FROM PLAYWRIGHT TO PERSONAL TRAINER

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You had an unconventional journey to becoming a personal trainer. What were you doing before?
I received an MFA degree in playwriting, after which I did what most aspiring young playwrights do: I found a job that would pay the bills while I was writing plays and submitting them to contests at universities and regional theaters around the country.

What inspired you to take the leap and change careers?
Much of a writer’s work is done alone, which was hard for me. After witnessing 9/11 from a Midtown Manhattan office building, I started to think very hard about the life that I wanted and the contribution I might still make.

What inspires you most about your job?
The moments I enjoy most in my work occur when my clients have an insight about the practice they are developing with me. When the light bulb comes on for them, it’s evident and deeply inspiring—a real hallelujah moment that leaves me feeling like I’ve made a difference. I believe this is a major source of inspiration for teachers in all fields, and personal trainers are teachers, whether they realize it or not. Good trainers understand this, but they do the work without becoming pedantic, focusing instead on meeting clients where they are and taking them step by step to where they want to go.

What advice would you give someone who wants to work in the health and fitness industry?
To succeed, health and fitness professionals need to be more than vessels of knowledge. We need to understand that ours is foremost a role of service and that succeeding in that role requires us to be excellent at listening, asking questions, encouraging and providing support, the net effects of which are trust and an authentic rapport.

Learn more about being a personal trainer like Patrick: ACEfitness.org/PT