

## EMBRACE THE SUCK!

New Year, new you? Have you been here before and failed to reach the goals you set out for yourself? Have you started towards a weight loss or fitness goal then weeks, months maybe later lost track and fallen off the path towards those goals? Lets look at why, and then explore new ways to help you achieve what you set out to do.

I'm going to start with a little back ground in concerns to how are brains work. First we need to understand that our brains are wired to pay attention to visible, large, scandalous, sensational, shocking, fast changing, loud, graphic onslaughts of stimuli. There have been recent studies discovering that the human brain is highly plastic. Now I'm not saying that your head is full of plastic rather 'plastic' referring in this case to the fact that our brains are moldable. The old adage; 'you can't teach old dogs new tricks' has been proven wrong. The brain at any age can 'change'; nerve cells routinely break old connections and form new ones. In a recent study they found an alarming increase during the last 10 years in anxiety, shorten attention spans, along with various other mental and physical problems. WHY? Well let's stop and take a look at the world around us, look at the news, Facebook, Twitter and other forms of social media sources and stimulus. They all contain short, quick stories, big headlines, quick points, and a lot of the time vivid images. Facebook is a status update, a quick way to see what our 'friends' are doing. Twitter, has risen in popularity recently reporting more new users signing up each month than even Facebook, WHY? It's quicker, you can skim the 'news', or updates faster. On Twitter you're limited to 140 characters to up date people on your thoughts and happenings. Ask yourself how many times a day, or hour you check your phone or computer to see what is new, or if you received a text? I bet a lot of your phones sound like R2D2 having a seizure!! We are in a constant state of looking for our next 'news' fix or updating our 'status' in life, it's like candy for our brains.

Let's draw some lines and put this all together now; our brains crave sensational, quick, stimuli, our brains are moldable, able to change and learn new things and we are surrounded by a constant stream of 'instant' news and 'highlight reels'.

Other factors that cause us to fail; we are not willing to make a true choice, we don't have the courage to start, and you don't have the courage to finish. When I "say we fail to make a choice", I mean we rarely make a choice that would substantially improve the quality of our lives. We make small choices everyday but we need to sit down and make an honest choice to better ourselves. Why do we do this? I believe that both failure to make a choice and failing to start are fueled by the same root cause. Many people will talk the talk, but few will step up, grind it out and do the work. These two choices are fueled by fear, I think most people don't think they are good enough, or that they have something wrong with themselves; SELF DOUBT. Thirdly, having the courage to finish, people are scared of finishing and maybe not accomplishing what they've set out to do. I find that this applies more in terms of fitness than weight loss. I've seen extremely talented athletes, put in a half hearted effort, compete and then say well if I would have trained harder I would have won; people are afraid of giving it their all and failing.

You combine all these factors and we do have a monumental challenge ahead of us. We inherently are afraid of the unknown, we are looking for quick 'fixes' so we can update our lives status, then we are constantly bombarded with other people's 'highlight reels' fueling further our fears of failure. WHAT DO WE DO?

First off we need to realize the process is going to be hard, the results aren't going to come over night and we are going to want to quit. Along this journey we are going to encounter quitting in many ways, we might say "this is crazy", "I can't believe I'm doing this", "I'm not good enough" or "this person is holding me back", quitting is going to

sound and take on many faces. This is a huge battle, don't just put it away, it will build up and consume you, identify that you like you want to quit, then go back to your goal, ask yourself why you started and take another step towards that goal. The fact is we don't know if we can accomplish our goal, but you need to try, telling yourself that to keep going, to take one more step. Another reality is we don't know what is going to happen ten seconds from now, one hour from now, next week. Paul Bryant once said: "The first time you quit its hard, the second time is a little easier and the third time you quit, you don't even have to think about it." You need to stand tall and refuse to quit, you need to act as though it is impossible to fail!!

You've made the choice, I'm going to lose twenty maybe thirty pounds, or I'm going to run that 5K race I've always wanted to do, great step one done. Step two, you need to create a plan, a road map if you will. Think of it like this you're traveling to a city or place you've never been, how do you get there? You're going to need help with this, you need someone to set up road signs, draw a map and support you along the journey. I've heard countless people say I can do it, sure that's why you've set out on this path before and failed, asking for help and guidance isn't a bad thing, get over yourself, check your ego at the door, asking for help is not a bad thing. Your coach or mentor and you are going to have sit down and plan out, your workouts, your diet, your rest / recovery and various other things. I recommend someone new to working out, or with a lower fitness level easing into it a bit, workout out every other day. Yes you are going to hurt a bit, but coming out of the gate wide open, is only going to cause so much pain that you cant move. You want to sit down with a calendar and schedule activities and workouts. You'll need to treat these like you would a doctor's appointment or dentist appointment; the workouts / activities aren't going to get done without you!! Step three, each day achieve these smaller goals of working out or maybe a walk with a friend. We need these little victories along the way, we need to update our status so-to-speak, be proud of yourself for taking that step. I said we shouldn't look for quick fixes, and we shouldn't, we aren't going to lose the 20lbs in 10 days and it stick, no matter what the infomercial say. We can though take pride and congratulate ourselves for getting through another workout or another day on our way to our goal. Third step, every other week, or maybe every month, sit down and re-evaluate our process, not the goal, it can stay the same. We need to be realistic in how we are doing, and if needed, make changes. We need to be dynamic, think of our goal as a target, if things around us change we need to be able to shift in order to hit that target. This is where a good mentor or coach comes into play, they will recognize set backs, or progress and change the input or stimulus. Lets say we are running everyday and start to develop shin splints, well we don't just run through this, and we don't just quit all together. In this case we might add some physical therapy to help deal with the shin splints, pull back on the running and maybe substitute some swimming or biking, we become dynamic but still focused on our goal.

One of my favorite saying is : " life begins at the end of our comfort zone", so along the journey to the goal, I like to challenge people. I do this because I think each person is capable of 10 times what they think they are. I like to get clients and athletes to challenge themselves in physical ways. Vince Lombardi said: "Fatigue makes cowards of us all". We should take on a task like a "tough mudder", "GoRuck Challenge" or a crucialble workout. I'll give you an example; for the last four years I have hosted a challenge camp out in Ontario, with athletes from all over North America attending. The first day we test, 2 mile run, push-ups, pull-ups, sit-ups and so forth, then we spend the next 3 days hammering on them. They workout, they carry logs, they run, they compete in the 'O' course, we truly put them to the test for 7-9 hours a day. Then after all that we run them through the same test that we did on day one. What happens? Well 95% of them beat all of their first day

scores, 100% of them beat at least one of their first day scores. WHY? We change their perception of 'failure', we change their perception of what they are capable of. We show them what true failure is, then how to react under that stress, teaching them to put one foot in front of the other. By challenging ourselves we discover what we are truly and I mean truly capable of! I've seen people come out of these challenges saying; "I can't believe I did that", "that was awful but I did it, I can't believe it!" They come out with a greater understanding of what they have inside themselves. This new sense of what they are capable of helps them when they have that 'quitting' conversation come up. They tell themselves I got through that incredibly hard workout, I can get through whatever obstacle they are confronting at that time. The challenges have to be scalable, you're not going to have someone do 1000 burpees let's say if they just started working out, a good coach will push the limits at an appropriate pace.

You're all jacked up now, you're excited, you think to yourself; "Drew you're right, I can do this", so get up, right now, head to the shower turn the water on cold, hop in. ? I could tell you all about the multitude of health benefits that cold showers have, weight loss, strengthening your immune system, but that's not the point, I want you to make yourself uncomfortable. Scream make noises, stay under the cold water as long as you can. What happened? If you've never done this before, was it as bad as you thought? It was stressful right, it sucked?! Look though you're still here! If you actually did it, then you know you can, it's not an unknown anymore! Next time challenge yourself to stay under longer. If you're one of the few that did it, then you have the courage to make a choice, you have the courage to stake a step into the unknown, be proud of yourself, most don't!! If you didn't, ask yourself why? Why didn't you try it? Are you saying to yourself I now it's cold and it's going to be awful? Don't kid yourself, that is quitting, and that is how easy it is to fall victim to it.

Get out some paper, make a goal, get some help, hire a coach, mentor, trainer, 'map' out your path to your goal, set your targets. "

Embrace the suck", in other words realize and be honest with yourself;

1. The journey is going to be tough
2. Believe that inside you, there lives an extra 10,20-30%.
3. We are at some point are going to want to quit.
4. You're going to overcome the 'quit' by recognizing it, acknowledging it, and returning your focus to your goal.
5. You will learn to act as though you can't fail, as I say when I undertake a huge challenge "Aint dead, can't quit!"
6. You've never done this before, ask for help.
7. Set out each day to accomplish then take pride in the small targets.
8. Challenge yourself in new and unique ways.
9. Enjoy the journey, no one tells stories about the time they sat around the house doing nothing.

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