Message From the Editor in Chief  Michael P. O’Donnell, MBA, MPH, PhD

I am delighted to welcome Paul Terry, PhD, to his new role as Editor of The Art of Health Promotion. Dr. Terry is one of the most productive, inquisitive, and service-oriented people I know. He has the rare combination of the rigorous approach of a scientist, the pragmatism of a program leader, and the imagination of a child. These traits come from his three decades of experience in health promotion, during which he has served as developer of programs that have won the C. Everett Koop Award, professor and president of an educational institute, Senior Fulbright Scholar in Zimbabwe, and now as CEO of StayWell Health Management.

The Art of Innovation

Although my primary motivation for serving as editor of The Art of Health Promotion (TAHP) section of the American Journal of Health Promotion (AJHP) is the opportunity to support and influence a key educational venue for health promotion professionals, I am also enthused about the opportunity to regularly play the health professional edition of the party game, “If you could sit down for a chat with anyone in the world, who would you pick?” Interviews are one of the surest ways to cut quickly to the essence of ideas and get a glimpse into the inimitable attributes of a person at the same time.

What is the most convincing way to convey to readers of the TAHP section that I intend to keep bringing them valuable ideas that they can put to use in their practices? I opted to start by teeing up one of the most prolific luminaries in the profession and asking him how best to apply what he has learned about behavior change against some of the most perplexing challenges we are presently tackling as practitioners. You will learn that Dr. James (Jim) Prochaska’s invention of the stages of change (SOC) theory was initially influenced by an article that argued for the need to better integrate principles of psychotherapy. It is interesting to note that the article, one of many that Dr. Prochaska references in this interview, was originally published in The Saturday Review. The Review was an influential journal in its time that was published by Norman Cousins, another seminal health education scholar. The transtheoretical model (TTM) that followed is perhaps one of the most studied and applied constructs informing the field of health promotion in the past 20 years. Imagine—one well-done article can indeed help shape a new direction for a profession and a field of study. My ambitions for TAHP are just that simple and every bit that grand.

Conducting an interview with Dr. Prochaska is like sitting down for an hour with a stack of encyclopedias; therefore I came to the discussion with a very clear agenda. As you will see in the interview, we not only delve into how best to put his research findings to use, but also into his take on current criticisms of his theories. Dr. Prochaska is thoughtful, unflappable, and gracious, whether sharing his excitement over new scientific discoveries that he and his colleagues made or responding to detractors who suggest sun-setting his work altogether. For most, using the quip, “you’re a gentleman and a scholar” is a casual expression. Reflecting on my discussion with Dr. Prochaska, and given the enormity of what he has contributed to our understanding of what it takes to successfully break bad habits, I submit that he is the personification of the original intent for that expression. My sense is that Dr. Prochaska is wonderfully magnanimous because he is deeply grounded in doing the right thing and allowing scientific evidence to be the basis for continued debate, disagreements, and discovery.

Paul E. Terry, PhD, Editor

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