

Hello there, I hope that you are creating a fantastic day today. I am geared up because I'm getting ready to go to the Big Apple to New York City to scoop up my daughter and take her to my alma mater. She has been there one other time. But this will be the first time that she has been to West Point. And this weekend, I will be joining a lot of Army fans along with many of my classmates. So, I am stoked. I am really excited to get going and to truly enjoy connecting with my family and with some old friends.

But before I do that, I am really excited about sharing some specific tools, workouts, if you will, that will help you to strengthen your self-command muscles. Now in the last podcast, we talked about mental energy, and I shared a simple way to think about how your mental energy works. And I gave a very simplified process that you can use to begin to understand it so that you can use your mental energy on purpose. And I call that being at the mental gym. And it really is about understanding that you're at the gym, how to find it, where and when to find it. And if you haven't listened to that, I invite you to stop right now and go back and listen to episode number 33, The Mental Gym first, because to train at the gym, you have to know where it is. It's one of the most important elements of using habit change to transform yourself into the healthiest and most optimized version of yourself. Recognizing the moment when you are at the gym is absolutely critical. And you can notice that you are at the gym.

First and foremost, when you notice that you are not taking your right action, however you have defined that you have been distracted. Maybe you are mentally distracted, you're no longer focused on the project in front of you and are focused on something else. Maybe you are ruminating about something that's happened in the past or something that might be happening in the future. And you're basically spending your mental energy. You are exercising your brain in a way that is not optimizing your vision or your results.

You also might be at the mental gym, when you physically recognize that you are not doing something physically that you want to be doing. So maybe you are eating something that you said you weren't going to eat or drinking something you said you weren't going to drink. Or maybe you were saying something like yes to another project that you don't really want to be doing that right there is when you are at the mental gym. And another huge indicator that you're at the mental gym is when you're having a craving or an urge. And we're going to talk about that.

So, it takes time and presence and awareness, self-awareness to even recognize that you are at the gym. And so, once you recognize that, what normally happens is that we say okay, I get it, here I am I'm at the gym, it's time for me to take my right action. And so, I'm just going to stop drinking, I'm just going to eat the right things. I'm just going to say no, I'm just going to and that's our plan. And the whole focus is on the action. Now the action piece is really important. You have to have an action plan. I'm going to talk about that in a second. But when we're only focused in on the action piece, what ends up happening is that we are resisting ourselves or spending a lot of energy forcing ourselves to do our right thing. Whatever that is. And if you've ever participated in that, you know, what can end up happening is that you quote unquote, behave for a certain amount of time you take your right action, and then you run out of steam. Life gets in the way. It feels too difficult. It takes too much energy; it feels too complicated. And the reason that happens is because we're only in the physical gym focused on the physical action and where we need to be is in the mental gym.

So, we're going to talk about exercises that you can engage in to increase your own personal self-command or self-control. And I'm going to keep going with this analogy of the gym and just like in the regular gym where you would work out your body. It's easier if you have a plan. If you have a workout. You know what you're going to do, you go in there you try it, you take notes, you track your progress, see what is working and what

doesn't working. And it is the same when you are exercising in your mental gym when you are practicing the art of self-control and self-command. And what I will tell you is that there is an inextricably strong link between your mental plan and also your physical plan.

And so that cycles back to your plan. And what it is that you are physically going to do, you have to have a physical plan something that is in your calendar that is at a specific point in time, this is a really big deal. Because many people resist having a plan, they just go with that general oh, I'm going to get healthier, I'm going to be better, I'm going to engage more, I'm going to focus more, whatever it is no, you need a very specific plan, you need to say I'm going to improve my focus. And I'm going to do that by focusing on this particular project for 90 minutes straight from 1pm to 2:30pm. That's the plan that goes in your calendar. I am going to reduce my weight. And the way that I'm going to do that is I'm going to eat three healthy meals, I'm going to walk five days a week, that is a plan, and it goes in your calendar, I'm going to increase my energy. So, for my sleep, I'm going to go to bed at 1030 every night. I'm going to have a morning ritual, whatever it is for you.

The key to being at the mental gym is to ensure that first and foremost, you have a physical plan. And the reason that you need that plan is because that plan and its existence on your calendar is going to pinpoint exactly where your mental gym is. Because it is at that point, when you are going to engage in a behavior that is different than what your brain is used to. That is different than your comfort zone. That is exactly where you will experience restlessness or discomfort or cravings, or urges. This is the point in time, where you have already trained your brain, you've just already trained it in a way that you weren't aware of this is where we train our brains to escape, to choose comfort. And there is literally a pathway in your brain that you have already created by training different thoughts.

And I'll tell you what, we are really good at this training. It is elite. It is professional, and it is sophisticated. And it sounds like this. Look, I get that I have been drinking too much. But this is the last time that I will be in this city in Italy with this bottle of wine with my spouse. And I will never get to experience this again. I'm not going to give this up. Does that sound reasonable to you? Of course it does. How about this one? You know what I have had a long day I've had a long and extremely successful day I have led my entire team through a challenge that nobody expected that we would get through. I am celebrating, I deserve to eat whatever I want to I was on today and I am going to celebrate me.

Another example. And one that I hear quite often runs along the lines of you know what I knew that I should have refused, you can fill in the blank food alcohol the next project, getting hooked into an argument with my spouse fill in the blank, I knew that I shouldn't have done that. But in this particular circumstance, this is what was different.... And generally, what follows whatever you are going to say as to why you didn't follow through, it will sound good, it will make sense and the average person wouldn't argue against your choice. But what's going on here is that you are with these very prettily wrapped excuses. And that's exactly what they are. You are staying in your current mental shape. You're at that mental gym, you just don't realize that you are lifting the weights of comfort instead of choosing to strengthen your brain in a different way. This point in time is where you are either in support of your old ways and you do whatever exercises you've always done. Or you say, aha, this is where I'm going to do my new workout. And I'm going to give you a couple of workouts that you can use. And before I do that, I want to just put out this word of caution here. That is really important to be aware of as you start doing these new workouts in your mental gym.

No matter what type of self-help or habit creation program or professional development program that you subscribe to all of them whether it is the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People or the Five Pillars of Motivating You and your team are the 23 Emotional Intelligent Steps that you need to take no matter what it is you are working with, including the Wellbeingness© model in the extra model. It always, always, always comes down to this point in time, and what you decide to do, whether you decide to go with your old exercise program, your old mental exercise program, or your new workout is this moment in time, where you decide to choose a new workout that matters the most.

I think that this is the most difficult transition that we don't talk about this moment when we are having cravings and urges, and the day has been long. And we just have these really good reasons why we shouldn't follow through. Those moments are where we build discipline, resiliency, confidence, follow through, and immense self-awareness. So, as I give you these workouts, keep that in mind. And if you kind of fumble through it, the first couple of times, do not worry about it, when you are aware that you are in the mental gym, and you have a workout and you decide to use it that right there is huge, that is where transformation takes place. It's so exciting to me, I kind of want to, I literally want to jump up and down right now. So, remember that and cut yourself some slack and also dare to try something new simultaneously, when you're at the mental gym.

Alright, so the first workout that I want to talk about has to do with food, and overeating food. So often I work with people who overeat. And then as a result, they have too much fat on their bodies, or they are unhealthy, they have diabetes, or high blood pressure or something like that. I also work with people who do not have those conditions yet, but are overeating, as in binge eating, not so much that they have too much fat on their body, or it's affected their health yet, but they know that they are out of control. They feel like hey, listen, in terms of how I am commanding my life I got to going on except for in this one area.

So, the workout I want to give to you, if overeating is a challenge for you is this one phrase, and here it is. Hunger is not an emergency. I'm going to say it again, hunger is not an emergency. Now the word hunger can mean a physical feeling in your body, when your body is like, hey, I'm hungry, and you can feel it in your stomach. I'm talking about that hunger. And I'm also talking about mental hunger, when we know that we are not physically hungry, but we have a craving to go eat something salty, or something crunchy, or something sweet. It's a mental and emotional hunger. In those moments when you're at the gym, and you can feel the discomfort, I want you to imagine picking up the weight that says hunger is not an emergency. For most people who are listening here to this podcast, hunger is not an emergency, you have access plenty of access to food. But if you've trained your brain and your body to be a sugar burner instead of a fat burner, or you have always comforted yourself with food, your brain thinks it's an emergency.

Now, it may not start off feeling like an emergency, it might just feel like a subtle idea, hey, let's drive by Dunkin Donuts on the way to work, I've got a few extra minutes or a little bored with this project. Let's see if there's anything salty in the office. And if you do not answer that urge that craving, then it'll get a little louder and a little louder and a little louder. And that space and time is you at the mental gym. That's where you pick up that weight. And by the way, your brain is not going to want to pick up that weight, it's going to want to do what it's always done. I implore you to pick it up anyway. Imagine yourself bending down and picking up that weight that says hunger is not an emergency. And do some reps with that specific thought that how many reps that you need to do really will be up to you. I'm going to recommend that you start with 20 literally say to yourself, hunger is not an emergency. Hunger is not an emergency. Hunger is not an emergency. And what you are doing here is you are interrupting that old set of exercises and introducing a new set of exercises. You are shifting your mental energy and you're doing it at the exact right time. And often people say it doesn't feel good

or doesn't feel like it's working. Every single time you pick up that weight you are shifting the way that you think you are transforming your brain every single rep counts.

Now this second workout that I want to give to you basically expounds on the first one. It applies to any activity that you feel like you might be overindulging in whether it's eating or drinking or spending or procrastinating or worrying and you apply this when you find yourself right in the middle of doing that action. So, you've got the doughnut in your hand, you've got the wine glass in your hand, you notice that you are ruminating about something that happened in the past, or you're worried about the future and you catch yourself, you catch yourself in this energy cycle. And this workout is just called, cancel, cancel. And that means that you are reminding yourself that you can put down the donut, put down the wine, stop the worrying, stop whatever is occurring in its tracks.

Now, this is an important workout, because often, we are right in the middle of doing something, and we recognize that we're doing it and then we end up thinking, Ah, what the heck, I'm already in the flow of this action. So, I might as well keep doing it, I've already ruined it oh, well. And the danger in doing that is that often that mental energy spills over into the next action, and then the next action and the next action. And before you know it, you are way outside of where you want to be. And that mental energy of recognizing that you're not doing your right thing, just spill over into one specific action, it also becomes a way of being, we're just exercising our mental muscles in whatever way we feel like it and there's no discipline.

So that's the danger of noticing your action and not canceling it out. And if you do not cancel, cancel in the middle of the action, you are missing an incredible opportunity, it's a powerful opportunity to practice shifting your mind in a way that you cannot practice when you're not engaged in that negative activity. So, to clear that up, when you find yourself doing something that you don't want to be doing, and you are able to shift out of it right there. That is like lifting double the weight. And being able to cancel, cancel, is extremely powerful. That is an amazing workout. So, what you do, when you notice that you're engaging in an activity that you don't want to be engaging in. You first and foremost, say cancel, cancel, you stop the activity, mental or physical. And then you return to your right activity, whatever that is for you. And you've already planned that you already know what it is.

So that is the second workout. And it's powerful even to just try the workout no matter if you are successful or not. To be able to practice and be aware and to try the cancel, cancel is huge. I also want to give you a little workout to be that goes along with this. And it has to do with something that Mel Robbins came up with. She is a famous psychologist, and she came up with something you may have already heard it called 54321. And it's literally something that you say in your head to help shift your mind and to help shift your activity. And the idea here is that when you begin to count down, you are now stopping your limbic brain, the brain that wants to remain comfortable and to seek pleasure and to do it as efficiently as you possibly can. You're stopping it in its tracks, and you're giving your prefrontal cortex a moment to take over. So, when you combine, cancel, cancel, you're stopping what you're doing. And then add in 54321 go, you go and do your right action. Those two together are a powerful workout combination for immense self-command.

Alright, the final workout that I'd like to give to you all has to do when you find yourself in the gym, and you are anxious, overwhelmed, stressed out, you notice that you are repeating thoughts in your head or repeating what somebody said to you or worrying about something that you really have no control over and you'd like to settle that down. Now, this workout, for sure is one of the most difficult because it's happening all in your head, you already are lifting weights that you're used to lifting. I'm just a worrier. This is the way that I am this is how I

think about things. This is what I do. This is how it's always been. And I want to give you one particular weight that you can use in the moment.

And here it is. It's a weight that says why is this a problem. And I want you to use this weight with a pen and paper, not on the computer, but with a pen and paper. And so, on your piece of paper, I want you to take one minute to succinctly write out what the problem is. And then you lift the weight the question, why is that a problem? And you answer it five times. So, for example, say that you are getting ready to give a presentation and you're like Oh, I'm totally freaking myself out here. I'm making myself nervous and worried about what they're going to think I'm not sure if I have the right numbers. I last time I did this. This is what happened. And then obviously like, oh wait, I'm in the gym. I'm lifting the wrong weights. I recognize that I am here. And I want to calm myself down. So, I get out a piece of paper and I write at the top. I'm nervous about my presentation. And then rep. Number one, why is that a problem? And the answer might be something like, well, the last time I gave this presentation, I messed up. Rep. Number two, why is that a problem? Answer? Because when I mess up, then people think that I don't know what I'm talking about. Rep Number three, and why is that a problem? The answer? Because if people think that I don't know what I'm talking about, then maybe I'm going to lose my job. Rep number four, and why is that a problem? And maybe the answer is because if I lose my job, I won't be able to provide for my family. And then route number five. And why is that a problem? And the answer is, because it's really important for me to be able to provide for my family.

Now, you'll notice that as you write down your answers, what you are doing is you are starting to unravel your own anxiety and understand where it is coming from and create some empathy for yourself, which is a really nice anecdote, a different way to feel other than stress, it also pulls you out of your own drama, and has you recognize what it is that you are thinking, and if what you were thinking is even accurate, or probable, or even true. And here's what else happens, it puts your brain in a different energy path, you go from the fight or flight of that limbic brain, the fear of all of the reasons why this might be a problem, and you begin to strategize solutions. And if you do more than five reps, eventually what you will come down to is your value. In this instance, it was it is important to me to take care of my family. And that value can lead you to and it's important to me to do well. And I do know what I'm talking about. And I do have expertise in this arena. And this is really important, not just for me, but for the people who I'm presenting to. And as you can see it has the potential to shift your energy.

Now, these are all workouts I've given you three distinct workouts. And the first one starts with shifting a concept around overeating and understanding that hunger is not an emergency. That's a mental connection to what's going on physically in your body. The second one helps you to stop yourself in your tracks the action that you're taking the mental action that you're taking, and to become aware of your ability to strengthen a new muscle. And then the final one that I'm talking about now helps you to unravel, mentally, all of these are workouts, and they take time doing them and practicing them just like when you're at the gym is not going to be perfect the first go around. But every time you choose to recognize that you're at the mental gym, and you choose to try a different workout, you are changing your brain, you are in the workout of self-command, it may not look the exact way that you want it to look immediately.

But as I said, every single rep counts, every time you witness and shift your mental workout to something new. It counts, not only does it count, it is the place where you transform, it's the place where I transform, and indeed is the only place where we can change our brains and change ourselves and change the way that we self-command. And now you know where the mental gym is, you have some exercises that you can do. And I pinky promise you that if you engage in these workouts, you will notice an increased level of discipline and

determination and self-awareness and confidence. And you will also notice the energy of curiosity and increased motivation because working out with a plan that you know will create results is so much more fun than cycling around in those old workouts.

So that's what I've got for you today. And I would love to hear how your mental workouts are going. I'd love to hear how your physical workouts are going to or anything else that you'd like to share with me. There is a really cool link at the bottom of this podcast wherever you are listening, and it will take you to a place where you can leave me a voice message and I love getting voice messages. So, feel free to drop a private message there. It's completely confidential and let me know how things are going for you. In the meantime, I'm off to New York City and wherever you find yourself don't forget to do your mental workouts and to create a great day.

Hey there if you are ready to take your Wellbeingness© to the next level come visit thewellness.coach where I've got lots of free resources and make sure that you type in thewellness.coach (not .com) and I will see you there.