow®, etc., as illegitimate, an interloper and a trademark infringer. Of course, these instructors were merely being naïve (and stupid). I was both amused and appalled that these hayseeds (some being my family) looked upon this other facility—who I could only assume was instructing and policing SuperSlow better than they as the company was owned by one of the former SuperSlow Guild Masters (Matt Hedman)—with condescension.

Throughout the small reception area of this facility are placards and postings of my work. One large poster on the wall boldly states *The Definition of Exercise*. On another wall are five certification certificates signed by me. On the opposite wall are framed memorabilia of

Ken Hutchins Day (designated by our city) celebrating my exercise innovations; on the same wall are pocket trays of several of my articles. On one desk is a laminated copy of a full-page advertisement about SuperSlow, me and my family that is regularly replayed in the local newspaper.

My niece, who once worked in this facility as an extremely proficient instructor and who edited some of my books, stopped by one Sunday afternoon. As she held the laminated advertisement, she looked at me and proclaimed, “Ken, this is a total misrepresentation.”

In addition to the rampant and loud socializing, each PC often accompanies multiple subjects simultaneously. Somewhere along the line, the owner—my brother—extended the proper use of the stopwatch—to measure time under load—to an improper application—to merely allow the subject to run out the clock. In other words, the subject starts the exercise with the idea that once an allotted three minutes has passed (or two minutes with some exercises), the exercise is complete. This occurs without any attention to form and without the purpose of attaining momentary muscular failure (MMF). Please read, *Reflections on Registering Performance*.

Magnetized digital stopwatches are attached to the equipment throughout the facility. And of course, it is often impossible to place them in a location that allows for correct head and neck orientation.

This practice presents the opportunity for extreme abuse. PCs don't make subjects wait in the reception area until escorted into the exercise area. They are permitted—even encouraged—to walk right in and get into a machine and start their first movement (not exercise) as the PC is finishing up the subject from the previous ½-hour slot.

In fact, I have yet to ascertain the use—a door is needed only if it is to be used—for a door between the reception area and the gym. It is sometimes closed by a PC for reasons I can't identify. Another PC then opens it so that the PC(s) can hear the phone ring, can motion in a subject who is just arriving or sitting, to merely wave at someone in the reception room from the workout area (causing several others to turn during their exercises to identify the one being waved at) or to enable a subject to monitor a child left alone in the reception room.

There are large windows on three sides of the exercise room permitting subjects and PCs to see outside. This invites impertinent comments and socializing about the weather, a turtle crawling across the parking lot, deer grazing, etc.

One day, I chided Paul Hanslik for waving, from his pickup as he drove past, to my brother who was pretending to supervise a subject. My brother waved back, thus eliciting five or more others to turn to see who waved first.

Later, I recommended to one PC that the windows be kept shuttered so that this would not happen again. She responded that sometimes she likes them open to let in the sunshine. What the hell does her liking sunshine have to do with the safety needs of her subjects?

The PCs rationalize the need to accompany multiple subjects simultaneously with the demand that a married couple requires same-time workouts when another PC's schedule can not accommodate the spouse. Thus, this excuse to abuse the sanctity of the one-on-one relationship and to bait-and-switch the charged-for and advertised-for product leads to the wholesale and deliberate mayhem of accompanying multiple subjects.

Of course, correctly supervising one subject is consuming; more than one is impossible for anyone, including me.

As a result, I witnessed subjects abandoned and permitted to uncontrollably sling the machines around. Daily, I saw subjects abandoned for minutes at a time while instructors talked to others, checked the schedule, set up others on machines or went to the bathroom. I admit that I did occasionally witness a subject performing SuperSlow speed of motion, although almost never with proper control of anything else. Socializing did not permit much in the way of instruction. Hearing instructions over the din was unlikely and strained.

One insurance agent was given a key to the building so that he could do his own version of a workout immediately preceding his scheduled/accompanied workout. I often observed him from afar performing leg extension with excursions of less than one second.

After advising my brother to avoid buying a Nautilus Abdominal machine, it is now regularly abused by both PCs and subjects alike. The positive excursions are regularly performed in approximately ¼ seconds.

The PCs are completely resistive to any discussion of curbing this discrepancy.

I admit that before I arrived here, I was aware of the open socializing that occurs between the PCs and their subjects. I was horrified to learn that this is taken to ridiculous extremes. Subjects talked to everyone in the room. PCs, as they accompany their subjects, greeted other subjects causing them to turn their head and sometimes their entire torsos to face the direction of the voices as they are under load in an exercise. All PCs felt compelled to greet, as well as to bid farewell, to every subject that enters the gym, including my subjects.

About half the time I was in the exercise area with my subjects, the room was filled with the four PCs and their subjects. At times there are as many as 15 or 16 people in this 650-square-foot room. Most all are talking at once, often yelling or laughing so that everyone else appreciates their response.

Amazingly, many of these loud, incessant talkers are school teachers. Three principals—all women—exercised here. Two of these principals were with me. Two were actually vice superintendents. It's ironic that those whose careers were spent frustrated trying to hush children, were unable to take instruction or concentrate for 20 minutes without running their mouths.

In addition to the loud, boisterous talking and laughing in the gym, the window air conditioners were running as well as the fans. To top it all off, the PCs allowed the pop-pins to ping in everyone's ears and allowed the seat posts to drop so loudly that the boom jarred the building (block and pier-beam foundation). Occasionally, I had pop-pins pinging on both sides of me providing a stereo effect of ear-damaging abuse. Often, I stated a command to my subject exactly when something was dropped, hence masking my command and requiring me to restate it.

On two occasions with separate subjects, I observed gum chewing throughout the workout. When I mentioned this to the PCs I get, "Oh, they complain that they can't concentrate without the gum [As though anyone could ever concentrate in this environment.]"

If I state that gum chewing is really not a negotiable topic, I was treated as though I did not belong (Correct: I sure did not!), that I was an infringer here, that I was an intruder. I got the same treatment with any other suggestion. And this treatment was expressed as a harsh

stance that I had better keep my comments to myself or they would threaten the owner (my brother) with leaving for another facility (as if one existed).

Meanwhile, when I was with my subjects I was rudely interrupted—not waiting till the proper free moment—by the PCs with technical questions regarding the special needs of their subjects. Most of the time, I merely appeared to be too busy to answer. I later pondered the usefulness of any of my expertise when no one is paying attention to general behavior, much less the required details of an exercise specifically tailored to address an abnormal condition.

At least once a day, the PCs introduced me to a new face to make hay with my notoriety of having developed the SuperSlow concept (whatever that might be) and most of the equipment. Before I arrived here, I had had the idea that I would upgrade some of the equipment in the facility. Before, I told Josh Trentine and my brother that I intended to replace the facility's SuperSlow re-engineered Nautilus Leg Extension with my SuperSlow Leg Extension. For what? I might as well give helicopters to the Tasadays.

Once, I was pointedly interrupted by a PC to be reprimanded for leaving an item out of place (an item that doesn't matter) while conducting a private intro with a new subject.

In another instance, I deliberately met a new subject at a time that avoided the schedules of all the PCs only to be intruded upon by a PC who came in to make a long private telephone conversation amidst my "private" interview.

Temporary Solution. My original plan was to build an office here so that I could practice trumpet and perform my intros with the use of the two most basic machines. I expected to spend about \$7,500 for this. The price became \$20k, and then required me to include seven machines (later adding the three P.U.S.H. portables) (in 315 square feet) in an attempt to conduct all of my exercise-instruction sessions therein. This was the only way I could properly perform the business and escape my brother's zoo.

My brother's facility utilized four rent PCs (plus himself). My brother furnished them the building, the business supplies, 18 exercise machines (13 of which I provided—gave—to him), parking, and electrical power.

I had to pay my brother the same rent as his rent PCs, supply my own equipment, build my own building, pay for my own building maintenance, pay my own power bill, and endure the wholesale bastardization of everything I had devoted my life.

By the way, the facility banners and displays and/or verbal sentiments were proudly and blatantly anti-non-Republican, anti-non-conservative, anti-non-Christian. I wish my name (including *SuperSlow*) could be expunged from any and all devices, paperwork, placards, advertisements, certificates, books, memorabilia, etc., in the building.

The office interior appeared as a Christian shrine. I guess it's the right of the business owner to run it as he chooses—along as the law allows—no matter how stupid and outwardly prejudicial. My niece commented that, five years before when she had instructed there, the clientele was comfortably diverse.

Protocol Erosion. In my original instructions to time a set of an exercise, I never intended this Curves-style mentality—seemingly—to bake a group of muscles for three minutes, then remove them from the oven—done or not—and then put a different group of muscles in the oven for the same arbitrary duration.

In 2011, Al Coleman suggested that we cease using stopwatches and the direct measuring of time under load (TUL). He argued to return to the practice of counting repetitions. I, at first, balked at this. I understood what his argument was, but I did not fully appreciate the ill effects that overall (set) time observance had on both the instructor and the subject.

Al sensed that subjects were thinking and approaching the exercises just like the subjects I observed in Texas. With direct TUL measurement, they become more concerned, *sometimes completely concerned*, with paying their dues to the clock (while socializing, of course) rather than to the acceptable standards of each repetition. And I now see that instructors can slip into this habit as well. Perhaps some of my instructors and their subjects (pre-Texas) did this without me realizing it.

Please read the full-blown article, *Reflections on Registering Performance*.

Back to The Wife: On the afternoon of August 4, I was in session with Doctor #3. As I was challenged

to convey my instructions to him, The Wife was on the other side of the room talking through her workout to the great distraction of me and my subject.

Then Doctor #2 entered the room and began more and louder talking as he stopped by to greet and converse on his way to his first exercise. He silently noted that I intentionally ignored him, not something my brother would have done.

Doctor #2's first exercise was in a machine only two feet from the SuperSlow Leg Press my subject was then using. Doctor #2 and The Wife (She finished her workout and moved to be with Doctor #2.) continued to talk as he pumped out repetitions on the SuperSlow re-engineered Nautilus Leg Extension.

Eventually, The Wife paused her discussion with Doctor #2 to interrupt me—as I was still engaged with Doctor #3—asking if we could set a new time to meet about her new role in her husband's practice. I was very challenged to hide my infuriation, but did.

I quickly told her to phone me so that we could set a time. I made it obvious that I was completely encumbered and could not be distracted away from Doctor #3. I then realized that she did not have my phone number, but I did not then act to correct this. I refused to allow anything more to take me away from my care of my subject.

The talking died down, perhaps because my manner told these trained medical people that I was trying to have some privacy and focus with my subject. Until then, I guess that they had never considered the possibility that the demeanor they rigidly enforce in their clinics might also be required in my trade.

Later that night, I texted Doctor #1. I had his personal phone number, but not The Wife's. I merely asked him to forward my number to The Wife so that she could phone me to complete the discussion that SHE had initiated.

Doctor #1 responded with:

We are very interested in referring our obesity patients to you for SuperSlow exercise programs. We are trying to get everything together in order to start my wife [The Wife] off [in her new capacity her at the office]. We already know the value of SuperSlow. My wife [The Wife], my mom, Dr #2, and many others have been referred by us for about 2 years. We will contact you when we are further along.

“We already know the value of SuperSlow.” Oh really?

The following day, I texted Doctor #4. I explained my dilemma regarding the lack of standards in the facility (in general, no specifics about the stupidity of her associates and family) to her and my shame that her experiences here were never what I had intended. (She had had a PC in the facility for about a year before I arrived and influenced many others to partake.) She texted her reply:

I had nothing but wonderful experiences and am so thankful you have helped my mother-in-law so much. But, you are a perfectionist. As I am. We always strive for improvement. Then we inspire the people around us to do the same. Give it time. With enthusiasm, positive reinforcement and kindness things will improve. Off to see patients. Good luck!

“Wonderful experiences”? To this day, she has no idea that her “experiences” were a misrepresentation of SuperSlow. How many countless times have I heard this drivel from so-called smarter people?

At a cost of \$35,000 to move, I had arrived in Texas from Florida on June 13, 2014. I made this move to market SuperSlow utilizing my brother's extreme marketing prowess. Within two weeks of seeing how he had ruined any possibility that I would consider business with him, I decided to vacate back to Florida.

My return to Florida was hampered by my brother's development of cancer. Other than being a total nincompoop about the required business structure to maintain the standards of a SuperSlow facility, he had made numerous accommodations for me. In his vulnerable state, it would be cruel to crush him with my rejection of his warmth and charity. I knew that I had to wait for his passing to avoid this.

In August 2017, he died. By then I was performing 60-70 sessions a week in my tiny office and had saved money to manage the 1000-mile move. It required another four months for me to identify a business space and a house in Florida and to coordinate a crew on both ends of the trip to launch eastward.

I moved into my new Florida abode in January 2018—same zip code as when I left four years ago. It had required this much time to reverse the mistake of involving my family in anything to do with exercise.