

Ep #5: Why Action Isn't Enough and What to Do About It



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Heather Branscombe

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Welcome to *Clinicians Creating Impact*, a show for physical therapists, occupational therapists, and speech-language pathologists looking to take the next step in their careers and make a real difference in the lives of their clients. If you're looking to improve the lives of neurodiverse children and families with neurological-based challenges, grow your own business, or simply show up to help clients, this is the show for you.

I'm Heather Branscombe, Therapist, Certified Coach, Clinical Director, and Owner of Abilities Neurological Rehabilitation. I have over 25 years of experience in both the public and private sectors, and I'm here to help you become the therapist you want to be, supporting people to work towards their dreams and live their best lives. You ready to dive in? Let's go.

Welcome to episode five. One of the best things about doing this podcast so far is the former colleagues I've been able to reconnect with. So shout out to you. And even if we haven't connected yet, know I am thinking of you along with those of you that I am so lucky enough to call my current colleagues as I record these episodes. Thank you.

And again, if we haven't met yet, in person or online, know that I consider you a colleague as well as I'm super grateful that you're taking the time to listen today. I'm recording this as we start a new home renovation at home. And when I say we, make no mistake, I will not be swinging any hammers. I always like to say to know your limits and play within them. And DIY reno is usually well outside my limit.

I'm lucky enough to have a contractor that I know and trust implicitly. His name is Jonathan. Jonathan, you're literally the best. We've worked together several times over many years now, and he has literally helped me create my dream home without ever moving. Again, shout out to Jonathan. Even with an amazing contractor and crew, one thing I know with this upcoming renovation is that my house is about to get a whole lot messier because destruction is ultimately just part of the renovation process.

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I know it, and I am embracing it because of the beautiful results that I know will come from this mess. Isn't it the best when you have a guide, no matter what that area is in your life, that can help you to get that specific result you're looking for? What I hope, and it is my intention to be that guide like that for you at work. I hope that in listening to this podcast that I plant some seeds that change you forever.

But know that if you're starting to feel like your relationship to work feels a little bit messier, even than it did before listening to this podcast, that's all part of the process. Just like a house renovation, nothing has gone wrong, and you are exactly where you need to be. And it doesn't mean that it's a problem either. I want to offer you that messy is a perspective or a thought, not necessarily a fact. So stay with me as I help you renovate your work life as you see fit into something you absolutely love.

Today I want to talk to you about action at work. Specifically, I want to talk to you about the difference between massive action and passive action. When I talk about massive action, what I mean is the action we take and continue taking until we reach our goal. Massive action includes the process of anticipating obstacles and being willing to fail repeatedly and try again until the goal is reached.

When we look at it from the perspective of our clients, it's the treatment planning process of helping our clients achieve the goal. We set up opportunities for our clients to take action in a variety of ways to help them to build the skills, and they're learning to reach their goal in the session and then ultimately in their natural environment during natural opportunities.

Now, knowing what I know about most therapists, more than likely, you are or have been at one time a goal-orientated person. And even when we don't set goals for ourselves, we often continue to use the concepts of goals as a tool for our clients as a way to determine what our intervention might look like.

Now, while this is true for us, I'm here to tell you that this isn't always normal behavior. Do you notice that? Like as you work with your clients or just notice

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how people show up in the normal, natural world. Using goals as a long-term tool isn't actually normal behavior.

Most people try, they fail, and they stop. They try something else, they fail, and then they give up. They test something once, and then they quit if it doesn't work out. Does that sound familiar? If you're anything like me, I think I can think of quite a few times where that sounds a little truer than I would like it to be. So that cycle of trying, failing, and stopping again is action. But it isn't the massive action, or at least in the sense that I want to define it as today.

Massive action is when we keep our sights on the goal, and we're willing to keep trying to get there. We try different ways, we fail, and we continue tweaking our actions until we hit our desired results. We're willing to feel uncomfortable, and we just keep taking action anyways. We do that so often as therapists for our clients, but what I noticed is that we do that much less often for ourselves.

So the next thing I want to talk about is how massive action is different than passive action. For the purposes of this conversation, I'm defining passive action as all the things that are done in preparation for action. So this is all the things like studying, courses, masterminds, listening, practicing, and reading. They can feel like action, but they aren't really the kind of action that directly gets us to our goals. Even listening to podcasts is that kind of action. They don't actually get us the results that we're after because passive action has to do with consumption, whereas massive action has to do with creating.

Now, don't get me wrong, I love me a good course. I love to learn. I love podcasts. That's why I'm here today and I will continue to show up on this podcast. But notice it isn't the passive consumption of information that actually gets us to our goal or the goal. I don't become a better therapist simply by signing up or even showing up to a course. A good course or podcast or book moves us closer to a goal when we decide to implement the actions that we take from the learning.

It's that application of the learning or the massive action from the passive action that actually moves us forward. So, in summary, there is definitely a time and a place for passive action. And there is a time and place for massive action as

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well. You get to decide what the right balance is for you. And that balance may even be different at different stages of your career and of your life.

So, now that you know the difference, let's do a little check-in on where you're at. We're going to do a little screening, if you will, to help you to find more awareness of what that balance level might look like for you right now.

One way to know whether you're taking massive action or passive action is based on the number of times you've fallen on your face or failed. When you're taking passive action, there's no risk involved. You're hiding, planning, and avoiding failure. Massive action typically involves embarrassing moments in front of a large audience, or maybe a small audience, but it is embarrassing moments potentially. You will fail where anyone or everyone can see you, which is actually not a problem.

So can you remember the last time you failed? Why or why not? Once you've answered that, the next question you might want to answer is, where in your life do you think that you're taking passive action or consuming instead of taking massive action? I've seen, and truthfully I have lived this in a couple of different scenarios. So let's see if any of them ring true for you.

First, I see this all the time as newer therapists. So this could be new to the profession, new to a certain area of practice, and or new to an organization. All of these times of transition offer us an amazing opportunity for you to decide if you think you are a good therapist or not.

So first, I want to offer that if you have successfully got into your professional program, you've achieved the post-secondary education required to become a therapist, as you've passed the regulations of your area to be able to practice, that could be enough evidence to show your brain that you are a good therapist. No matter how long ago or how short that time has been, that can be enough. And for many therapists, their brain does not believe that. Does that ring true for you?

Next, we commonly hold a communal thought that good professionals are lifelong learners and are looking to grow their professional practice. There are

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lots of ways to do that, and they normally fall under one of two categories. Number one, we take passive action in the form of a course, podcast, journal article, in-service, or something else. And number two, we practice our skills with actual clients.

What I notice is sometimes therapists think that they will be better therapists by taking more courses, when in fact, it's the practice that can come from those courses, or just practice in general, that has the bigger impact, both on their confidence and their competence as a therapist. It's not one or the other. It really is the balance of passive action and massive action.

When I'm saying massive action, again, it's the application of that action. So next time you want to take a course or consume some kind of information, just check in with yourself and ask yourself why. As long as you like your reasons, go right ahead. You might even see me there with you.

Now, the second way I see this concept where passive action feels better and safer than massive action as a therapist is when therapists want to take a whole lot of time preparing for a session with a client. Now, client preparation is amazing, and we may even say a very important part of our practice.

But notice if you feel like you feel the urge to keep preparing after you've decided in advance that that's where you'd want to be done. Or your need to prepare is getting in the way of other things you want to do, like ending your work in a timely way.

If client preparation or the time you feel like you need to complete it is going well and it feels amazing, then keep doing what you're doing. And if you notice that you might be over-preparing again, ask yourself why. Only you know what over-preparing is for you and what that looks like for you. And if you think you may be, in fact, over-preparing, asking yourself why can help you to generate the awareness you need to help you decide, if anything, what you want to do about it.

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In any of these examples, one question you can ask yourself that may help could be something like, in what way do you imagine massive action would be more useful to you than passive action?

So now for the story time portion of the podcast. I noticed that this concept of massive action versus passive action came up for me when I was transitioning full-time into private practice. This was more than 15 years ago, but as I thought about this, I was like, oh, this was a time when I was really having a challenging time.

I decided early on, as I made that transition that I wanted to have a practice that worked with both children and adults with neuro diversities and neurological challenges. So while I had experience and competence in both, at the time, I felt much more confident with children than I did with adults. And part of that was at the time, I had a ten-year history of working in a variety of pediatric settings.

So in order to overcome that lack of confidence with adults, I started to take courses, a lot of courses. Which was amazing, don't get me wrong, and expensive. And it ultimately took a lot of time away from my new solo private practice.

So, one day I just decided to stop taking courses for a while and just practice what I had learned. It felt uncomfortable, don't get me wrong. There were a lot of thoughts out there at the time, and maybe you still feel some of them about what courses you should be taking or have already taken to see the kind of clientele I wanted to see.

And those external thoughts and opinions of other people only reinforced my own thought that I might not be good enough until I decided again that I was a good therapist. And I worked with clients again and again until I got a whole lot better.

So did I end up taking courses again? Of course, I did. But the difference is now I take courses from a place of just-in-time versus a just-in-case basis. What that means is that I take courses when I think I can use a certain skill immediately to benefit myself and the clients that I'm serving, not to make me a better therapist,

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because I already believe that I am a good therapist. You can decide that you're a good therapist, too, today.

So what kind of massive action are you taking at work? What kind of passive action are you taking? Do you like that balance? Or would you benefit from a shift? What is an example of massive action that you could take towards one of your current goals?

I promise you that as you take some time to be introspective and think about your action, your work life will get better, all because of you. I can't wait to see the impact that you create with this. See you soon.

To celebrate the launch of the show, I'm going to be giving away a \$100 gift card and two \$50 gift cards to Amazon. I'm going to be giving them away to three lucky listeners who follow, rate, and review the show.

Now, it doesn't have to be a five-star review, although I sure hope that you love the show. I really want your honest feedback, so I can create an awesome show that provides tons of value for you. So visit abilitiesrehabilitation.com/podcastlaunch to learn more about the contest and how to enter. And I'll be announcing the winners on the show in episode ten. Thanks so much.

Thanks for joining me this week on the *Clinicians Creating Impact* podcast. Want to learn more about the work I'm doing with Abilities Rehabilitation? Head on over to abilitiesrehabilitation.com. See you next week.