

BACK TO THE BASICS SERIES: REAL FITNESS RESULTS

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Inspiration: Look Within

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As human beings, we are all united by our connection to the earth, to each other, and by the multitude of obstacles we face. Although each individual is undoubtedly unique, we all struggle with similar daily challenges, we are forced to adapt in order to do the best we can with the lives we are granted, and strive to find satisfaction, through self-improvement and discovery. The gift of life is something we can sometimes take for granted, but finding purpose in our lives, and working on, or towards something meaningful, adds a tremendous amount of vigour, dedication, and value to our lives and our work. There is nothing more powerful than the human spirit, when set in motion.

Sometimes, we lose sight of what matters most to us, and need to find ourselves again. Sometimes, we get confused about where to look, or what to do, or which direction to turn, and we can waste time. Since nobody wants to waste this valuable commodity, we might consequently just avoid looking altogether. However, any math problem can be looked at from different angles, and it's quite possible we're just analyzing things incorrectly, or in a way that blocks our progress. By re-framing the questions we ask ourselves, we can potentially overcome these hurdles, and discover what our goals, desires, or wishes truly are.

When it comes to fitness, a huge part of succeeding and reaching future aspirations, is deciding specifically what matters to us, and why. Now, how is this done? This is like asking a child what they want to be when they grow up... pretty tough question for them to answer... However, ask that child what issues they don't like, which problems they think they'd like to work on solving, and you're showing them how to make their own decisions. This shift in wording essentially unlocks potential, removes pressure or fear, and can become an excellent moral compass.

If this resonates with you, and you intuitively understand what your goal is, you may all of a sudden feel "behind", like you're late for a meeting, and have a strong urge to start doing something right away. This is good. You want your desire to drive you, and fuel your work, because there's certainly a lot of it to do! Nothing worth achieving is acquired easily. It's the process and the mountain you're climbing that matters, not so much the end result. Once you reach the peak, it's only human nature to search for a new mountain and climb more anyway. Moral of the story: find your mountain and start climbing. Don't worry about reaching the top, or how long it will take. Just focus on what's in front of you, on putting in the effort that's needed. All castles are built up, brick by brick.

Now, [changing gears a little], consider the notion that everyone is trying their best, even if on the surface, it may not appear that way. Nobody dreams of being lazy, depressed, being very overweight, being stressed, or becoming out of shape. These things happen to good people all the time, for a variety of reasons that are too complex to simply point judgment at. When it doesn't seem like people are happy, focused, determined, or positive, it could just be that they haven't figured out what their "question" is, and are missing that added value in their lives. Maybe they're just climbing the wrong "mountain", or perhaps they haven't found their "mountain" yet. Remember that inner strength and awareness is your key to success, and self-defeating thinking, poor attitude, judgment of others, or making assumptions about others, does nothing for your success, but take up valuable energy.

Everyone is fighting their own battles that we know nothing about, so it's generally better to focus on our own, unless we can help boost others up, and empower others too. Try searching your heart and mind, and allow yourself to embrace your thoughts, feelings, and frustrations, even if they are negative. Why? Natural tension or discomfort helps us better understand ourselves, and practicing mindfulness can potentially help us identify gaps that might exist, between where we are now, and where we would truly like to be. Contemplation sets the stage for our goal setting, and gives us direction and purpose. Rather than see it as a problem, or something you're not proud of, try seeing it as a realization of big opportunities and as something to grab onto, and work toward. This keeps things simple and manageable.

Everybody has things they wish were different about themselves; like losing 20 pounds, improving flexibility, reducing stress, reducing pain, gaining muscle or strength, or combatting health-related issues. Or, perhaps it's even more tangible, like being able to play with your grandkids more easily, hike with your nephew or niece, or being able to play a sport you used to love to play, again. The tensions I speak of are cues, or indicators, for where to look, within. What are you waiting for?

Deep inside, you probably already know what you want; it's more a matter of taking a leap of faith, changing your "normal", shaking things up, and taking charge. Change can be difficult, I know. However, change also breeds growth and maturation. Nobody got anywhere significant by remaining in his or her comfort zone. Just like physical body changes come as a result of disrupting homeostasis, altering behaviour and achieving great results, involves a similar interruption of "normal", and facing fear (and excuses) is key.

Now, I've encouraged you to look within yourself, and decide what you want to achieve, but how is this actually accomplished? First you must realize something important, which is that you deserve to be successful, happy, and fulfilled. You are worth it. I repeat. You are worth it. Working hard towards something that matters to you is actually my definition of "success", so whether you're broke, or a millionaire, it doesn't really matter. When I train someone, they all start from ground zero. We are all born with nothing, learn and develop able bodies, and use our minds to make

decisions that have consequences. Realizing our potential is all about deciding how best to focus our time, aim our energy and contributions, take some risks, and go after it. If we are empowered and chipping away at something that matters to us, deep down, hard work becomes instantly less daunting, and the results simply reflect the effort.

When there's a fire in our belly and an unwavering ideal or goal in mind, we can conquer any feat, and overcome any hurdle that gets in our way. The first step is choosing a specific, tangible goal, writing it down, and formulating a sustainable plan to achieve it. The rest is plan execution, adapting and modifying the approach to find balance, and seeking help from those around us for support and guidance. Together, our resolve, dedication, resilience, and inner strength can lead us to accomplish anything we put our minds to. The real challenge is deciding what to put our minds to (not whether or not we can do it). Ask those further along, seek advice from trusted sources, and push yourself to be your best self. You are infinitely more powerful and capable than you know. The real question is, are you ready for this kind of power? If so, keep reading.

Life is short, and making time for fitness is challenging for many people. In fact, "not enough time" is the number one reason people give, when justifying why they don't exercise enough, or look or feel the way they would like to. Although it's obvious that it's an excuse, again, it's simply a forgivable lack of realization. These folks have yet to figure out for themselves, the true benefits, and return on investment, for time spent on physical exercise. Since time is like money (you don't find it, you must create it), this excuse invariably just limits human potential. Allowing advancement of one area (for example, mind, career, etc.), while avoiding work on other faculties (e.g. body, spirit, sport, etc.) creates imbalances. Our minds and bodies are not separate entities, and the reason exercise is so powerful and important, is that our human physiology fundamentally fuses these "wires" together, and their connectedness predicts our health.

When we are fit, we function better. We breathe better, sleep better, work more efficiently, are more immune to the effects of disease, stress, and pathology, and overall just feel better. This not only optimizes our physical self, but our mental, and spiritual health. Exercise saves millions of lives, millions of dollars per year for medication, drugs, and other expenses. For many, exercise can also be an invaluable outlet, to relieve stress or anger, reduce pain or suffering, or improve self-confidence. The fact that strength and conditioning is destructive and constructive, together, at the same time, makes it pretty rare and exceptional, as far as activities go. Further, many reach a higher level of self-actualization, which is very satisfying, and rewarding.

So, the \$40 monthly membership fee, the 4-6 hours per week you might spend training, and the slightly increased grocery bill...they're more than worth it, as it sets you up for your best life. Besides, the better your health profile, the longer you'll be around to do the things that matter to you: support and enjoy family, complete our

life's work and projects, see our kids get married, pass our teachings, values, and experiences onto others, and be a part of this wonderful planet, a little longer.

As someone who has trained in the gym for over 15 years, and who has worked with hundreds of people, I have seen and felt incredible change. I have witnessed efforts that were simply moving, and inspiring. It seems like, once people figure out what they really want to work on, get after that "thing", and get better and better at it, proportionally comes a huge physical and mental boost in strength and resolve. Beating your own personal records, week in and week out, planning ahead, looking back, making discoveries about your training and body, and reaping all the rewards; it grounds you by providing structure. The structure and planning involved in training is learned over time, adopted and modified, and that's the beauty of it all. It's earned and is a learning process. The principles of growth leak into all other areas of our lives, and allow us to realize our own potential, by seeing that our goal setting, plan execution, analysis and introspection, work.

Humans are happiest when they are working on things; not when they are stagnant or stuck. If you're feeling stuck, consider this article your tow truck out of the mud. If you feel a little lost, a little let down from having fallen off the wagon, or are wanting to achieve something really meaningful this year, let the writing in this article lift and inspire you. Now is the time. If you know what you want, but don't know how to achieve it, don't let that block you! That's what personal training is designed for – to remove hurdles and boost you!

In conclusion, there's no need to look around you, look at what others are doing, or go online. You have a gold mine between your ears, an unbreakable spirit and soul, and a worthy body, no matter what your current state. If you want to change your life, you must look within, and inspire yourself. Be the change that you want to see in the world, embody what you want to achieve, and lead by example. As you develop, increase strength and confidence, and optimize your health and life, do your best to help those around you, too. Part of learning for yourself and improving, is also helping those around you (provided they want the help). As the saying goes, "with increased power comes increased responsibility"...

What are you waiting for?