

It's All About Motivation

Let me tell you the secret that has led me to my goal: my strength lies solely in my tenacity.

--Louis Pasteur

The following contains excerpts from the book Body for Life, by Bill Phillips and Michael D'Orso (12 Weeks to Mental and Physical Strength). The book is about making body "transformations," weight loss and muscle gain. Many of the principles in this book also apply to someone who has suffered an injury and needs to recover or has experienced a slow decline in health and needs to make some changes to keep from perpetuating the same problems.

Sometimes taking that first step back in the right direction is the hardest step to take. When I work with people who are laborers, I often remind the mechanic how well he maintains his tools, or the chef how well she maintains the kitchen equipment. With people in other fields, we remind them of the same concept. Obviously a truck driver plans to service his truck and change the oil at predetermined intervals. All this makes sense but what about caring for the most important tool of all, the person who runs or operates these tools. We are pretty complex systems of organized "machinery" that require specific care and maintenance otherwise abnormal wear and tear will occur. Obviously antiques get to be antiques because somebody cared for the object over time and the same case applies for humans.

Other analogies to consider are how much planning goes into one's education and we've all heard the college foundation slogan "a mind is terrible thing to waste." I add to that, the mind *and* body are terrible things to waste. Another strange phenomenon is we tend to think of others first or take better care of others than we do of ourselves. Speaking directly to all the "industrial-strength mothers" out there; why did you take better care of yourself, watching what you ate and drank and avoided smoking while pregnant compared to what your "normal habits" would have been while not pregnant. That's funny if you think about it; most women will endure forty weeks of a different lifestyle while pregnant, but will forget to make time for themselves to recover from such an endurance event. It is possible to reinvent yourself within twelve weeks, but you have to make plans to do it. No one expects to get a high school diploma or a college degree without planning to go to school; however we think a healthy, fit body will just happen to us without any planning or effort.

It is my hope that reading some of these passages excerpted from the book will inspire you to read the book yourself.

When I accept someone as a chiropractic patient, I always explain that there are different levels of participation when it comes to regaining and restoring good health. Many people are stuck in a "medical model" that I have described as, "Doc, I'm going to drop my body off at your office and pick it up later when you're done fixing it." These are the people who want to take drugs to cover up symptoms and do not want to take an active part in their own recovery. They want someone else to do all the work for them, which often is not realistic. Rather than supporting this mentality, I try to get people engaged in their recovery with home care activities that will support the healing process.

With rare exceptions, many people have slowly become unhealthy and thus allowed themselves to be susceptible to injury. Some would argue the point, “I felt just fine until I was in a car accident (or some other unforeseen incident) caused injury.” To a degree that is true, but you also must consider different levels of health and tissue integrity are more or less able to respond to injury. The healthy, strong and flexible tissues of an athlete are better able to adapt to rapid overstretching of tissues that would normally result in injury compared to someone who is prematurely aging, stiff and has degenerative changes. The point being, you can make yourself more or less injury prone by your own actions and decisions. So my goal is to not only help you feel better, but to motivate you to actually “get better.”

Many of the same things that apply to a person slowly getting out of shape and gaining weight over time, are similar to the issues that allow someone to increase degenerative processes in their body and become more susceptible to injury from relatively trivial insults. No matter your age or current condition, you can make a decision to change some of these factors for the better.

This would be the difference between thriving and surviving. Page 22: “Have you made the decision to change? What are your reasons for making the decision to change? When you look at yourself, do you honestly like what you see?” Bill Phillips recommends taking a photo of yourself relatively relaxed with your arms at your sides, in a pair of shorts or a swimsuit. Look at that photo and ask yourself a few more questions that may identify your reasons to make a change. How do you feel deep down inside? How do you really feel about yourself? Are you confident, energetic, and strong? Do you often wonder if you are on the right path? What are the pros and cons of continuing in the direction you’re going? Would you like to create a brighter future? When you answer these questions, your reason for making the decision to change will become clear. Write them down. What are the five most important, specific accomplishments you need to make, within the next twelve weeks, for you to be pleased with the progress of your body and life?

I like questions like these that are hard hitting and ask you to investigate yourself at the deepest level of your conscious. It reminds me of how often we’ve heard financial planners make comments, such as the average American spends more time planning a one-week vacation than they do their financial retirement planning. The same is true for planning health. There’s not much point in planning a retirement if you don’t plan for health. How much fun will it be to live a long time if you don’t have any quality of life?

For most people it’s easier to reminiscence about where they’ve been than to try to figure out where they’re going. Most are reluctant to accept new ideas or opportunities, and they have trouble sticking with anything challenging. Some even sabotage themselves and others because they’re very uncomfortable with the growth of others, because it threatens the structure and apparent ease of their own lives. A strong future vision is essential to force yourself to set goals. Every time you accomplish an objective, it’s not the end, but the beginning for another stage of an ongoing journey of progress, development, growth and adventure.

Go back to the question, what changes in your body and life do you wish could create within the next twelve weeks. Write down specific statements, such as: I want to commit to my chiropractic treatment program to help my body attain a new level of health, I will perform the exercises Dr. Gottlieb recommended daily to help restore my range of motion, flexibility, and strength. I'm going to decrease the amount of junk food, soda, etc. I eat and drink and replace those items with good quality fruits, vegetables and foods that will nourish my body. I will stop repeating bad posture and slouching positions at home and work that are working against my body and use the new body mechanics that I have learned. Use these statements as ideas to make your own plans to improve, instead of just hoping it will happen without effort. *Page 27: It's very important to understand the difference between dreams and goals. Dreams are things you wish for – things you enjoy thinking about, but don't really know when or if they'll happen. Goals on the other hand, are specific things you have decided you need to accomplish within a clearly defined period of time. For example, "someday I'm going to get in great shape" is a dream. "Within twelve weeks, I will lose twenty pounds of fat and gain ten pounds of muscle" is a goal.*

Practice eliminating doubt from your tone of voice and picture these things as something you will absolutely accomplish. Page 28: See yourself with a strong, lean body; your posture is good—shoulders back, chest out, chin up—a look of confidence, control, and satisfaction on your face. Anything you want to happen in your life—that you really want to achieve—you have to rehearse in your mind. When things don't go your way, pick yourself up because your future vision will be stronger than your setbacks.

Patterns of action are like habits. They are the "rules" we follow automatically—the things we do that we don't even think about. What makes a pattern of action good or bad is simply whether it takes us closer to or pushes us further away from our goals.

One mistake many people make is, in their state of overwhelming enthusiasm, they want to stop eating to lose weight and increase activity to gain strength and recover a higher level of health. The fact is, when you gain muscle and strength, your body requires more energy to maintain that new muscle. The same is true when a nutrient-deficient body is trying to heal, you must supply extra nutrients or the body will be creating a worse nutrient deficiency. Think about it this way. If you had a poor nutritional status that allowed you to be in an injured or degenerative state, it's going to require even more good nutrition to get back to a base level, plus the additional required for the healing and recovery process. This is one reason why many people need to be supplementing their diet with a good quality multivitamin and mineral complex.

When you exercise a nutrient-deficient body, you are not making it healthier: you are actually creating a worse nutrient deficiency because there are no reserves to draw from. *Page 36: Working hard and going nowhere is unrewarding and dispiriting. It's downright frustrating. If you don't have the nutrients in your system to recover, much less improve, performing intense exercises will be like flicking a lighter with no butane—you might get a spark, but no flame.*

So as you return to activity, remember to increase your good nutrition. Also, you need the perspective that fat takes up 5 times more space than muscle. Muscle also weighs more than fat, so as you return to a fit level you may find as your building muscle and losing fat in the right manner; your weight will stay approximately the same and sometimes even go up while your physical size changes by several inches.

Page 37: People of all ages should be weight-training. If we don't work out, we lose muscle mass as we grow older. In the average American man's body, from his early thirties to his mid-sixties, his body fat level often doubles, from about 18% to 36%. In the same time frame, the average American woman's body fat can bulge to 33% to 44%. It's never too late to change. A university study of a group of men between the age of 60 and 72 years, using a 3-day a week weight-training program caused an average increase in flexibility and strength up to 200%.

Page 39: Brief, intense periods of exercise produce impressive physical results while actually clearing the mind, relieving stress, and allowing us to focus on accomplishing the day's goals. There is a point of diminishing returns beyond which, if you keep pushing your body, it will begin working against you. This is where guidance comes into play. During a workout we're trying to slightly damage the muscle fibers by overloading them. This causes the body to mobilize it's muscle rebuilding workforce. This is also the rationale for giving some time between heavy workouts so that the body has time to do some rebuilding.

Any exercise is better than no exercise but if your goal is to make a significant transformation, you're going to have to focus on pushing yourself further than you may have pushed yourself before.

Psychologically, the most important thing is for you to make a commitment to yourself. There is no greater sense of accomplishment than keeping a promise to yourself. The opposite is also true there is nothing more depressing and discouraging than knowing you have not kept a commitment to yourself.

Page 81: Think about this for a moment: within a year, virtually every cell which makes up your body right now will be gone. The fact of the matter is your entire body is "re-created" every year. Somewhere around age 25, the natural process of "building up" that your body has undergone since birth crosses over to a process where degeneration occurs faster than regeneration. We can adapt and evolve. We do not have to lose muscle, gain fat, feel tired, give up, and give in as we age. If we choose, we can look and feel good, for life. We have the opportunity to recreate ourselves, if we decide to do it, and if we know how.

Start recreating yourself intentionally. We can supply the guidance and treatment in the office, but without the "spark" of exercise and the "fuel" of nutrition, we can't keep this fire burning. Now that you know every cell in the body is recreating itself, you understand the importance of supplying good quality "raw material." Feeding yourself junk food and poor quality saturated fats means all the cell membranes in your body will be made from a poor quality fat as opposed to supplying yourself nutritious, good quality fats and oils that come from cold water fish, such as salmon and cod, and good quality plant fats and oils, such as EPA and DHA and the Omega's. You see now you have the opportunity to make every cell function better in your body.

Saturated fats are the bad ones, which can remain solid at room temperature. My way to remember this is a sat. fat is one that can sit up on it's own at room temperature. In other words, a saturated fat is solid. Whereas the good quality fats and oils such as olive oil, grapeseed oil, etc. are liquid when at room temperature.

Transform adversity into energy. Page 100: There is no training system, supplement, or "miracle pill" that can make you immune to adversity. It's hard to make changes especially when you already feel bad or you're coping with an injury, but what better time to have the motivation to make a change than the moment you realize you cannot go on allowing things to continue the same path. Expect adversity as an inevitable part of life. Our character will never be fully tested until things are not going our way. Courage to succeed in spite of adversity becomes an inspiration. "How can I make this work for me rather than against me?" Misfortune is a bridge, not a barricade, to greater achievements. Transforming negatives into positives is not just the right way, it's the only way.

Honor self promises. You must promise yourself you will finish what you start, no matter what. The very essence of confidence is self-trust. Would you trust anyone who repeatedly lied to you? If you can't honor, trust, and depend on your own word, well... that may be the root of a lot of challenges in your life—a lot more than you realize. Most people have a hard time answering the simple question, "Do I keep my word to myself?" Or, I should say, they have a hard time answering it honestly. When you know darn well, deep down inside, that you should be doing something and you're not, like exercising regularly, like eating right, you're lying to yourself. If you keep doing that your self trust—your confidence—will fade away. Keeping those promises to yourself, unleashes enormous energy and potential. You will be filled with strength, certainty—and, yes, confidence—if you honor self promises. When you succeed, you will feel the transformation inside even more than others see it on the outside.

Instead of feeling pressure as a negative; harness the power of pressure as being positive. Deep down inside, you want pressure; in fact, you need pressure to feel excited and passionate about life. We are all capable of so much more than we might believe, but our ultimate potential is often smothered by what society teaches us—that pressure is a bad thing, that it hurts rather than helps our efforts. After years of conditioning, most people see pressure as an obstacle, not the powerful, driving force it really is. Think about times in your life where the more things you had thrown at you the more things you got done or accomplished. As opposed to the times that you were on cruise control without any significant pressures pushing you. Positive pressure is needed for breaking out of your comfort zone, which in reality is a very uncomfortable place to live. Without confidence, you won't be able to stay on course. Start playing to win instead of playing "not to lose." The payoff is automatic and in many forms: satisfaction, pride, fun, fulfillment, friendship, self-esteem, and energy.

The best way to receive support is often to give it. Admire the hard work of others and recognize it in the verbal and written forms to them. It will come back to you.

You can regain control of your life and change it, beginning with your body. Is this year better or worse than last year? A year from now will you say, "I wish I had..." or "I'm glad I did..."?

These are all wonderful principles for transforming your body and your life. Remember treatment happens in phases, such as getting you out of pain, decreasing muscle spasm, and increasing your activities of daily living. Then we progress to rehabilitation strengthening and stabilizing your new healthier body. And the final phase is not an end, but the beginning of maintaining a new healthier you which ultimately requires less energy than recovering from another injury or setback.

Overview of staying on course:

- ❑ Expect adversity and be prepared to transform obstacles into energy.
- ❑ Honor self-promises by finishing what you start.
- ❑ Harness the power of positive pressure by embracing challenges.
- ❑ Focus on progress, not perfection in order to build confidence.
- ❑ Practice the universal law of reciprocation by giving unselfishly to others.
- ❑ Give us permission to help support you and enable you to successfully regain your health.

The fact that you have decided to improve yourself is something to be proud of!