

Foreword



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“If you don’t understand the process, you don’t know what you are doing.”
Anon.

process (*Lat.* processus - movement) is a naturally occurring or designed sequence of *changes of properties/attributes* of a *system/object*. Every *measurement* is a process. Identification of a process is a subjective task, because the whole universe demonstrates one continuous universal “process,” and every arbitrarily selected human behavior can be conceptualized as a process. This aspect of the process recognition is closely dependent on human cognitive factors.

When I first decided to pursue an advanced degree in Health Care Administration, I was unsure exactly how I would use it. In fact, it was 12 years before an opportunity presented itself to actually utilize the lessons learned while earning the MS degree in Health Care Administration. This “new” position led me into a very different world than the one I was used to. Surgery is precise; administration, on the other hand, in my opinion, is esoteric at times. Moreover, if we had as many meetings in surgery just to decide to have another meeting, no surgery would ever get done.

One of the current buzzwords in administrative circles today is “process.” It is important to identify and understand processes so that informed leadership decisions are made that benefit the organization. As they say, “for the good of the cause.” Process improvement, process identification, process theory, and process management are all integral parts of the central core of how things work. More importantly than recognizing how things work is to fully understand why they work and how that knowledge is applied.

Analyzing processes made me realize that there is a direct connection and application to the everyday activities of podiatric medicine and surgery. If we understand the process, then we know what we are doing and we know why we are doing it. Isn't this true in surgery? An understanding of the surgical foundation or process allows us to apply that process to all surgical cases. After all, how many of us experienced every possible type and variety of forefoot surgical procedures in our training? Probably not many, if any at all. Yet, we are fully capable of performing a great variety of cases based solely on our ability to apply the processes we learned to "the good of the cause," in this case to the benefit of our patients. We may not have recognized this aspect of our training as learning a process but that is exactly what we were doing.

As educators, we owe it to those who trust their training to us to convey the importance of process learning and not just memorization or step-by-step manual instruction. Only when we can fully articulate the process will we have accomplished cognitive reasoning and sound application principles that will ensure the future production of the finest foot and ankle specialists in the world.

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