



THINKING BIG

*Mental strategies to
take your drug-free
training to a higher
level of efficiency!*

SKIP LA COUR

U.S. \$29.99

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We wish you the best of luck and want to do everything we can to help you achieve your health and fitness goals—and enjoy the “journey” at the same time.

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Thinking Big By Skip La Cour

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Thinking Big

1

THE REAL CHALLENGE IN BODYBUILDING IS TO BE NATURAL AND OUTSTANDING!

Your destiny in life is often shaped by the beliefs you have acquired and the decisions you have made. By reading this book and doing the exercises, you will have the opportunity to re-evaluate your current beliefs and make decisions that could change your bodybuilding destiny forever! I know that is a is very big statement. But it is a promise I can make with absolute certainty because I know from personal experience, as well as from the experiences of other top bodybuilders, what human beings are capable of when we have the right mental attitude.

I have always had the belief that you can never “know it all.” For example several years ago, I made the decision to try the new supplement creatine monohydrate that was “supposed to be” pretty effective. Although I was very skeptical, I decided to try it ten weeks before an upcoming contest, the 1994 Musclemenia Natural Bodybuilding Championships. It was having my mind open to the latest-breaking developments in sports supplementation and the decision to use this product despite my skepticism which enabled me to win the heavyweight and overall titles -- six pounds heavier and significantly harder than my third-place finish at the inaugural Team Universe contest just 13 weeks earlier.

Winning that show gave me the confidence that I could truly “hang with the big boys.” What put me over the top was a single belief and a single decision. Now, a few years later, creatine is the most heralded natural bodybuilding supplement available -- so effective, its use has spread to the mainstream,

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major-league sports world. Creatine's approval by those who have used it is unanimous.

Yet there are top natural bodybuilders in the country today who have never used creatine. As one said, "I tend not to believe the hype. Different products come and go. There's always someone trying to sell you something." That belief and that decision, in my opinion, is costing this athlete at least five pounds of quality size on stage and probably a title or two.

Learning is creating an association between the known and the unknown. Throughout this book, I will use stories and analogies from life outside the gym to provide lessons that will help your training. Using situations that you already understand will make learning much easier.

Many comparisons can be made between the trends in the business world and the current trends in bodybuilding. Whether you are an encyclopedia salesman, a personal trainer, or an employee of a large corporation, you must become attuned to your situation and stay ahead of the paradigm shifts in business. In other words, anticipate what will happen in the future and be proactive in your practices if you want to stay competitive. As a bodybuilder, you must stay ahead of the trends in bodybuilding to become successful.

I remember when I was a child; my parents did everything they could to keep our family always supplied with a current set of encyclopedias. I really appreciated their efforts, not only because of my hunger for up-to-date knowledge, but also because I knew a complete set was not exactly inexpensive.

But can you imagine if a business depended solely on the production and sales of encyclopedias in book form to be successful in today's market? With the advent of CD ROM, the information in an entire set of encyclopedias can fit on a single compact disc! With the computers available in so many households across

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the country today, CD ROM versions would surely be a much more efficient and dramatically less expensive alternative to all of those books.

In our own world of bodybuilding, if a supplement company does not constantly raise its standards of quality and availability of state-of-the-art supplements, it can expect to go out of business soon.

The gym where you train is either a member of a large chain of gyms, or surely feels the mounting pressure from the larger chains to compete for your membership. In order to compete in today's challenging fitness market, a gym must now feature top-of-the-line equipment, keep that equipment operating perfectly, be open for long hours, keep its facilities clean, and be inexpensive. Long gone are the days when gym owners could demand up to \$500 a year from you – before you even had your first workout!

The key to staying in business in today's economy is to be proactive and outstanding.

“You either grow or regress. Nothing stands still.”

--Bill Phillips, Executive Editor of *Muscle Media*

Technology, which is advancing at a mind-staggering pace, is making keeping a job difficult for many people. As far as employees are concerned, with the downsizing (or right-sizing depending of which side of management you are on) you can no longer merely show up for work anymore. You must also be outstanding if you expect to survive in the business world.

A few years ago (from the time of this book original writing), AT&T has let go a significant portion of its workforce. Today computers can take care of many tasks people were once needed to do. Is it the company's responsibility to keep these workers employed even though they are no longer needed? There may be

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differing opinions to this argument, but one thing is certain: People today cannot sit back and feel they are guaranteed employment. The workers who used the cliché, "It's not my job," have found themselves with no job at all.

At this point you may be thinking, "This information sounds interesting, but what does it have to do with my training?" Good question!

I applaud you for being keen enough to realize that using drugs to build your physique would no longer be acceptable. Every time you start getting discouraged that your gains are not coming as quickly as you want them to, just think about the unfortunate barrage of criticism people using drugs get along with their praise. They exert so much effort but they get that kind of treatment. If you have any kind of muscular development and are drug-free, I am sure you get your fair share of abuse. At least you know in your heart it is unwarranted. I encourage you to have a little compassion because I know that the drug-using bodybuilder's plight must be ten times worse than the one you face.

But there are hard working, good athletes and officials (who are also good *people*) who are stuck in the middle of this dilemma. What they had failed to realize is that, once steroids and other drugs became illegal, the bodybuilding community's tolerance would wane, and they would be in a very difficult position. As time goes on, the situation only gets tougher for them. Bodybuilding requires too much work to be appreciated so little. We will see how this complex issue resolves itself in time. One thing is certain, however; "sticking to your guns," hoping the problem just goes away, or pretending there is no problem is *not* the solution.

Being a *natural* bodybuilder is only a portion of what it will take to be truly successful. Almost everybody trains without drugs, searches for a healthy lifestyle, and won't necessarily try to be a competitive bodybuilder. The new challenge is to be natural *and* outstanding.

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Training without drugs is good. In fact, training without drugs is *very* good. But training without drugs is only a start. Anybody can train naturally – that doesn't take a whole lot of effort. You must strive to become outstanding. That is the real challenge!

What will it take to be natural *and* outstanding? Probably establishing of a whole new set of beliefs. That's why I wrote *Thinking Big*: to provide you with a whole new way at looking at your current beliefs, so that you will adopt new ones empowering you to take your physique to a higher level of development. *Thinking Big* is designed to help you take your physique to a much higher level than you currently believe is possible.

Although many natural bodybuilders do a lot of talking, too many have not mustered up enough mental strength and courage to be really dedicated and develop their physique to their full genetic potential. I have had quite a number of inspired readers of my articles in the bodybuilding magazines who have surprised themselves with what they have accomplished naturally -- and wish they hadn't wasted time.

“Don't say --- DO!”

-- Matt Potulny, a high school buddy of mine

I have a question for you: Which side of this new and emerging paradigm shift in natural bodybuilding will you be on? Whether you will be included or not, there are definitely some ambitious and mentally flexible people training who are taking this information to heart and are beginning to see “unbelievable” results.

With all of the advances in training, nutritional information, and sports supplementation, plus international magazine exposure and top-of-the-line, drug-tested contests such as the NPC Team Universe, people training naturally have the knowledge and incentive to get better and better.

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The old stigma that says, “If a bodybuilder is good, he must be on drugs,” should not last forever. Soon there will be too many outstanding natural bodybuilders around to keep on insisting that they all are on drugs.

Sure, some die-hard skeptics will continue to say looking good can’t be done without drugs. I understand this. But they are going to be on the *wrong* side of the paradigm shift in bodybuilding. Those skeptics will be just like the guys taking steroids that they view as being on the wrong side of the current trend.

If being “number one” is so important to your ego that you must tear down those who are better than you, this new set of beliefs may be very hard to adopt. There will *always* be someone bigger and stronger. There will always be someone with a better-developed physique and who builds their body in less time and/or with less effort than you. If being a bodybuilder is just an avenue for you to be the biggest and best, you may wish to start hanging out with smaller people. You will save yourself a tremendous amount of effort.

I assume a person who would invest his money purchasing this book and spend valuable time reading it is a much more mature and evolved person. I respect you for that.

Bodybuilding is about reaching *your* full genetic potential – not comparing yourself to someone else. Successfully building your body and living a healthy lifestyle are certainly not going to be achieved by using the quick-fix solutions of judging and/or tearing down others in an effort to make yourself feel better. If you are currently stuck in this disempowering mode of thinking, I have empathy for you. If someone would have told me as little as eight years ago the things that I am telling you, I would have thought they were crazy. I totally understand your current viewpoint.

At the same time, I am old enough to see compact disc technology cause the 33 1/3 record player industry to disappear virtually overnight. I am old enough to

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remember thinking those household entertainment devices called VCRs would never be in a majority of homes. I thought the same of personal computers. If you would have told me I would be receiving written computer messages from around the entire globe in my living room, I would have thought you were insane. For the younger readers, I am only 35 years old. All of these changes have happened in the last 15 years or so.

I hear many people in the gym today speaking of Arnold Schwarzenegger saying, "He was *nothing!*" And you know what? They are right in a sense. If you are measuring him by today's competitive bodybuilding standards, Arnold would more than likely not make the top 15 at the Mr. Olympia contest.

But it was Arnold who influenced thousands and thousands of people across the world to train. They took the mental approach he developed and were able to begin at a much higher level than having to figure efficient strategies out for themselves. What people *thought* could be accomplished was taken to a higher and higher level.

The same will hold true in natural bodybuilding. More and more people will be influenced to train without drugs. Those with superior genetics will no longer just jump right into the use of drugs, and others will discontinue their use. The physiques will get better and better.

I have written in past articles in the bodybuilding magazines of how, early in my training, I set my sights on being better than Francois Guy. He was one of the few natural bodybuilders featured in the magazines at that time. I *knew* I could be better than him. The defining moment for me was when I made the decision to be the very best I could be and spent all my energy trying to achieve that goal. I recently received a call from a former training partner of Guy. He expressed how proud Guy was to have such an influence on me. It is my sincere wish to influence you in the same way.

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Mark my words: Ten years from now, the natural physiques you see on stage will “blow away” anyone you see in the bodybuilding magazines today. That is because of evolution -- and it is inevitable.

I am certain Chris Faildo, Yohnnie Shambourger, Ron Coleman, Bill Davey, Mike O’Hearn, myself, and the rest of the top drug-free competitors would be proud if, years from now, we influenced you to “unbelievable” drug-free development that would make us look like “nothing.”

If you saw one of us in a gym 10 years from now and said, “You guys were nothing compared to the natural guys around today,” we would turn around, look you straight in the face, and say “*Thank you!*”

I have listed a set of beliefs that couple of other top natural bodybuilders and myself have adopted to become our very best. Doing the same could fortify your quest for outstanding drug-free development. For your comical reading enjoyment, I have also listed a few of the beliefs those who are settling for mediocre, natural physiques have adopted.

It is critical that you become a visionary or look to stay ahead of the trends of our sport. Master or become an expert on your passion for bodybuilding. Adopt new, more empowering beliefs. In other words, make assumptions that demand you take 100% responsibility for your results. Go “all out” in your efforts to build an *outstanding* natural physique!

So let me ask you again: Which side of this shift in natural bodybuilding will you be on? *Now* is the time to make that decision!

**Empowering Beliefs That Can Help Lead To An
Outstanding Natural Physique**

- There is *always* a way to accomplish my bodybuilding goals if I am truly committed.
- I appreciate what is great about me. I limit comparing myself to others.
- I will constantly strive for a higher level of drug-free development. I have surprised myself so far; just think what I will look like if I take my discipline to a higher level. Just think how good I will be with five more years of this kind of effort!
- I train with the attitude of gratitude. I am fortunate to have this passion for bodybuilding. Many other people live life looking forward to nothing.
- I will never stop learning.
- Knowledge is power! I will constantly strive for a better understanding of bodybuilding and specifically how my own body works.
- I will never assume I know it all. Doing so will severely slow down or even halt my progress.
- Since I have not yet achieved the physique I want, I will be persistent. The very next strategy I try could launch me into a new level of growth.
- I make myself feel good by knowing I gave 100% effort – not by tearing other people down.
- I realize the development a natural bodybuilder can achieve is tremendous.
- If someone is better than me, maybe he has trained longer. Or perhaps he has trained with more intensity, intelligence, and consistency. Maybe he has better genetics or has sought out more knowledge.
- If others are better than me, I will find out what it is they are doing differently. I will model their success.

**A Comical Look at the Top 10 Beliefs
of a Natural Bodybuilder with a Mediocre Physique**

10. That guy isn't natural! You can't look that way without drugs!
9. The only reason he looks that good is because he *used* to take drugs
8. He must only take enough drugs to get by the testing – but I know he takes them!
7. He just looks that way because he has awesome genetics. He doesn't even work very hard!
6. He's 10, 9, 8, and 7 combined!
5. Taking any kind of supplements? That's not natural!
4. He takes "excessive" supplementation. That just the same as taking drugs! ("Excess" begins where mine leaves off)
3. He's worse than Mr. Olympia! At least Mr. Olympia admits he is using drugs!
2. Mr. Olympia? He's nothin' but a pill poppin', needle shootin' steroid freak!
1. I don't really want to get that big anyway!

Conclusion:

I am the highest human example of what can be accomplished drug-free. Anyone bigger than me is obviously a drug-using liar!

Special Exception:

I reserve the right to raise the standard of how good a drug-free bodybuilder can get if or when I improve.

Warning:

Don't you dare accuse me of using drugs! I have worked long and hard to earn this muscle!

NOTES

**THE REAL CHALLENGE IN BODYBUILDING IS
TO BE NATURAL AND OUTSTANDING!**

EXERCISE #1

What would you expect from your physique development if you were absolutely certain your hard work would pay off? Dare to dream!

What makes you think you can't achieve such outstanding development?

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What beliefs do you need in order for your bodybuilding dreams to come true?

Assume that these bodybuilding dreams are possible. What sources of information, strategies, and people are *currently* available to you to use in order for you get the knowledge and inspiration to accomplish them?

What sources of information, strategies, and people can you *make* available?

2

HOW TO EXPAND BEYOND PERCEIVED LIMITATIONS

When I look back on my career as a bodybuilder, I have memories of dedication, hard work, sacrifice, and focus. No matter how difficult those years seemed at the time, I put forth my best effort when I felt in total control of my own destiny. For me, the most challenging aspect of being a bodybuilder, especially a drug-free one, was blocking out the pessimism and negativity of other people went out of their way to offer me. They wanted always tell me “You can’t do this” and “You’ll never do that.”

I discovered that if I was patient and persistent, I could make my dreams a reality – regardless of what others believed. Expanding beyond the perceived limitations of others was a critical step on my way toward success. Ironically, the training and dieting were the easiest parts of the journey.

Isn’t this situation similar to other aspects of life? When a rocket is launched skyward, it encounters a tremendous force of gravity that makes leaving the earth’s atmosphere difficult. This gravitational pull is so strong that, as little as 50 years ago, many experts felt getting through the pull would be impossible. Well, needless to say, science has discovered breaking through this force that was once thought impenetrable is indeed possible. Traveling through the heavens becomes significantly easier once the ship has broken through gravity.

This same type of situation often occurs at the workplace. Ambitious employees who aim for excellence or a promotion encounter resistance from less motivated workers. The aspiring workers are discouraged, either directly or indirectly, from working hard. Employees who expect less from themselves are determined to tell you why you shouldn’t put forth so much effort. If you have broken through this

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peer pressure, you've discovered that the satisfaction you enjoy by excelling at your job is far more rewarding than pandering to those who have far less drive.

If you have a couple of years of experience in the gym, aren't these scenarios similar to the evolution of your training? In the beginning, didn't it seem that the endeavor of building your body was extremely difficult or maybe even impossible? You probably had an overwhelming amount of information thrown at you as the "right" way to train and to eat. And to make things even more complicated, everyone seemed to have a different opinion.

You more than likely had – or still have -- the more experienced lifters telling you that it is impossible for you to build any significant amount of muscle without drugs. "Everyone with a great body uses them," they reason. But if you were persistent, you soon found out it was not nearly as difficult as you were led to believe. You now have replaced the "information overload" and negative thinking with knowledge, determination, and passion as you seek to develop your physique.

"If you truly expect to realize your dreams, abandon the need for blanket approval. If conforming to everyone else's expectations is your number one goal, you have sacrificed your uniqueness and, therefore, your excellence."

--Don Ward, motivational author

I read a *Sports Illustrated* feature story called "Bigger, Stronger, Faster," implying that building quality drug-free muscle is impossible. The article basically implied that *anyone* who truly excels at *any* sport is more than likely using performance-enhancing drugs. "Don't be fooled," it warns. The article clearly implies that all drug testing is just a "sham" and is very easy to get around. Although I am sure it was not their intention, that article probably makes the "gravitational pull" towards believing a great physique is not possible with drugs a whole lot stronger.

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This negative opinion hits the world of bodybuilding right in the ol' breadbasket! If there is any sport that is plagued with the stereotype of drug use, bodybuilding is definitely one of them.

This possible stereotype would not only negatively affect our sport's chemically assisted participants, but established and aspiring *natural* bodybuilders as well. Besides the obvious tell-tale signs, drugs in our sport have made it difficult to tell who has built their physique with discipline, hard work, sound nutrition, and good genetics – or with performance-enhancing substances.

Drug-using bodybuilders will have their years of effort appreciated even less because of the belief that their development is produced solely from drug use. Drug-free bodybuilders, with any muscularity whatsoever, will be accused more frequently than in the past that their development is also aided by illegal substances. Whether you weigh 130 pounds or 230 pounds, no natural bodybuilder will be immune from this skepticism – from within our own bodybuilding community, as well as the general public. And don't think that saying you compete in drug-tested events will mean anything to the cynics. They might just laugh at you as you offer your proof that you are truly drug-free.

When I first saw this article, I thought to myself, "Now the stereotype is going to be perpetuated even further! It's going to be even harder to have people training in the gyms believe that they can build a decent physique without drugs!"

But I then realized that this was nothing new to us in the bodybuilding world – the issue is talked about all the time. Having a mainstream, credible source like *SI* discuss this issue will simply bring the controversy out in the open sooner and more fully. I firmly believe that bringing the issue out in the open is our best opportunity to resolve the situation. Let's get done with this issue of drugs already.

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The way I see it, you as a person training in the gym basically have three choices of how you can react to the negative drug stigma associated with our sport:

- You can decide not to attempt to face the challenge. You can take up the sport of bowling or something else instead.
- You can settle for a mediocre physique because now you “know for sure” that you should be realistic and not expect anything more.
- You can continue strive for your dreams -- regardless of what the conventional way of thinking dictates. Hopefully, you will choose this alternative. Since you are reading this book and doing the exercises, this option suits you best. If so, you will need to tap into the powerful tool of your mind even more efficiently if you plan on reaching your goals

Let me ask you a question: When you see a television infomercial in which someone is trying to sell information that could make you financially wealthy, what do you see? Do you see some slick salesman trying to swindle you out of your hard-earned money? Or do you see a passionate person who has found a strategy to enhance your odds of duplicating his financial success? How you answer this question could be a good insight into how you view the world.

Many people in the bodybuilding world have adopted new, more empowering beliefs about what they can accomplish with their physiques. Bill Phillips and *Muscle Media's* contest for the Lamborghini has demonstrated to many people training drug-free that maybe they've been settling for too little from themselves. Many participants, who have never considered entering a bodybuilding contest before, are aiming at a goal for the first time – and have achieved amazing results.

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Yet there is even a *higher* level of achievement available to everyone training naturally. Just imagine what you can achieve if you can string together 12 *years* of intensity rather than the 12 weeks to win the fancy car!

I am sure many of guys aiming for the Lamborghini have learned many strategies and “secrets” to getting the job done naturally that they may have not previously put the effort into discovering. The natural stars that you see featured in *All Natural Muscular Development* and other magazines have worked diligently with that same ambition and have strung together many years with that same intensity – if not *greater*. You would be foolish not to listen to their strategies and philosophies because you are too jaded by conventional thinking.

Like the participants of the contest, many readers of my *Thinking Big* monthly column in *Ironman Magazine* have discovered that much more can be achieved than what they originally thought – or what others tried to convince them was not possible.

The way I see it, bodybuilding has two different factions: those who are pure fans of the sport and those who love to train in the gym. I can agree with *Flex* Editor-in-Chief Peter McGough’s comments that most of the hard-core bodybuilding *fans* do not really care how the bodybuilders accomplish their goals. They just want to see the biggest and freakiest physiques. However this is not necessarily true of those training in the gym.

Unfortunately when muscle magazines publish the training routines of top professional stars, readers mistakenly assume that if they use these routines, they will get the same results. To be perfectly honest, due to genetic factors, it may be unlikely for many of you to even approach the development of the top *natural* stars if you use their *drug-free* routines either. At least when you use the routines of the natural stars, your training conditions are closer to theirs than the drug-assisted bodybuilders.

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I believe that most natural bodybuilders do not want to do “whatever it takes” to become the best bodybuilders – if being the best means using drugs. Think about it for a moment. To be a professional bodybuilder, the *easier* route is to use drugs rather than to do so naturally. Most natural bodybuilders do not want to use drugs and, if that means not becoming a professional, so be it. They do, however, want to live a healthy lifestyle and build the best physique possible without drug use.

Your quest to build an outstanding physique without drugs is similar to great stories of heroism. Whether it is a story from the Bible or a screenplay from a blockbuster movie like *Rocky* or *Braveheart*, the hero's courage is challenged by a series of enemies. First, he must conquer the doubt that he can actually defeat his foe. Secondly, an unexpected force from within his own camp tests his mettle. If he has the strength to overcome these obstacles, he then must conquer a threatening adversary. Sometimes, after everything that the hero has faced, this last opponent is the easiest of the three to defeat.

How is building a good body without drugs similar? First, you will have to believe that doing so *is* possible. You will then have to deal with people telling you it can't be done. If you become even the slightest bit successful, you will have to endure the skepticism of others and the attacks on your credibility and character. Finally, and surprisingly probably the easiest part of this procedure, you will have to dedicate yourself, become more knowledgeable, and persist for a considerable amount of time in order to be victorious in your efforts.

Are you up for the challenge, hero? Do you have the courage to rocket through the “gravitational pull” that's limiting you to a mediocre physique? Do you have the fortitude to get to the easier, more enjoyable part of this process?

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There is a big difference between you and the high-level athletes that *Sports Illustrated* focused on. Most of you don't even want to compete – you just want to live a healthy lifestyle and build a muscular physique. Those of you who do want to compete, would like to so naturally.

I am passionate about bringing you the strategies to build your body without drugs. Take the challenge and make that “leap of faith.” What have you got to lose?

HOW TO EXPAND BEYOND PERCEIVED LIMITS

EXERCISE #2

1. List all the beliefs and opinions you've heard that make you think that building a good physique, improving a certain body part, or achieving any other high standard of development is *not* attainable without using drugs.
2. Check whether those statements are true or untrue.
3. Rank the true beliefs and opinions on a scale of 1 through 10 as to your certainty. (Examples: 1 = Even though I have not yet achieved it, I do not believe I can't achieve it without drugs; 5 = I am not sure, but I want to believe it; 10 = There is no way possible!)

Belief	True	If you think it's true, rank 1 - 10	Not True

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- 4. List all the beliefs and opinions you have ranked 5 or higher.
- 5. Next to that belief or opinion, list at least one natural bodybuilder, either at your gym or in the bodybuilding magazines, who has accomplished this feat despite any perceived limitations.

Belief (5 or above)	Natural bodybuilder(s)

- 6. With an open mind, study the strategies and opinions of these athletes. How did they turn the impossible into the possible? Bodybuilding magazine articles, books authored by these athletes, one-on-one conversations (if you are so fortunate), and e-mail correspondence are just some of the ways you can get this information.
- 7. Apply these methods to yourself. Whether they work or not, you will gain perspective and knowledge.

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3

WHY SETTING GOALS IS IMPORTANT TO BODYBUILDING SUCCESS

What do you ultimately hope to achieve from your bodybuilding endeavors? To gain 10 pounds of rock-solid muscle, lose 10 pounds of menacing body fat, raise your squat 100 pounds, or add a full inch to your arms? Maybe all of the above! Training goals can range from a short-term goal, like having a great set of shoulder presses, to a long range goal, like becoming the best natural bodybuilder in the country. With so many different directions to work toward, it is imperative to determine what is most important to you.

How many bodybuilders have taken the time to determine *exactly* what they hope to gain from their efforts? If you have not -- you are not alone. It has been estimated that 97 percent of the American population have no *specific* goals whatsoever. This figure probably applies to those training in the gyms.

As I interview top drug-free bodybuilders, I am often reminded that, besides genetics, the mental abilities of these stars have helped them achieve such amazing development. All of these champions have *mastered* the skill of goal setting.

“A dream without a goal is just a wish.”

--Bill Cole

There is a saying that goes, “You can’t hit the bull’s eye if you do not have a target.” Seems simple, doesn’t it? So why is it that most bodybuilders do not

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bother determining their specific goals? Three reasons are often given: They are afraid of failure, they do not see the importance of determining goals, and they do not know how to set goals properly.

Fear of failure is probably the paramount reason why most bodybuilders fail to set goals. Everyone on this planet dislikes disappointment, and even worse, embarrassment. To prevent experiencing these feelings, many people will avoid most challenging situations altogether.

If you do not think fear of failure applies to you, let me ask you: Do you have the body you want right now? Have you done *everything* possible to get your ideal physique? Fear is more than likely stopping you if the answer is “no.”

I know some of you are saying, “But I have average genetics,” or “I’m too young,” or “I’m too old.” You may even be offering reasons such as: “I don’t have enough time to eat properly” or “I don’t have the time to get in the gym consistently enough.” Aren’t those excuses just a form of fear?

Those excuses constitute an obstacle, because they are creating beliefs that are limiting what you think is possible to accomplish. How can you give 100 percent effort toward a goal if you believe it’s impossible to achieve -- before you even try? Will you honestly make anything a goal if you feel is impossible to achieve it? Of course not! You would be setting yourself up for inevitable disappointment.

So, what if you were to set a goal and fail? Big deal! Although there is the possibility of experiencing pain, disappointment, or embarrassment if you don’t reach your goals, not even trying will ultimately be more devastating. I always say, “In the baseball game of life, it’s better to go down swinging than to take a called third strike.”

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If you let fear control what you will attempt, you rob yourself of great things that life has to offer. Have faith in yourself! I am 100 percent dedicated to helping you build the physique you desire. Don't let the possibility of failure prevent you from creating your specific bodybuilding goals.

Another reason why most bodybuilders do not set goals is that they do not understand or appreciate the importance of doing so. The sooner you set a specific goal, the more time you will have to enlist the input of other people, gather more information, and evaluate different experiences to help you reach it. Oftentimes, successful people are not necessarily that much more gifted than others. But they have focused and worked toward a goal *longer* than most other people.

“When we set exciting worthwhile goals for ourselves, they work in two ways: We work on them, and they work on us.”

--Bob Moawad

At an early age, President Bill Clinton knew the importance of setting goals. Ever since he was four years old, he dreamed about becoming President of the United States. Since that time, his thoughts were consumed with reaching his goal and he did everything possible along the way to fulfill that dream. He joined clubs and organizations that he felt would make him a better politician. With the ultimate goal of holding the highest political position in the country, what do you think the level of intensity of his participation in those clubs and organizations might have been back then?

Regardless of your political beliefs or opinions of the president – notice the lesson to be learned. Many of us go around wishing we could do “this,” or hoping we could be “that” -- *while others make it happen*. What if you stopped wishing and confidently set a goal that you only wished for years ago – and diligently

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worked to make it happen? Where would you be today? Probably significantly closer to fulfilling your dreams. Setting that specific goal is the very first step.

In the world of bodybuilding, Arnold Schwarzenegger is a great example of a person who set a goal years before there was any “proof” that he would achieve it. As a 16-year-old adolescent in Austria, he sat in movie theaters and watched Steve Reeves’ films. There he made the *decision* that he was going to become a muscle-bound action movie hero. What really makes this story amazing was, at that time, he had yet to even pick up a dumbbell! Since that time, he has probably tried to use the wisdom of every person he has ever met and every conversation: every hour in the gym, every Mr. Olympia title, and every opportunity to get him closer to his goal. I am sure every article written by Steve Reeves in the muscle magazines had more significance than mere entertainment for Schwarzenegger. It is no mystery why he is such a successful and powerful movie star.

Stories like these of Clinton and Schwarzenegger are fascinating. What would your physique – or life – be like today if *you* set ambitious goals at such a young age?

What if you were to make it your goal -- *today* – to become the next Chris Faildo? Would your mindset elevate to a higher level of intensity every time you read an article he wrote? Wouldn't a story detailing the strategies he employed to win three Team Universe class titles take on a whole new meaning? You bet it would! This is the advantage goal-setters have over the masses. Right now, make the decision to join that special three percent who have set goals.

Let's say for example, you set a goal five years ago to become the best drug-free bodybuilder in the United States. In that time period, how much more information would you have gathered than you have actually done? How many different training methods would you have tried? How much more intensity would you

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have applied to your workouts? Would you have been more conscientious about your eating habits? How much more attentively would you be reading this book right now?

The good news is that it's not too late to begin setting specific goals. Whether or not you discover the importance of setting goals, the next five years will come and go. How much quality muscle will you have achieved in that time span? However you are best motivated, I want to stress the urgency of immediately setting goals.

The last reason why most bodybuilders do not set goals is that they do not know how to do so properly. Check out the different strategies in the next chapter.

Until then, spent the next 10 minutes writing down all the things you would like to accomplish from your bodybuilding efforts -- and do it now! Get rid of your fear of failure, realize how important it is to set these goals, and get outrageous! Who knows what you will be able to accomplish when you join the overachievers who set specific goals?

**WHY SETTING GOALS IS IMPORTANT
TO BODYBUILDING SUCCESS**

EXERCISE #3

1. Write down every single goal, desire, or accomplishment you wish to achieve from your bodybuilding endeavors. Set goals as if there were no way possible that you could *not* achieve them. Include short-term, long-term, small, and large goals.
2. Review your list of goals. Next to them, write down the time frame in which you plan to achieve them: one year or less, two years, five years, or 10 years.

Goals	Time Frame

3. Identify your top goals to achieve in each of the time periods.

TOP ONE-YEAR (OR LESS) GOALS

TOP TWO-YEAR GOALS

TOP FIVE-YEAR GOALS

TOP 10-YEAR GOALS

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4. Write down at least a couple of sentences why it is important for you to achieve these goals. I realize this will take some time and effort. Remember, you want to be in the special three percent of the population who have goals and are the most successful in life!

ONE-YEAR (OR LESS) GOALS

TWO-YEAR GOALS

FIVE-YEAR GOALS

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10-YEAR GOALS

Congratulations! You have finished the important goal-setting portion of this book. Although these exercises may have been difficult to complete, they will lead to improved results.

4

TEN SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES TO HELP YOU REACH YOUR GOALS

How did you do at creating a clear vision of what you want to get out of your training? You should now have a better understanding of the importance of setting goals in order to enhance your bodybuilding efforts. There should be little question in your mind that goal setting is the first step toward successfully developing the physical body you desire. Many books have been written on this subject, and I am sure you are currently applying at least a few of the many proven strategies toward your daily, regular-life goals, as well as in the gym.

This subject is discussed quite often, to say the least. Goal setting is talked about so much, it can even become a little boring at times. But it is imperative that you do not get caught up in the trap of taking this important subject for granted. Read this chapter with the belief and anticipation that there will be *at least* one key distinction that will help you get closer to achieving your bodybuilding goals. Goal setting is a fundamental task that *must* be done on a consistent basis if you hope to attain the physique you desire.

Unless you already have everything in your physique you have ever desired, there is *always* room to improve upon your goal setting strategies. Successful drug-free bodybuilders are very good at finding *several* ways to help make their dreams come true.

1. HAVE THE COURAGE TO BE A DREAMER

Let's imagine that your goal is to have the biggest calves in your gym. What would you do differently in order to get them? Would you train them harder, heavier, or more often? Would you ask people with big calves questions on how they built theirs? Would you read with a different attitude everything written on calf training?

You more than likely won't get the biggest calves in your gym by accident. You can earn the biggest calves by making that desire your goal and doing everything possible to build them. Unfortunately for many people, even a simple goal like this would be too big for them to even contemplate. Instead they would spend their time thinking of all the reasons why it *can't* be done.

“Most people don't aim too high and miss, they aim too low and hit.”

--Bob Moawad

There is the saying, “Ask and you shall receive.” *Be sure to ask for enough from yourself.* Don't be like the local bodybuilder who trains hard and builds an awesome physique, only to enter the novice class when he could have won the entire open division. He unfortunately set his goals too low. In his victory he has also suffered defeat, in my opinion. Don't sell yourself short.

Champion drug-free bodybuilders courageously set lofty goals and work long, hard, and intelligently to achieve them.

Recently my TaeKwonDo instructor, Ricardo Oliveria, began working out with me at the gym. After just a week of training, he had set his sights on going head-to-head with three-time NPC Team Universe winner Chris Faildo.

I said to myself, “Who is he trying to kid? Faildo has been training for 16 years and is one of the best drug-free lightweights in the world! Ricardo should try

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winning a local NPC Ironman Naturally contest before he even *thinks* about competing with Faildo!”

But then I thought, “Who am I to tell him what he can and cannot achieve? He had the determination to earn a black belt and open a martial arts school. Even if he doesn’t reach this goal, wouldn’t he demand more of himself in his approach to training, nutrition, and supplementation? Wouldn’t he be significantly better with this ambitious mindset?”

Many people may argue, “C’mon, you’ve got to be realistic!” But what exactly is considered realistic? I am sure many of you have physiques that others find unbelievable to have been built without drugs. How is your way of thinking different than theirs? Is it possible that someone with better physique has taken that mental process even a few steps further? There is always a higher level of achievement, but you will have a difficult time getting there if you do not first believe it is possible. I have little doubt Ricardo will do much better as a bodybuilder because he expects more from himself than if he settled for goals others consider reasonable.

If you are in a state of frustration about your training, let me ask you a question: Is there another area in your life in which you are extremely accomplished? Maybe you have attained a certain level of education against great odds, have an outstanding position in your company at a young age, make a tremendous amount of money, or have the ultimate relationship. Many people can’t imagine how you were able to accomplish such a feat. That’s the problem – they *think* it is impossible. But you made it real – despite what other people thought was possible. Think of the character qualities, positive mindset, and the strategies that made you reach those goals and apply them to developing your physique.

But what if you set a goal and you fail? This is a possibility for everything you do in life. You must focus your attention on what you *want* in life – not on what you

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don't want. If you doubt yourself at the start, there is no way you are going to do everything possible to reach your goal.

Replace your fear with courage. In the “merry-go-round of life” you need to stretch a little if you plan to get the “brass ring.” Eventually you will find out what you are actually capable of achieving. Setting goals that are too ambitious is a good thing. In our society, most people settle for far less than they are capable of doing.

2. KNOW WHAT YOU ULTIMATELY WANT TO ACCOMPLISH

“Begin with the end in mind” stresses Stephen Covey in his best-selling book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. To make every day a day in which you productively work toward your goals, you must focus on your ultimate destination. Knowing *exactly* where you want to end up will make you more efficient at working toward your goals. This clarity will also ease the handling of the smaller problems that may arise along the way.

3. KNOW WHY YOU WANT TO ACCOMPLISH YOUR GOALS

Why do you want to achieve a particular goal? Attaining a goal if you do not know exactly why doing so is important to you will be very difficult. Many experts on this subject believe that 80 percent of what is needed to achieve a goal is having a strong enough reason *why* doing so is important. If you know *why*, *how* to accomplish a goal will become easier to discover.

Try writing half a page on why this goal is something you must achieve. Think through this process. If you can't communicate all the reasons to yourself, you will undoubtedly have a big challenge when the going gets tough.

4. DON'T WORRY SO MUCH ABOUT HOW YOU WILL ACCOMPLISH THE GOAL

Don't get caught up in worrying about every precise detail necessary to reach your goal. This is another reason why most of us do not set goals. We assume that if we do not exactly how to get to a goal, we won't be able to accomplish it.

But that's not necessarily how your mind works. First, plant the goal in your mind. Then your subconscious mind takes over from there and searches for every possible way for you to reach that goal. If you are committed, persistent, and believe in yourself, you will eventually find a way to achieve your desire.

“If you put everything off until you're sure of it, you'll get nothing done.”

--Norman Vincent Peale

In the last chapter, I discussed the goals of President Clinton and Arnold Schwarzenegger. Do you think that when they set their “unrealistic” goals at young ages of becoming President and an action movie star they knew every precise step necessary to get there? No. Not being afraid to set the ambitious goal in the first place allowed them to move forward and recognize all the people and resources available to help in their quests.

This powerful strategy will also work for you. When you set a goal – no matter how big or how outrageous you may think it is – your mind will start seeking every opportunity to make it come true.

But before this “magic” will start happening, you must truly believe it will come true. Have faith in yourself. The human spirit is awesome! As my mentor Anthony Robbins says, “Reasons come first, answers come second. ” Your mind will assist you in finding opportunities to make your goals come true in ways that will be absolutely astonishing.

5. WRITE DOWN YOUR GOALS

Writing down your goals will help you achieve them for a couple of reasons. First, it will signal to your brain that this desire is far more than just a fantasy – it is an endeavor you are committed to turning into reality. Secondly, the paper that it is written on will serve as a constant reminder of what you have set out to do. In a recent interview, WNBF World Champion Kai Greene goes even further and suggests that you write down your goals down six times a day to fuel your fire.

After listing all your goals, write the following question: “What can I do *today* to get closer to achieving these goals?” Your brain will subconsciously go to work seeking opportunities to assist you in your efforts.

6. REVIEW YOUR GOALS OFTEN

New Year’s Day is a time when many people set resolutions and goals. What often becomes a problem is that they make the goals but then never measure their progress until the beginning of the next year.

I use my time on the stationary bike to review my goals. This constantly reminds me of what I want to accomplish and motivates me to use *every day* as an opportunity to work further toward my goals.

If I start to stray, reviewing my goals also serves to make myself accountable for my actions -- or lack of action. I won’t tolerate lack of action if my list of goals reminds me that I have not done what I need to do to reach them. The pain that is caused by not working towards my goals will *force* me to get back on track.

7. CREATE A PLAN

A goal without a plan will most likely remain just a dream. To turn your dreams into reality, you must create a plan of action. Brainstorm all the people and all the resources available to help you devise this plan. To build your body without drugs, be sure to take advantage of information in the bodybuilding magazines and books specifically designed to meet the needs and conditions of natural bodybuilders.

Also, sit down and evaluate your current habits. Both in the gym and in your mind *honestly* determine if they are truly working for you. If not, then make the necessary changes.

Model those who are already successful. This is a tremendous tool. Live with the attitude that you can learn something from anyone at any time.

8. PREPARE FOR OBSTACLES AND CREATE SOLUTIONS

Even the best-made plans will not always go smoothly. Understanding this before you run into difficulty will help you be mentally prepared for obstacles that will challenge your commitment. Instead of fearing problems, *anticipate* them. Be proactive and contemplate different physical and mental obstacles that may get in the way. Creating several possible solutions to each potential problem will give you a greater sense of confidence that you can handle any situation that may arise.

9. TELL OTHERS ABOUT YOUR GOALS AND STRATEGIES

No matter how dedicated you are, your motivation inevitably may wane to some degree. One way to keep yourself on course is to tell other people of your goals. Doing so will give you that extra bit of incentive to keep chipping away at them

when it gets difficult to do so. For some of us, letting ourselves down is a lot easier than letting someone else down.

10. BE FLEXIBLE – BUT STICK WITH YOUR PLANS LONG ENOUGH

Let's say your goal is to find a way to build your stubborn chest. You may have tried 20 different routines for a significant amount of time and none of them seemed to work. You're not quite sure if there is *any* routine to improve your lagging chest. But instead of giving up, you have the courage to persist trying to find an effective method.

Then you may run across a Ron Coleman article in one of the bodybuilding magazines and – boom! – you start getting the results you always dreamed of having. If you didn't set the goal in the first place, this valuable source of information might have slipped past and you never would have earned the chest you have. Giving each routine a long enough period of time to be properly evaluated, along with your flexibility and persistence, led to your success.

BONUS TIP: ENJOY THE RIDE

Have you ever reached a goal, only to be excited for a surprisingly short period of time? If so, you are not alone. Have you ever finally reached a goal like building your arms up to 15 inches, felt a sense a pride for a few minutes, and then started noticing all the guys with bigger arms than you? Many people feel somewhat guilty because they do not fully appreciate how fortunate they are to have accomplished a goal – especially when there are many people who only wish they can be half as accomplished.

The explanation for this is simple. You will never be “there.” Success has many different levels. There is always a higher level of achievement to attain in every aspect of life; including your bodybuilding endeavors. There will always be

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someone bigger, there will always someone better, there will always a bigger contest to win.

If there is one lesson I would like to teach you from my experience, that lesson is to enjoy the process of what you are doing. If I could go into my past and change anything, I would have enjoyed everything more along the way. Instead, when I achieved something great, I just buried my head in determination and immediately focused on the next conquest. I seemed to defer enjoying the moment until after the *next* goal was accomplished.

But, you know what? When you get caught up in that way of thinking, there is always a next goal and you never allow yourself to celebrate. I noticed many people who had achieved far less than me but yet appeared to be much more happy and satisfied with what they had done.

I have worked hard to make the necessary mental adjustments. I want to keep you from falling into the same trap. You don't want to be in that place.

The key to being successful and happy is to enjoy the process of working toward your goals. Appreciate the fact that you have a "gift" of something in your life that gets you out of bed early in the morning anticipating the day with joy.

In Nissan's latest advertising campaign, the automobile maker preaches, "Life is a journey, enjoy the ride!" Don't wait to enjoy success and happiness until you finally achieve your goals. You should be proud of the great person you have created who is able to be so visionary as to set an ambitious goal, create a plan, work diligently toward the goal, and confidently face the obstacles in the way.

Many strategies may help you reach your goals. There are many books and audiocassette tapes that address this subject and can be extremely helpful to you. I recommend anything written by Anthony Robbins or Zig Ziglar.

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Although we have discussed the value of goal setting in building your physique, be sure to apply these skills to enhance the quality of your *entire* life as well.

TEN SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES TO HELP YOU REACH YOUR GOALS

EXERCISE #4

1. For each of your goals, write at least five strategies to help you reach them.

ONE-YEAR (OR LESS) GOALS AND STRATEGIES

(Goal) #1 _____

(Strategy)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

#2 _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

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#3 _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

#4 _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

#5 _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

TWO-YEAR GOALS AND STRATEGIES

#1 _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

#2 _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

#3 _____

1. _____

Thinking Big

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

#4 _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

#5 _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

FIVE-YEAR GOALS AND STRATEGIES

#1 _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

#2 _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

#3 _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Thinking Big

4. _____

5. _____

#4 _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

#5 _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

10-YEAR GOALS AND STRATEGIES

#1 _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

#2 _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

#3 _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Thinking Big

4. _____

5. _____

#4 _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

#5 _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Awesome! You have made it through the goal-setting strategies session. You made a tremendous effort, but you now have a list of options that can help you make dreams a reality.

5

HOW TO INTENSIFY YOUR DESIRE TO REACH YOUR GOALS

I believe almost anything is possible if you have the “heart” to achieve your goal. What exactly do I mean by that? Almost anything you desire can be accomplished if you are 100 percent committed, determined, and work hard towards your goal with intelligence, flexibility, and passion.

Heart is what motivates you to stay up late at night when nobody makes you in an effort to fulfill your mission in life. Heart is what makes you pound out that last rep workout after workout, month after month, year after year. Heart is what makes you carry around your meals with you every day to ensure that you will consistently eat properly. Heart is what gives you the desire to use some of your discretionary income to buy nutritional supplements to help your efforts. Heart is what gives you the strength to keep on going despite the fact that people tell you your dreams are impossible – and ridicule you for even having the audacity to think you can achieve them. Heart makes the invisible suddenly visible.

“Outstanding is not a *skill* difference – it is a *heart* difference.”

--Anthony Robbins

There is a gigantic difference between *trying* to do something and being *absolutely committed*. There is a massive discrepancy between having an *interest* in accomplishing a goal and being *passionately resolved*. Being totally honest with yourself, how would you describe your current bodybuilding efforts? How would you *like* to describe them?

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Here is another question for you: Do you have a favorite bodybuilder? I am sure the reasons why you have developed a fondness for this person are because he or she has certain qualities that you totally respect, admire, or can identify with in your quest to reach your bodybuilding goals. But do you have a friend or training partner who gets irritated when you simply mention this bodybuilder's name?

The reason is simple: We are all motivated and inspired by different things. What is important to you in choosing something you like may have no importance to someone else. The same analogy can be made for many other things in life, such as a movie, a car, hobbies, clothes, or a sports team.

How do you develop the heart, or in other words, the motivation, strength, and resolve? You must know why achieving your goal is so important to you. What motivates or inspires you about this goal? Sit down for an hour or so and determine -- on as many different levels of consciousness as possible -- why there is no doubt in your mind that failing to reach your goal is *not* an option. I guarantee you that this time will be the most productive hour you can ever spend.

I do a lot of one-on-one phone consultations for ambitious people like you. They call to get advice on how to improve their bodies by learning certain strategies in training, nutrition, and supplementation. What I have found, however, is that about 95 percent of the time, the client already knows enough about *how* to reach his goals.

Only 20 percent of what is needed to reach a goal is learning the skills to achieve it. Information is not the problem. Most people have usually already read and/or tried many of the different methods available. They often assume that, if they find the "magic" training theory, their physique will be dramatically transformed. But having more theories, opinions, or skills is not going to put them over the top. Having heart will.

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Their challenge is to be motivated enough to actually *do* what they have learned and to do it for a long enough period of time to see results.

Why is training so important to us in the first place? Most of us train to get a certain *feeling* or a set of feelings – not necessarily for “bigger biceps.” Bigger biceps are just the concrete or tangible signal for our brain that allows us to feel the way we want. What we want is to feel better, whether it is to feel better physically, mentally, or spiritually, or a combination of all of these.

Steve, for example, desperately wants to get in shape. He is a 36-year-old, happily married man and father of two. After 10 years at a job that he felt was no longer challenging, he courageously decided to start a new career. While training for this new career, he earned the distinction of being the very best in his class. An officer in a branch of the armed services in his younger days, Steve remembers how he was in awesome condition and carried himself with certainty and confidence. “People *knew* when I entered a room,” he recalls, beaming with pride.

Steve *loves* to train and exhibits great strength. He is consistent and is proud of the fact that he can keep up with -- if not outperform -- the younger guys. Unfortunately, however, over the past several years, he has gained an extra 40 pounds, not all of which is muscle. He has tried diets before, but admits he never stuck to them for very long periods of time. Each time he would try a different nutritional philosophy.

Steve wants to shed the body fat and maintain his hard-earned muscle. He came to me because he was frustrated and overwhelmed with all the information provided in the muscle magazines. He was desperately searching for the “right” information.

After spending about 15 minutes giving him my personal opinions on training, nutrition, and supplementation to lose body fat, we spent the rest of our session

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helping him make it “crystal clear” why undertaking the discipline of strict dieting and training to lose the excess weight was so important to him. In other words, now that he has this information, *why* is he now going to make this “right” information work for him?

As I have said before, we are all motivated by different things. What gets you excited about something may do nothing for me. I could not tell Steve why he should want to lose the weight. He had to tell himself why -- and do so convincingly.

Steve talked about how great feeling confident and certain was back in the service. He wanted to feel that way again. With his new job, he met a lot of new people. Steve consciously knew the people he met would eventually discover what a great guy he is, but he did not want to be prejudged because of his extra weight. At 36, he was starting to think more about getting older and wanted to fight off the aging process as much as possible. He loved the feeling of lifting as much weight as the younger guys, but he wanted to look as good as them also. Steve wanted to be a great example to his children that health was something they should appreciate and maintain.

Once you know the “why,” the “how” can often become a whole lot easier. With this clear, associated reasoning for losing the extra weight, Steve’s task should be a lot easier. Obviously, a man who had earned a position of such respect in the service, had enough courage to leave a longtime job for something more challenging, placed at the top of his class in the training for that new job, trained consistently, and performed in the gym as well as much younger men can surely lose the extra weight if he was truly committed.

Did Steve really need me to help with his training, nutrition, and supplementation -- or did he just need help getting his mind straight? You can save yourself a lot of time, frustration, and money if you learn to train your own brain in this way.

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Also, if you can become more conscious of why you are doing so well, you can take that efficiency to an even higher level.

On the following pages is a suggested hierarchy of motivating factors for Steve to lose his extra weight. I also include my reasons for why I am dedicated to naturally building my physique to unbelievable standards. With this clarity, why I am so determined on doing so should become obvious. More importantly, this list of motivating factors constantly reminds me of why I *need to be* so dedicated. I encourage you to do the same for yourself. I have no doubt that doing so will help you get closer to your bodybuilding goals.

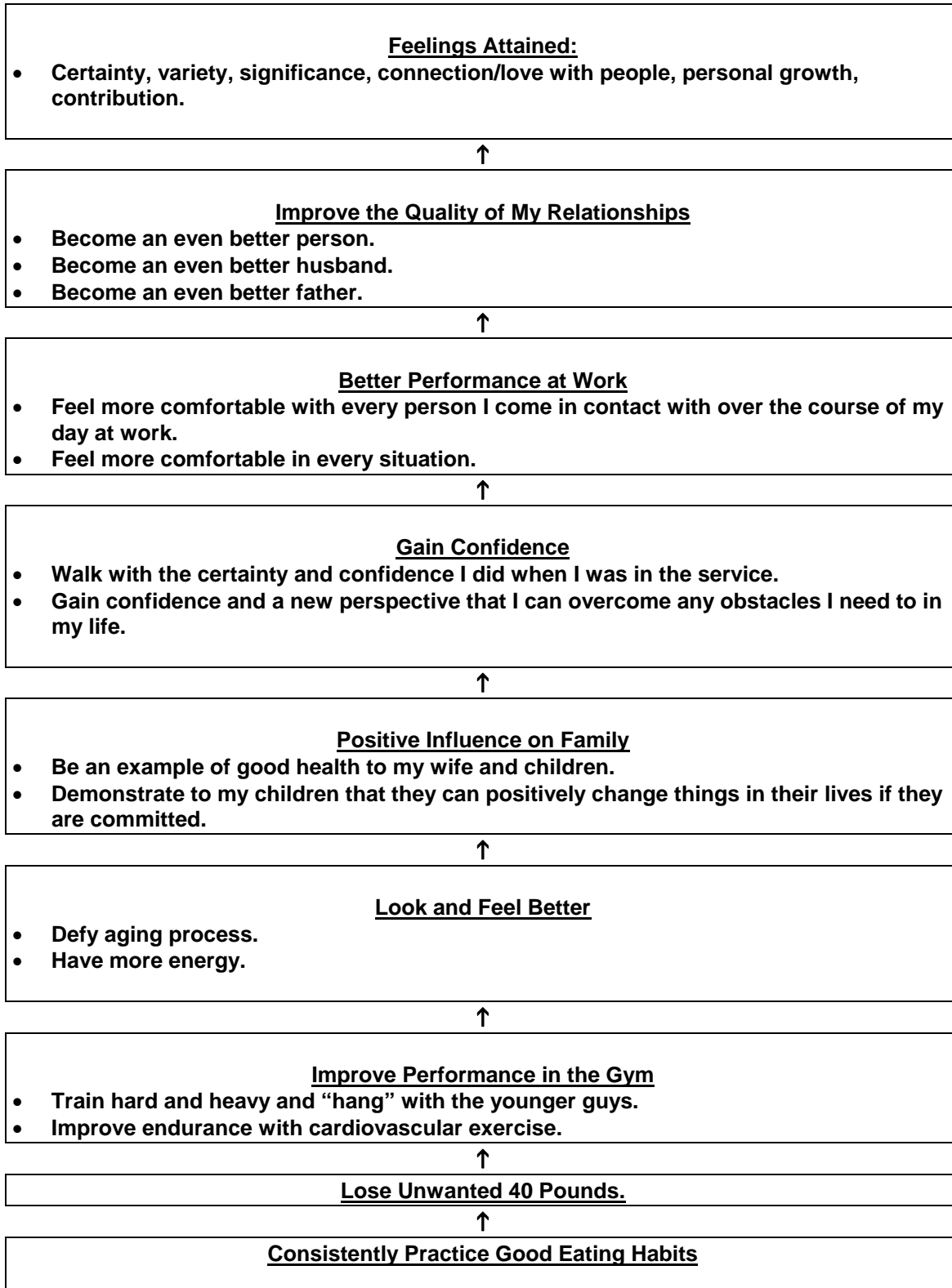
HOW TO INTENSIFY YOUR DESIRE TO REACH YOUR GOALS

EXERCISE #5

1. Review the hierarchy of motivating factors of both Steve’s and mine on the following pages. Notice the following:
 - The bottom boxes contain general goals and get more specific as the boxes ascend.
 - Each box states a goal and provides specific plans on how we intend to reach them.
 - The higher goals are more like “bonuses” we will receive when the lower goals are accomplished.
 - The top box lists the positive feelings we will gain by reaching our goals.
2. Create your own hierarchy of motivating factors.
3. Review it often to stay aware of benefits you will enjoy by working hard and being committed to achieving your goals.

NOTES

STEVE'S HIERARCHY OF MOTIVATING FACTORS



SKIP LA COUR'S HIERARCHY OF MOTIVATING FACTORS

Feelings Attained:

- Certainty, variety, significance, connection with people, personal growth, contribution.



Help Bodybuilders Provide Themselves with A Better Quality Of Life

- Underlying message of applying winning psychology and a positive attitude toward everyday life to all forms of my communication.
- Bodybuilding can be used like a metaphor for life.
- If you can be successful in the gym, maybe that success can help build the confidence necessary for success in other facets of life.



Influence

- Motivate natural bodybuilders around the world to build a great physique.
- Raise the standards of what natural bodybuilders expect from themselves.
- Openly share winning strategies of the top natural stars.
- Help bodybuilders around the world understand the need to carry themselves as ambassadors of our sport to help it prosper.



Peak Interest and Draw Attention to Natural Bodybuilding

- Write informative articles.
- Continually improve writing and communication skills.



Develop an Outstanding, Drug-free Physique

- Earn high contest placings.
- Provide quality photographs for muscle magazines.



Develop and Maintain Outstanding Training Habits and Psychology

CREATING YOUR HIERARCHY OF MOTIVATING FACTORS

Feelings Attained:



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6

HOW TO MAKE EVERY WORKOUT A GREAT WORKOUT

Someone once said, “It is the *little* things you do in life that make the *big* difference.” This principle can be applied to creating better training sessions, which over time, will lead to a better physique. In this chapter I want you to consider a small adjustment in the way you plan your training sessions. This strategy may advance the development of your physique.

If you aspire to have a great body one day, you must *plan* to have efficient and productive workouts on a consistent basis. Good planning is essential for succeeding at anything in life.

Building a great physique without the use of drugs is just as challenging, if not significantly more difficult, than accomplishing things in life like having a prosperous year, month, week, or even a single day. It is just as challenging as getting a raise from your boss or getting an “A” in a difficult class.

New Year’s Day is when we usually construct our game plan to make the upcoming twelve-month period more prosperous. We understand we must identify, list, and follow through with exactly what we hope will occur. Merely living throughout that time span and just hoping the next 365 days will be fruitful is only wishful thinking. The same principle applies to having a productive month, week, or day.

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If you wanted to ask your boss for a raise, would you knock on his door without a specific plan of what you wanted to say to him, and just hope for the best? Wouldn't you want to sit down before your meeting, identify what his expectations are of you, determine how you have exceeded these objectives, how long you have been doing so, and how he and the company will benefit by giving you a raise? Wouldn't developing a line of questioning that, in the event you are turned down, can help you earn that raise later be better planning?

If you hope to receive an "A" in a particularly difficult class at school, you have to do more than just passively attend class. You must go to the sessions on a consistent basis, concentrate on the information presented, diligently study, set short-term goals like doing well on the very next test, and make adjustments along the way. Thus you give yourself the best possible chance to earn that "A."

Would you even for a single minute consider just showing up at the gym not knowing which body parts you were going to train or which exercises you will perform? The key to having a great workout is simple: *Plan* to have a great workout!

"When you fail to plan, you plan to fail."

--Unknown

I know what you're saying to yourself right now: "Plan to have a great workout?! What the heck do you mean, La Cour? I always plan to have a great workout! Are you going to waste an entire chapter telling me to *plan* to have a great workout?" Yes. Not only do you need to create a plan, you must create a *specific* plan.

Most of us go the gym and have a *general* plan of which body parts we are going to train. Hopefully we also have a good idea of which exercises we will do. If we are very good at planning your workouts, we have a goal of how many reps and

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how much weight we are going to lift on that particular day. But the planning usually stops there. Very rarely do we get really *specific* on what our goals are for that session.

Why is it that so many of us go to the gym without a really specific plan for what we want to achieve during our workout? I believe the reason is because we have yet to discover the tremendous impact it will make on our training during the next workout, the next month's worth of workouts, and the next year's worth of workouts. Remember, the little things in life make the big difference.

The more clear you are about *exactly* what you want to accomplish, the better opportunity you have to accomplish it. Be sure you are asking enough from yourself. The more you ask from yourself, the more you will produce. Are you currently asking enough from yourself – without any rationalization -- to achieve your definition of a great workout?

The bad news is that implementing this new strategy to your workouts will require an extra bit of thinking. The good news is that those extra five minutes or so you spend planning your workout will lead to a *big* difference in your efficiency and productivity. When these benefits are stacked upon each other workout after workout, week after week, month after month, and year after year, they make a *gigantic* difference in the quality of the physique you acquire over time.

From that perspective, is investing an extra five minutes before each and every workout such bad news?

I would tend to believe you are no stranger to pumping out great workouts. A person who goes the extra mile and reads a book like this one probably pushes himself to the limit inside the gym. But even for the very best of us, the challenge is to have great workouts on a consistent basis.

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Everyone can benefit from this advice, no matter what level of development you are currently experiencing. Maybe you do a better job of planning your workouts compared to others. Perhaps you are naturally more organized, are more experienced in the gym training, or have trained at a higher level of efficiency in the past. Maybe you are trying to get in shape for bathing suit weather, have a contest you are preparing to enter, or have a training partner who is pushing you. Who knows?

Regardless of your level of experience or motivating factors there is *always* a higher level of efficiency and productivity to achieve. Don't settle for just being very good. Set your sights on becoming absolutely *outstanding!*

The quality of your workout is totally up to you to design and determine. What constitutes a great workout? A great workout depends on your individual goals. Your goal may become the next Bill Davey. Maybe you never wish to compete but just want to get in awesome shape and live a healthy lifestyle. Others just may want to use their time in the gym to relieve a little stress and connect with their friends.

I totally respect whatever you wish to get from your workouts. But whatever you want to accomplish, my intention to help you make that wish come true. The bottom line is you are going to have to plan and not wish.

The possibilities of what you can "wish" for when you design your ideal workouts are boundless. Your workouts can be either physical or mental. Physical goals might include a strength record in a particular exercise, stretching between each set, or finishing within a certain period of time. Mental goals can be things like to staying in a peak state of mind throughout the entire session, being a more supportive training partner, or carrying yourself with more confidence.

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Many people use training logbooks -- which are great in one aspect. They allow you to track your progress during your workout for review at a later time. The question is, are you really referring back to your logbook later? How useful is the information you have recorded when viewed after the fact?

How about taking this training log book concept a little further and use that book to plan what you want to do? What I suggest trying is writing down your goals for your workout, or writing down exactly what you want to achieve -- *before* you even take your first step into the gym. Writing these goals down will help you mentally prepare for your session. Determine how much weight you are going to lift and how many reps you will perform *before* you do the set -- not during the set. Meeting or exceeding these goals for each set creates a session full of small victories. A series of these small victories will ensure a better workout.

Make this exercise a habit. You will soon create such a high standard within yourself of mental preparedness, goal setting, and intensity, that you will never go back to those levels that you *thought* were great workouts in the past. They will be pale in comparison.

When do you know you have had a great workout? If your answer is when you walk out of the gym and you have a certain feeling, that's much too late. If you are *really* committed to reaching your full genetic potential, you can even take this strategy another step further by reviewing your performance.

Immediately after your training session is the perfect time for evaluation. While your performance is fresh in your mind, determining what specifically was great about your workout will reinforce those things you did well, giving you a better chance to repeat them during your upcoming sessions.

At the same time, analyzing what you wish to improve upon after every workout will have advantages also. Doing so will make you focus on what you need to

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work on. The winner inside will not allow you to write “get to the gym on time next workout” day after day after day -- without demanding that you eliminate this repeated shortcoming.

What can you do to make the process of training more enjoyable? The benefits of taking the time to answer this question after your training session can do wonders. One of them may be to help you stick to your training program for years to come. You will not experience longevity in your training if you do not enjoy the process. Asking this question will help you focus on doing so.

The characteristics that make you successful in the gym can also help make you successful in life. Don't limit the application of such a valuable lesson to your bodybuilding. Use this same logic in every facet of your life.

My friend Glenn McIntosh has the word “Why?” posted on the back of one of his doors at home and at work. The word serves as a constant reminder to make sure he asks himself this critical question before anything he does. The fact that Glenn is very successful at everything he does and is a person I greatly admire probably doesn't surprise you.

Stephen Covey shares the same wisdom in his book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, when he preaches “begin with the end in mind.” Anthony Robbins tells you to “know your outcome.” Determining exactly what you want to accomplish in advance is the foundation of the philosophies of virtually every peak performance specialist or motivational speaker in the world.

Try getting into the habit of asking yourself exactly what you want out of your next important conversation. Whether this conversation is with your boyfriend or girlfriend, husband or wife, son or daughter, or father or mother doesn't matter. For example, you may determine that you would like to: 1) solicit their opinions and any information they may have on a particular issue, 2), express your

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thoughts and feelings in a clear, concise manner 3) ask for help, 4) let them know how much you have appreciated their help in the past, 5) make sure they know they can always come to you if they ever need help, 6) make sure that, before they walk away, you have let them know how much you appreciate their friendship, concern, or love.

How much better would you communicate with the people around you if you took a moment to outline in your mind exactly what you wished to accomplish during your time with them? How much time would that even take? Thirty seconds? A minute? However long this strategy would take, I am sure doing so would give you a better opportunity to give them what they want and to get what you need. Of course, using this process may not be practical for every conversation, but definitely try using this method for the important ones.

Determine specifically what you want to accomplish during your next workout and be sure to set high standards for yourself. Then follow through with your plan. Whatever you do, don't just show up expecting to have a great workout!

Suggestions for Planning Workouts
at a Higher Level of Efficiency and Productivity:

- Set high standards.
- Set standards before workout.
- Get to the gym on time.
- Warm up properly.
- Stay in a peak state of mind throughout the entire workout.
- Enjoy the process.
- Stay focused.
- Drink plenty of water during workout.
- Focus on the muscle group being worked.
- Stretch the muscle between sets.
- Squeeze the muscle between sets.
- Visualize each movement before doing it.
- Be a supportive and conscientious training partner.
- Carry yourself with certainty and confidence.
- Set a higher standard of performance technique.
- Set a higher goal of weight to lift.
- Set a higher number of reps to perform on a certain exercise.
- Perform a new exercise.
- Expect to learn at least one new thing about an exercise, your body, or your character during the workout.
- Train with total concentration.
- Limit your non-training conversation.
- Be grateful for the opportunity to train.
- Finish within a certain time frame.
- Review your standards in the middle of your workout.
- Review your standards at the end of your workout.
- What was great? What can I improve upon? How can I enjoy the process more?

**HOW TO MAKE *EVERY* WORKOUT
A *GREAT* WORKOUT**

EXERCISE #6

1. What is already going great during your workouts?

2. What areas of your training do you want to improve?

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3. How can you make your training more enjoyable? List as many ways as possible.

4. List new standards to set for yourself to ensure every workout will be a *great one*.

7

WHY ROLE MODELING IS A VALUABLE TOOL IN BODYBUILDING

Imagine yourself with the conditioning of Chris Faildo, well-balanced muscle of Johnny Stewart, the posing ability of Ron Coleman, the strength of Kai Greene, the awesome mass of Robert Washington, and the longevity of Yohnnie Shambourger.

“That’s impossible!” you might say to yourself. But stop and think for a moment, is it *really* impossible? If you were to methodically copy *exactly* what these champions do and allow yourself the same amount of time they took to develop these special gifts, could you possibly do the same? How do you really know until you have tried? Would you not, at the very least, be significantly better than trying to figure out how to accomplish these feats for yourself?

Do you want to take your physique to the next level? One of the best ways to accomplish this challenge is to emulate those who have already reached that level. Modeling, the strategy of following the exact step-by-step approach is a very effective and efficient pathway to bodybuilding success. It seems so simple, but many people training today don’t use this technique often enough.

Trying to create your own methods will take too much time. Start where those who are already successful have ended, and then proceed from there. As the saying goes, “It is easier to look down on a giant when you are standing on his shoulders.” Use their proven routes to success and you will give yourself the best chance to duplicate it, and hopefully in a significantly shorter amount of time.

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A large number of people training sabotage their potential for basically three reasons: First, they try to “re-invent the wheel.” They try to formulate their own philosophies on training, nutrition, and supplementation with no real foundation of experience or knowledge. Secondly, they reinforce their questionable methods after just a few years -- at best -- of training and develop an arrogant attitude of “knowing everything.” They need to realize they will *never* know everything. The sport of bodybuilding is constantly evolving. Bodybuilders must always keep their minds open to the latest research available.

Then after their “proven” methods are unsuccessful, these same people make the assumption that if they can’t get the job done, the task is impossible. If someone else is successful, he must be doing something unethical, cheating in some way, or relying on great genetics. There are even some who don’t even bother devising and trying their own methods and go directly to this rationale.

“The wise person questions himself, the fool others.”

--Henri Arnold

The feeling that what you are attempting is impossible will prevent you from doing everything you can to achieve your goals. Avoid this state of mind at all costs. If you don’t believe accomplishing your bodybuilding goal is possible -- you are not going to give 100 percent and use all the sources of knowledge available to you. Human nature wants us to avoid failing and experiencing disappointment. You must develop the feeling of certainty that achieving your goal of developing a great body without drugs is possible.

Obviously, by taking the time to read this book, you are a person committed to developing your physique by harnessing the incredible power of your mind. Have you ever had this mentality toward your training? Be honest with yourself: Would say you have this mentality *now*?

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Steve Blechman of TWINLAB shared with me his observations on distinct and common personality traits among the top natural bodybuilders. Blechman, who has interacted with most of the elite bodybuilders in the country, said that the manner in which the naturals conduct themselves, their core of beliefs, perspective, attitudes, sense of who they were, and what they could accomplish is quite different than that of the other top bodybuilders.

Did these top naturals develop these characteristics *after* they made it to the top, or did they reach the top *because* they already possessed them? This observation is definitely something to think about.

Success leaves clues. Learn from those who are already successful. As you strive to reach your full genetic potential without drugs, discovering the traits of the top natural stars should be your goal. Find out how they think, how they talk, how they carry themselves then do likewise. In the gym, discover their methods of training and then try them. Uncover their secrets for eating to promote muscle growth, and eat that way too. If they tell you what supplements they take and from what companies, run to the store and start doing the same. Read the books they have read.

The skill of modeling successful people can also be applied to your life outside the gym. At work, don't diminish the accomplishments of someone receiving promotions. Instead, learn from this individual. How can you use this person as a model and duplicate his success? What does this person do that you don't do? How is his or her approach to the job different from yours?

Effectively using models has helped me write articles and books. A few years ago, I made it my goal to share my knowledge of bodybuilding by writing for national muscle magazines my goal. I looked at the work of those already successfully writing for the magazines and started to emulate certain styles from

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those I admired. I knew that if I sowed the same seeds, I would give myself a better chance to reap the same rewards.

Therefore I asked them for their input. I enlisted the help of people like Rosemary Hallum, Laura Dayton, and Lonnie Teper. I found out some of the specific strategies they use to produce their quality work.

People who have read my work ask, “Is your degree in journalism, physiology, or nutrition?” The correct answer is none of the above. You see, when you learn to model people who have successfully attained a level of skill or knowledge that you desire, you may cut your education time drastically. As I’ve traveled across the country, people have complimented me on my writing more than on my physique. I owe this to learning how to use role models effectively.

But don't expect modeling to make you automatically successful. Modeling takes some real effort! When I was writing my very first article a few years ago, Hallum had me rewrite it a *few dozen* times before I actually felt comfortable enough to submit my work. Although this took a lot of effort and different techniques, effective modeling cut down the amount of time trial and error would have taken. I feel fortunate to say that I had my very first article, and just about every one since, accepted for publication.

You will use the valuable skill of modeling only if you believe the natural stars are truly credible sources of information. If you look at the athletes and say, “There's no way these guys are drug-free!” there is going to be little chance of you benefiting from the proven methods that have led to their success. At the very least, say to yourself something like, “Although believing that this kind of development can be attained naturally is very difficult, let me give what they are doing a try.” You will probably surprise yourself. You have nothing to lose by doing so – except for a mediocre physique and a lot of frustration. In chapter 10, I discuss at greater this strategy of asking yourself the right questions.

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I stress this theme over and over again. The reason is very simple: you will not usually want to model the message if you do not believe in the messenger.

I know from personal experience how this type of pessimistic thinking can destroy potential. After just a couple of years of training, I thought I “knew it all.” I had won a few shows and thought I was relatively big and strong. I remember seeing bigger guys in the gym lifting some outrageous amounts of weight. I would say to others, as well as myself, “Those guys are loaded on drugs!” I did not even consider for a moment that perhaps they could be doing something more efficiently than I was!

Then I got smart and started finding out what works. I began learning their philosophies about training and tried them for myself. Once I mastered them, I began to add my own theories. I am now pounding considerably more weight than I ever dreamed of lifting. I see a lot of guys observing me with that same “loser” way of thinking I had back then. I understand the thought process that they are going through, but the situation is unfortunate – for them.

My passion is to help you develop the tremendous tool of your mind, enable you to break through negative thinking, and enjoy cultivating your full genetic potential just like the top natural bodybuilding stars are doing. Effectively role modeling these champions can help you accomplish these ambitious endeavors.

**WHY ROLE MODELING IS A VALUABLE TOOL IN
BODYBUILDING**

EXERCISE #7

1. Identify five of your bodybuilding role models and explain the reasons why you have chosen them.

Role Model #1 _____

Reasons: _____

Role Model #2 _____

Reasons: _____

Role Model #3 _____

Reasons: _____

Role Model #4 _____

Reasons: _____

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Role Model #5 _____

Reasons: _____

3. **Keep your mind open to all the strategies and methods that are shared by your role models in bodybuilding magazines, books, videos, etc.**
4. **Record these strategies and methods. Emulate them for a sufficient amount of time to see if they will work for you.**

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8

HOW TO USE YOUR SUCCESS OUTSIDE THE GYM TO HELP YOU REACH YOUR BODYBUILDING GOALS

If you can apply the content of this chapter of *Thinking Big*, this single lesson could possibly be the “breakthrough” secret that propels you into a whole new level of drug-free growth. Why is this one so special? Because you will learn to utilize the skills and strategies that are *already* producing successful results in other areas of your life and apply them to your endeavors in the gym. Learning to use the factors that you know already motivate you, instead of relying on someone else to “pump you up” or convince why you should give your utmost effort, will obviously be more effective immediately and in the long run.

The key to using your mental and physical attributes fully is to associate yourself with why reaching your goals are important. Associating yourself means to think of different reasons why you *must* to accomplish your goals. Brainstorm the obvious reasons and the not so obvious, the short-term and long-term, the physical and the emotional, and so on.

Quite possibly you may be already implementing this strategy and not even realize you are doing so. But if you can understand and appreciate exactly what you do in your own head that makes you successful, you will be able to call upon those skills any time you wish. Using those skills will be like “turning on a switch,” rather than just hoping they show up when you want them to.

As I have shared with you many times before, I believe that bodybuilding can be a metaphor for life. If you can be successful with the intelligence, effort, consistency, and perseverance needed to build a quality physique, then you can

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surely be successful outside the gym also. Now, I am offering you the opposite of that theory to consider: If you can be successful in doing something outside the gym, then you can use that success as a reference to build a great body.

Here are examples of people I have met who are struggling in the gym, but have accomplished some admirable things in their regular lives:

I was training at the Gold's Gym in Seattle when I met a young gentleman by the name of John. He was a very ambitious student who was just entering law school. John was absolutely overwhelmed with all the information presented to him in the areas of training, nutrition, and supplementation and passionately shared his frustration with me. He felt he would *never* be able to figure out how to use the information to help him build his body.

Michelle, an energetic young lady who trains in the same gym as I do, believes finding a way to shed 10 extra pounds is impossible. She also happens to be an expert in repairing automobiles.

Then there is Fred. Fred, a national-level bodybuilding competitor years ago, who chose to use drugs to build his physique. Unfortunately he achieved only moderate success. Fred thinks that anyone who believes I have built my physique without using any drugs is naive. Amazingly, Fred earned an incredible amount of money in his young lifetime. By the age of 28, he was grossing over \$500,000 a year! If you make \$100,000 a year in today's economy you are considered in the top one percent *in the entire world!* Fred makes five times that and has not even reached the age of 30 – but believes building a good physique without drugs is *impossible*? How much sense does that make? I feel like saying to him, “You wanna trade beliefs?”

Although I may have a pretty good physique, I never even graduated from college, let alone start work on any advanced degrees; I have never learned

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anything about cars but where to put the gas and where I should take my car to get the oil changed; and as far as finances are concerned, I have not figured out how to become anything close to a millionaire.

I am far from outstanding in many facets of my life, but I have spent a lot of time and energy focusing on and developing mental and physical strategies to build my body naturally.

I have total respect for John, Michelle, and Fred. They have skills and abilities I would love to have! I am convinced that these individuals have the power within themselves to improve their bodies in a way that would make them happy. I am sure that when they are in their element, they walk and talk with confidence and certainty and are able to produce amazing results. But when they get into the gym, they totally lose confidence in themselves.

We all have some area in our life that we have worked harder on improving than other areas. Hopefully your efforts have produced some great results. What are you great at? How did you become great at it? Were you just born great or did you specifically do things to make yourself that way? What did you do to achieve such advanced development in this particular circumstance? What challenges did you overcome? How does your mental approach differ from that of people who have failed?

You deserve special recognition for the great feats you have accomplished. Be able to achieve at that level took many outstanding qualities and attributes. The challenge now is to apply those same qualities and attributes to your training.

HOW TO USE YOUR SUCCESS OUTSIDE THE GYM TO HELP YOU REACH YOUR BODYBUILDING GOALS

EXERCISE #8

1. Identify an area of your life outside the gym in which you have achieved a certain level of success. Choose something in which you have put more effort into than the average person was willing to do.

2. List several tasks you have done in order to excel in this particular area of your life.

3. What *personality traits* do you feel were needed for you to accomplish so much in this area? (e.g., passion, intelligence, discipline, persistence, creativity, hard work, confidence, etc.)

4. What are some of the biggest challenges you currently face in trying to build your physique? (Feel free to use some of the challenges you have listed in previous chapters.)

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5. What personality traits do you feel are *needed* in order to overcome these bodybuilding challenges?

6. Are there any similarities in your answers to questions #3 and #5? What can you learn from comparing the personality traits that were needed to become great in the area outside the gym and the ones needed to overcome your current bodybuilding challenges?

9

WHY YOU MUST HOLD YOURSELF TO A HIGHER SET OF STANDARDS

We are all on a mission to improve the appearance our bodies and live a healthy lifestyle. How successful you will be at accomplishing this mission will be determined by the expectations you have of yourself. How good could your physique *really* be? What do you need to do differently to achieve outstanding development?

How disciplined are you at your current bodybuilding habits? Do you train hard? How dedicated are you to eating properly? If you are like most people who love bodybuilding, you more than likely feel you train *very* hard and are *very* dedicated to eating properly.

Feeling that we are working at a high level of efficiency can be very satisfying, but not if we don't have the physique we really desire. If we truly feel we are working hard but the improvements come slowly, how can we generate the confidence that we will progress – and do so at the pace we expect? What is going to suddenly happen to transform our physiques to the next level?

The answer may be that, no matter how hard you working now, there is always a higher set of standards to work toward. There is *always* more to expect from yourself. There is *always* a higher level of efficiency to achieve.

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A big challenge is to be really honest with ourselves in evaluating our efforts. In my travels, about 99 percent of the people I talk to feel they train very hard. They all can't be right, can they?

How do we determine that we train hard? Is it by comparing ourselves to others or comparing ourselves to what we assume others do? Do we make comparisons to the people with work ethics that are not as good as ours? Do we compare ourselves to "the lowest common denominator" in our attempt to justify our intensity?

We should compare ourselves to those who are achieving outstanding results. If we were to develop a habit of doing so, we would probably be motivated to elevate the level of our intensity a notch or two.

On the downside, comparing ourselves to those who have achieved outstanding results could bring us frustration and disappointment. When we start to feel the discomfort of frustration and disappointment, we usually start making excuses for ourselves.

Making excuses for ourselves is *not* going to help us build the physique we want. "I just don't have the time to eat all the meals I need to build muscle," is a dilemma I am invariably offered by frustrated bodybuilders. "I am just too busy," they reason.

In jest, I often ask a series of questions: "If I gave you a million dollars to eat all six of your meals per day for six months straight, could you do it?" Their response is always an emphatic "Yes!" Then I ask, "Could you do it for \$100,000?" Their answer is still an enthusiastic "Yes!"

"Could you eat that often and that consistently for an outstanding physique?" is the last question I pose. If they were truly committed to having an outstanding

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physique, they would become more creative and eat all of their meals despite their challenges. They would, however, need to raise the standards of what they expect from themselves.

The top drug-free stars featured in the muscle magazines hold themselves up to incredibly high standards. They train, eat, and use supplements to build their bodies as if they were going to receive a million dollars for their consistent work.

I get many letters from individuals who have difficulty believing these stars are truly drug-free. They may also have a very hard time believing the amount of discipline and hard work these stars put into looking the way they do.

On the following pages are examples of what a several of the stars feel they *must* do every day to achieve their bodybuilding goals. If they hold themselves up to such standards, achieving such development naturally will be a lot easier to see.

What would cause us to expect less from ourselves? Sometimes that attitude is complacency that makes us lower our standards. We easily recognize complacency in others, whether it is inside or outside of the gym. Shortcomings in others are very often easy to see, but how easy is detecting our own complacency that is causing us to lower our standards? Even when we have the best intent, honestly assessing our efforts is difficult. Complacency can sometimes just sneak up on you and me.

I learned a valuable lesson about complacency in my training mentality after going out to eat one day. A restaurant seems like a strange place to learn a lesson about training, doesn't it? Let me explain: I was eating at a restaurant with some friends during their busy lunch hour rush. There was quite a long line, so I didn't expect to get the very best or fastest service on that particular day. But at the same time there was no reason to expect the very worst and slowest.

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Immediately after we were seated, a young waiter came to our table and said, “I am really sorry, but the service will be really slow today because we are soooo busy! I thought telling you right now would be better than disappointing you.”

In an effort to get the best possible service and take some pressure off of him, I said that we understood the situation and thanked him for letting us know in advance.

Did this empathy result in better service? No way. All my compassion did was give our waiter my “stamp of approval” to go ahead and give poor service. Despite how busy the restaurant was at the time, he did not adjust his effort accordingly. He walked very slowly from table to table and carried on long, casual conversations. The waiter worked with no sense of urgency whatsoever. He did not fulfill his basic duties, even those responsibilities which had no bearing on how quickly the cooks were preparing the food.

To top off our frustration, when he finally did bring our food to the table, he had the audacity to say, “Well, here’s your food. I’m sorry getting your meals to you took so long, but I bet they came faster than you probably thought they would right?”

I thought to myself, “Boy, this guy really has the ‘Slacker Mentality’ down to an art form!” Was he desperately trying to set the expectations on himself so incredibly low that anything better than horrible would seem good? He took advantage of the restaurant being busy to lower the standards that were expected of him and thus provided service far worse than the situation called for.

Here is when I learned my lesson: Soon after my experience with the waiter, I had an extremely efficient, satisfying, and difficult leg workout. After reading of the benefits of running, I started doing them after every workout. But on this

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particular day I thought that I wouldn't be able to run very well after such a fatiguing leg session. I caught myself saying things like, "I'll just go through the motions today" or "If I just *complete* my sprints today, it would be an accomplishment. You know, I did have a great leg workout."

I stopped myself and asked, "What am I doing? I am already making excuses for my performance and I have not even begun to run and determine how my legs feel! What is the difference between my attitude now and that 'slacker' waiter's?" Nothing!

Although the sprints were difficult, just being aware of what I was subconsciously doing and challenging myself to raise my standards produced some of my very best sprints *ever*.

**"The truth of the matter is that you always know the right thing to do.
The hard part is doing it."**

-- General H. Norman Schwarzkopf

Have you ever experienced a similar situation? Have ever surprised yourself by accomplishing more than you thought you could in a challenging situation? Those who achieve incredible results in life consistently put extremely high expectations on themselves day in and day out. They apply the tremendous pressure to *themselves* in their quest to be their very best. They expect nothing less than outstanding effort in everything they do. They do not wait for failure to occur before they raise their standards. They do not wait for someone better to come along before they decide to take their performance to another level. They just take their performance to a higher level because they have an internal "barometer" telling them to do so. How efficiently and sensitively is your barometer working?

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Everyone would like to succeed, so what could be another reason why people lower their standards? They do so to avoid frustration. Nobody wants to be disappointed or disappoint others. For a lot of people, lowering their standards is much easier than to expecting more out of themselves.

Although lowering your standards will *seem* to take pressure off of you, doing so will only be short-lived. Even if you are successful at convincing yourself that you are working as hard as you can, but are not seeing any significant improvement, you will eventually become even *more* frustrated. One of the worst feelings a bodybuilder can experience is to believe they have done everything possible to develop their physique but there is no hope for improvement.

Frustration leads to being overwhelmed. When people become overwhelmed, they will often either quit or start making excuses to feel better. They start telling themselves their own “versions of the truth” that make them feel better for not achieving the physique they *really* want. They take the pressure off themselves just like the slacker waiter at the restaurant did during my visit. They begin making their expectations so low that they achieve only a fraction of what they are capable of accomplishing. You definitely do not want get caught up in that series of actions and reactions. Be careful. This mentality sneaks up on you gradually, without a lot of notice.

About this time, we start using the excuse that building a physique without drugs can't be done and anyone with great development must be using them. We start convincing ourselves our genetics are just not very good. We start labeling ourselves as “hardgainers.” We start saying that all the information in the magazine is “garbage.” We begin to believe that attaining a great physique is impossible.

Skip La Cour

A lot of times when people come to these conclusions, they have little training experience. With as few as a couple of years of training, they think they “know it all” or even feel they are close.

Can a person really feel he or she can actually know so much with so little time trying? Wouldn't a person be better to assume that there is much more to learn? Bodybuilding is a sport in which you have the opportunity to learn constantly. Some of the champions I speak with discover major training distinctions after 20 or 30 years of training. You shouldn't be so arrogant to think that no one knows as much as you. You cannot assume no one else can work as hard, or even harder, than you. There are a lot of people in this world!

A more empowering belief would be that of politician and former basketball great Bill Bradley. He assumed that there was always someone out there working harder than he was. He used this belief as a constant reminder to push himself just a little bit more if he was committed to achieving his dreams in life.

Now I am not saying that all of us can be a Robert Washington, Kai Greene, Darrell Monson, or another top star simply by raising our standards of what we expect from ourselves. But we can be the best we can be. Unfortunately we convince ourselves to settle for far less than we are genetically capable of achieving. More than likely, we can all be better than what we have settled for in our physiques, no matter what we have accomplished to this point. That goes for you, me, and every other natural bodybuilder in the world!

Let's assume that what you have done up to this point in your bodybuilding efforts has been great. Many of you should be very proud of what you have accomplished. But if you really want to achieve the outstanding physique you desire, if you want to achieve your bodybuilding dreams, you may have to do something differently than what you have always done before. Reaching your goals may take raising your standards even higher and putting more pressure on

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yourself without any ready-made excuses that will make the possibility of failure and disappointment less painful.

We are very fortunate to have our passion for bodybuilding. Be sure to truly “go for it” with everything you have to give!

WHY YOU MUST HOLD YOURSELF TO A HIGHER SET OF STANDARDS

EXERCISE #9

1. Review the standards set by the following top natural bodybuilding stars. As you read their lists, consider the thoughts and actions they are committed to doing each and every day. Adopt some of them for your own set of standards.

THE HIGH STANDARDS OF TOP NATURAL BODYBUILDING STARS

BILL DAVEY, 1997 Mr. America

I Must...

1. Eat a minimum of six meals per day year round except for my one “play” day per week.
2. Constantly try to do one better than my previous workout. I will do so by either increasing the number of reps by one or by increasing the weight by at least one pound.
3. Maintain a consistent sleeping pattern (minimum six hours at night and 30-minute nap in mid-afternoon).
4. Listen to my body and take extra rest days when necessary.
5. Make time throughout the year to vacation and enjoy life to the fullest.
6. Not let bodybuilding rule my life.
7. Do a minimum of three 30-minute cardio sessions per week year-round.
8. Consistently challenge myself to better my physique from year to year.
9. Warm up (10 minutes cardio, 10 minutes stretching) before each training session.
10. Use my time between sets efficiently by either flexing or stretching the muscle group being worked.
11. Prepare all meals for the day either the night before or in the morning.
12. Supplement my diet daily with a well-planned supplement program.
13. Eat a minimum of 300 grams of protein per day.
14. Plan my day to allow me to eat my meals on schedule.
15. Carry my water with me to insure a minimum of two gallons per day
16. Maintain a level head each day because I know there is always someone better than me just around the corner.
17. Realize there are a million other people who are training just as hard as I am and would love to have what I have.
18. Compliment someone every day.
19. Thank the Lord every day for my health!

CHRIS FAILDO, 3x Team Universe Lightweight winner

I must...

1. Wake up early (4:00 AM) to do cardio.
2. Eat first meal (5:00 AM) on time, never late.
3. Go off to work with a positive attitude (Sales will be great today!)
4. Treat others at work the way I would like to be treated.
5. Concentrate and focus on the task at hand.
6. Never forget to drink my Rx Fuel and Whey Fuel combo at 8:00 AM.
7. Eat second meal at 11:00 AM on time, never late.
8. Chew my food and take my time while eating.
9. Always drink lots of water throughout the day.
10. Drink another Rx Fuel, Whey Fuel combo at 1:00 PM.
11. Take pre-workout supplements with coffee at 3:00 PM.
12. Always stretch and warm up before working out.
13. Stay intense and totally focus throughout workout.
14. Do more cardio and evaluate workout at this time.
15. After workout, drink Rx Fuel, Whey Fuel combination (most important drink of the day).
16. Eat final meal at 7:30 PM.
17. Get all my meals and supplements ready for the next day.

SKIP LA COUR, 1995 NPC Team Universe Heavyweight Champion

I must...

1. Constantly strive to improve the quality of my physique to a higher level.
2. Constantly do something – no matter how big or how small – to get me closer to my goals in bodybuilding.
3. Take the time to review my bodybuilding goals at least 5 out of every 7 days.
4. Constantly train efficiently and with intensity.
5. Eat every meal every day.
6. Eat the right "bodybuilding foods" every meal except for on my scheduled "cheat day."
7. Take all of my supplements every single day.
8. Get at least 8 hours of sleep every single day (6 hours at night and a 2-hour nap).
9. Eat my meals no later than 10 minutes from their scheduled time.
10. Take my supplements exactly on time.
11. Stretch every day.
12. Pose and squeeze every day.
13. Stretch and pose between every set when I train.
14. Drink at least 3 gallons of water a day.
15. Prepare all my food for the week on Sunday.

7. List a set of new and higher standards that you are committed to doing each and every day to help you reach your bodybuilding goals.

NEW AND HIGHER SET OF STANDARDS

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25. _____
26. _____

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10

HOW TO ASK YOURSELF THE RIGHT TYPE OF QUESTIONS

When I started training years ago, I saw a picture of Francois Guy in one of the muscle magazines. This much-heralded natural bodybuilder was considered one of the best at that time. Although I had been training for only a few months, I *knew* I could eventually become better than him if I totally applied myself and worked very hard. I immediately set the goal of becoming the best natural bodybuilder, even though there was very much publicity for natural bodybuilding at the time.

I began asking myself questions like: “How can I get more information about him? How tall is he and how much does he weigh? How does he train? How heavy? Does he have any key philosophies or secret tricks? How does he eat?” Questions like these led me to the right answers in my attempt to build my body. If you keep asking yourself the right questions and work persistently, you *will* find the answers to developing a great physique naturally.

However I must warn you that there is also a lot of work ahead of you. I have many successes, of which I am proud, but there have also been many setbacks and disappointments along the way. This is all part of the fascinating and frustrating adventures you may have to experience in your bodybuilding efforts.

All successful people have something in common: relentless persistence. They have the ability to keep on trying and trying, long after the average person would give up. But this is true of *anything* in life that is worth attaining. My high school

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economics teacher Hank Meyer used to say, "If it were easy, you wouldn't enjoy it!"

“They say you can’t do it, but sometimes that doesn’t always work.”

--Casey Stengel

At one time, many people believed that running a mile under four minutes was impossible. The track and field experts in the early '50s thought the human body could not withstand such stress. But in 1954 Roger Bannister broke that barrier, becoming the first person to finish the mile under four minutes. What was truly amazing was that in the following month a couple of other runners did also. That year almost 40 other runners finished the mile under four minutes. Bannister's efforts helped others break through the “invisible ceiling,” or assumed limitation of what is possible to accomplish. Today high school runners are approaching the mark.

“You can only achieve what your mind can conceive” is one of my favorite empowering sayings. Once Bannister set a new standard of excellence, others duplicated and exceeded his efforts that year because they now believed they could. They started asking themselves great questions about how they could imitate his feat.

I've been in gyms around the country and know the prevailing attitudes of natural bodybuilders. The attitudes are either implied or directly stated, “If he's bigger than me, than there is no way he's natural!” I challenge you to take 100 percent responsibility for your own development. Instead I challenge you to ask yourself a question like: *What is he doing differently than I am?* If he's bigger than me, does he know something that I don't?

Your mind is an amazing machine. Have you ever noticed how many red BMW convertibles are on the road these days? Your initial response may be that you

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have not really noticed. But then something very interesting begins to happen. Over the next few weeks, you begin to notice *dozens* of these automobiles on the roads. Did the sale of this particular make of cars coincidentally escalate in your area?

Probably not. But the “seed was planted,” so to speak. The question was put into your mind and later, even when you were not consciously thinking of it, your brain sought out an answer. You can use the tremendous power of your brain to help you accomplish your goals, or conversely, solidify your misguided beliefs that they are unattainable.

If you ask your brain the right questions, it will search for and eventually deliver the right answers. What do these natural champs do to get such amazing results without drugs? What are they doing that I'm not? What can I do to duplicate their success? If you attentively read the magazines that offer drug-free training information, you will benefit greatly from these tremendous sources of knowledge.

Unfortunately, if you ask yourself the wrong questions, your brain will try to find answers for those, too! Have you ever done this to yourself? Before you attempt to lift heavy weight do you think of all the ways it will seriously hurt you? What does your mind do? It starts giving you graphic mental images of horrible things like Dorian's injured bicep in 1994, or even worse, *your* arm being totally ripped out of its socket! You need to immediately stop doing that exercise and change your state of mind.

Too many natural bodybuilders are asking themselves the wrong questions. They ask: How does he get off saying he's drug-free? How does he beat the drug-testing? Did he ever use drugs in the past? Is that why he looks so good now? All you are doing is looking for ways to rationalize your inferior drug-free

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development. If your brain is successful at coming up with answers to these questions, it will only ensure your *failure* as a natural bodybuilder.

Don't fall into this negative way of thinking. And if you are currently in this trap, climb out of there fast. If you are sincerely dedicated to finding out what it will take to develop your body without drugs, you need to start asking yourself the right questions.

Examples of the right questions might be: What training methods are most common among the best drug-free bodybuilders? What are their training schedules? What do they do to build the particular body part I want to improve most? How do the best naturals diet to get so ripped and preserve their muscle mass? How long do they diet? How much protein do they eat? How much cardiovascular work do they do? What supplements do they take and why? I could go on, but I think you get the idea.

Apply what you learn in the gym to your regular life. This is a regular request of mine. I feel that the discipline required to become a successful bodybuilder can help lead us to success in our personal lives. If you are constantly planting questions in your head like: What am I happy about in my life right now? How is tomorrow going to be better than today? What new and exciting information will I learn today? What can I learn from this difficult situation? Your brain will constantly search for answers to those questions in the same manner it sought out red BMW convertibles. I invite you to try this method. Don't waste such valuable skills on just attaining "big biceps."

Francois Guy "became my Roger Bannister" after I saw him in a magazine seven years ago. This book is meant to help influence and motivate you in the same way.

Skip La Cour

Who are *you* hoping to look like? What are you planning to do make your dream a reality? And most importantly, what type of questions are you asking yourself?

HOW TO ASK YOURSELF THE RIGHT TYPE OF QUESTIONS

EXERCISE #10

1. Identify five bodybuilders you admire. Then list questions you would like to ask them about how they achieved such outstanding development or accomplishments.

Bodybuilder #1

Questions:

Bodybuilder #2

Questions:

Bodybuilder #3

Questions:

Bodybuilder #4

Questions:

Bodybuilder #5

Questions:

2. Look through past bodybuilding magazines and any other literature about these athletes. Now that you have opened your mind up to the right type of questions, the answers should start coming to you more easily.

NOTES

Thinking Big

11

HOW YOU MAY BE PREVENTING YOURSELF FROM REACHING YOUR GENETIC POTENTIAL

Drugs, drugs, drugs, drugs! Who's using them? I don't care what he says -- he's not fooling me! What? You're accusing *me* of using steroids? Hey, I'm not one of *those* guys! Do you know how long and how hard I've been training? How dare you say that about *me*!

In my opinion, too many natural bodybuilders are absolutely *obsessed* with talking about the subject of drug use. They spend too much time determining who they feel is using them, passing judgment upon them, and at the same time defending their drug-free status against the assumptions of others. These discussions dominate many of conversations among the naturals all over the country and that kind of talk is a true shame.

This banter seems harmless, don't you think? Besides, those drug-users deserve the verbal attacks, right? "Participating in this kind of gossip and making my assumptions will not affect me because I'm a *natural* bodybuilder!" a person might reason.

You couldn't be more wrong. Involving yourself in this useless talk will ultimately prevent you from being the best you can be without drugs. And collectively, this negativity will stall the progress of the natural bodybuilding movement for all of us.

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You are probably asking yourself, “How can putting those ‘steroid freaks’ and those guys ‘pretending’ to be natural in their place harmfully affect me?”

How did you feel when you gossiped about others you thought were on drugs? Have you ever had to defend yourself against the false accusations that you were using drugs? How did that make you feel?

How long have you been training? Are you significantly better now than when you first started? Are you somewhat surprised that you were actually able to achieve this kind of development naturally?

Do you plan on continuing to train naturally? How much better do you think you will be when you have *twice* as many years of training? If you have to defend your drug-free status now, how much defending are you going to have to do later? Isn't that something to look forward to?

Have you ever gossiped with your friends about a particular bodybuilder who has at least *twice* as much experience in the gym as you? At the same time, do you defend your drug-free status against people in the gym with *half* as much experience as you?

Every natural bodybuilder with any degree of development has unfortunately experienced most, if not all, of these scenarios.

Peak performance coach Anthony Robbins professes that everything we do in life is either to gain pleasure or to avoid pain. Think about this for a moment. Isn't that why you have a job? Isn't it to earn money, which will enable you to buy things, which will bring you pleasure? Why do you do things like buy your friends birthday gifts? Isn't it to show them how much you care about them, to bring them pleasure, and to see them smile, all of which will bring you pleasure? Why do you

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work out? Isn't it to build your physique, which will make you healthy, to make you look and feel better, and make you experience more pleasure?

None of us want to experience pain in our lives. We will do more to avoid pain than to gain pleasure. Our attempt to avoid pain is obvious when someone stays in a job or in a relationship he or she does not necessarily enjoy. Instead of taking action to get them in a more pleasurable situation, *fear* of getting into an even worse situation keeps them there. Their desire to avoid the uncertainty is greater than their desire to get into a happier position. "At least," they rationalize, "I know what I can expect."

Avoiding pain can affect the potential of natural bodybuilders. How so? Very simple: Although we train very hard to improve our physiques, we are ultimately held back from becoming our best when we realize, either consciously or unconsciously, we will experience some level of pain from our peers if we become what *they* consider "too good."

"To be nobody but yourself in a world which is doing its best, day and night, to make you like everybody else is to fight the hardest battle which any human can fight...*but never stop fighting!*"

--E. E. Cummings

One part of your brain is striving to be the very best. Simultaneously, another part of your brain fears that your character will be attacked and your hard work will not be acknowledged or appreciated. Maybe in the same aggressive fashion you are currently attacking those with more development than you. This point is definitely something you should think about.

Having this attitude is like driving your car with the parking brake on. Although you may be going forward, and maybe even at a good pace, you are not achieving your full potential under those limiting conditions.

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Admitting that you are susceptible to the negative opinions of others is a hard thing to do. Nobody wants to believe they can be manipulated by other people. As I interview the top natural bodybuilders, I often ask them how being accused of using drugs makes them feel. Their first conditioned response is that they “take the attack as a compliment.” But, a few questions later they start revealing the pain the attacks cause them. They often feel that their efforts, discipline, knowledge, years of training, and genetics are not fully appreciated -- except by their family and a few people who *really* know them.

I have to admit, I fell victim to this destructive way thinking between 1995 and 1996. After winning the heavyweight class in the NPC Team Universe that year, I received probably more national recognition than any other natural bodybuilder. Many fans appreciated my efforts, but many questioned my credibility and character.

On one hand, the pride of winning the class made me hungry for a higher level of achievement. On the other hand, it caused me a certain level of pain because I take far more pride in myself as a *person* than I do as I bodybuilder. It took me a while to realize this, but subconsciously my brain knew that the better I get, the more negative attention or pain I might attract. I would sometimes think to myself, “Boy, if I’m getting this kind of negative reaction now, how much more will I receive in a few years when I significantly improve?”

I know what some of you are saying, “I don’t worry about what other people say about me, I know I don’t use drugs!” Whether you want to admit this to yourself or not, the same situation is affecting you to some degree – even if very slightly. I wasted much of my time and energy with such thought.

Admitting to myself that I was affected negatively wasn’t easy, but the realization helped me put the issue behind me. Hopefully you can learn from my experience.

Skip La Cour

The more you engage in this type of negative discussion, the more you plant in your brain the notion that the better you get, the more people will be talking about *you* in the same fashion you talked about those who were better than you.

Without even being aware of that talk's affect, you will be sabotaging success at the level you truly deserve.

How do you expect your brain to work properly under these conditions? Are you going to say to yourself, "I'm going to train my butt off! I'm going sacrifice my time and energy -- just so the guys rip me like I rip the top natural guys of today! That negative attention is going to be great! I can't wait until this happens!" I don't think you will.

If you say to yourself, "You can't look like (insert name of a top natural bodybuilder here) without drugs!" You know what? You have just created a "ceiling" limiting just how good you can possibly get. Your brain now "knows" taking your physique to that level is impossible, so it will not work towards developing your physique with 100 percent effort and intensity. Once you come to this "intelligent" conclusion, you have now become too smart to produce an all-out effort attempting something that is impossible. The moment these words leave your mouth, you have sealed your fate – regardless of how promising your genetic potential might have been. Rising above your words will be very difficult. Maybe you could have become *better* than some of the top guys. Who knows?

And if you think you'll just "back into" a great physique, think again! Attaining a great body without laser-like focus, a determined work ethic, and the absolute faith that your efforts will lead to you realizing your dreams is much too difficult with that limiting belief. With your self-fulfilling prophecy, you will probably settle for far less than you are genetically capable of achieving. You are hypnotizing yourself with your negative thoughts and words.

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Haven't you already been surprised with the development you have achieved without drugs so far? Do you also expect to improve greatly in the future? Is there the possibility that the best natural bodybuilders in the country are doing things better than you or have better genetic potential to grow?

I've mentioned before the saying, "The mind can only achieve what it can conceive." Maybe you will continue to surprise yourself and get better and better. Maybe you will get so good that you will convince yourself that much more is attainable than you currently think is possible.

Think about that the next time you refer to yourself as a "hardgainer" also. What *exactly* does that mean? Does it mean every one of your body parts has a hard time growing, or just a couple of them? Who are you comparing yourself to? Flex Wheeler or that genetically superior guy in your gym? The truth is that most of us on this planet would be considered hardgainers compared to them.

How would a hardgainer approach his training? Does he attack it with confidence and certainty? Does he feel that the next strategy or method he tries will launch him into a new level of growth? Is he excited to get to the gym because he feels his hard work is going to pay off in a big way?

Or does a hardgainer believe that regardless of the methods he tries or regardless of the amount of effort he exerts, he can only achieve minimal results? Is a hardgainer willing to continually "bang his head against the wall" under these conditions? Is a hardgainer more likely to say that anyone with great development *must* be on drugs? Referring to yourself with a disempowering label such as hardgainer is definitely something you should reconsider.

How can you minimize these negative effects preventing you from building an outstanding physique? How can you achieve a physique that is true to your full potential? How can you go for that body in an all-out fashion? Rid yourself of

Skip La Cour

negative gossip about others. Treat bodybuilders who are better than you with the same respect you think you deserve from those that you have earned better development. Give them the same benefit of the doubt you expect from others.

If you are currently caught up in this way of thinking, I can totally empathize with you because I was once there too. After just 13 months of training, I won my first show at a ripped 200 pounds. While I had to defend my drug-free status, I still had the audacity to assume that the guys in the gym who were bigger than me were on drugs. What did I know? I had just a little over a year of training under my belt.

I feel fortunate to say I got off that “train going nowhere fast” and began thinking differently. I started giving everyone the benefit of the doubt. I adopted the belief that if I ate right, trained harder and smarter, and reached an advanced level of experience, I would be as good or better than the guys in the gym were. Reaching my current level of development without doing so would not have been possible.

The sad truth is that many people in the gym will never be able to break through this mindset. The best way to prevent this from happening to you is to be proactive and get rid of this way of thinking – and do so now! Maybe now is the time to realize how you have been sabotaging your efforts with your words. Maybe now is the time to notice that your parking brake was left on.

Maybe now is the time to release that brake, slam the accelerator down to the floor, and kick your training into overdrive!

HOW YOU MAY BE PREVENTING YOURSELF FROM REACHING YOUR GENETIC POTENTIAL

EXERCISE #11

1. Identify five of your genetic-potential limiting beliefs that make building a great physique without drugs seem impossible, e. g., you can't build great legs naturally, all the top natural bodybuilders are really on drugs, you can't listen to any advice given in magazines articles because they are written by guys on drugs, I am limited by my average genetics, you can't get ripped with drugs, etc. Feel free to use the same limiting beliefs used in previous chapters.

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- _____

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- _____

2. Assume for a moment that you are absolutely unstoppable – that there is *no possible ways* you are *not* going reach all of your bodybuilding goals. Look at your five genetic-potential limiting beliefs and write down a new, more empowering belief for each one. e. g., If I am persistent and dedicated, I will find a way to build great legs naturally; I will assume the top natural bodybuilders are truly drug-free and exploit this tremendous

Skip La Cour

source of knowledge; There is potentially something to learn from everybody; I am not even close to reaching my genetic potential, etc.

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WHY YOU NEED PERSISTENCE TO SUCCEED

How many different training methods, philosophies, or strategies do you think there are that can add quality muscle to your legs? When you consider the amount of exercises you could possibly perform, amount of sets, amount of reps, amount of weight, and the many different types of machines available to use, you can easily see there are many routes to choose to accomplish this endeavor. When you add into that equation the speed of the motion with which you execute each exercise, the sequence of the exercises, your degree of mental focus, the frequency in which you train that muscle group, and the number of years you have been training, the number of variables are staggering. When you figure in training efficiency, consistency, and longevity with sound nutrition and supplementation, that number becomes astronomical. There must be *thousands of different combinations* you could use to build legs that could make Tom Platz envious!

How many of these combinations and variables will you *actually implement* before you start saying building great legs is impossible because you have poor genetics, are a “hardgainer,” or my pet peeve, you can’t build big, muscular legs without drugs? I would suggest that to you the majority of us have actually tried a *maximum* of only 15 different approaches, and that’s probably an overstatement. Now I realize that we all have different genetic capabilities and different goals. I understand that fact. But I am not talking about you compared to Yohnnie Shambourger, or you compared to me, or even you compared to your closest rival in your gym. I am talking about *you* compared to *you*. Bodybuilding is about being the best *you* can be.

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Too many of us settle for so much less than what we can actually expect from our physiques -- and those lower expectations are so disappointing. Too many times, this way of thinking is the result of our giving up far too soon and too quickly. We are too ready to compromise or give up on our dreams when the challenge becomes too difficult and we lack the mental toughness to persevere. What happens all too often is that we adjust our dreams *downward* or rationalize how they are not really so important to us. You can choose to continue telling yourself that version of the situation if you wish, but I doubt that choice would be acceptable to a person taking the time to purchase, read, and follow through with the exercises in this book.

I have empathy and understanding for this disabling way of thinking. In the bodybuilding world, we get conditioned to believe the task of building our bodies to any significant degree is impossible without using drugs. Although we originally do not want to believe such negativity, we constantly hear those beliefs over and over again from our friends in the gym and from the self-appointed bodybuilding authorities. The pessimism is hammered into our brains so much that there is no such thing as a very good natural bodybuilder. What is a normal, intelligent person suppose to think after hearing all this garbage so often – especially after failing many times in his or her efforts?

In the second chapter we discussed the importance of setting goals. A person, who is ultimately successful at anything, developed a dream or a vision that he or she was committed to achieving much earlier than experiencing it. They had the ability to “lock on” to that dream and do whatever was needed to make that vision a reality.

Another characteristic common among successful people is unbelievable persistence. Persistence is the ability to keep on trying and trying *different* methods with the absolute certainty that, regardless of being unsuccessful in the past, the very next attempt will bring the desired results.

Skip La Cour

Notice that I used the adjective *different* when describing their methods. All too often, we just try the same methods over and over again just harder and longer. You must become flexible in your approach and never assume you know or have done everything necessary to succeed.

I get letters every once in a while from frustrated drug-free bodybuilders saying things like, "Don't try to fool me with this natural stuff! I've been in this sport since the '70s and I know what can and can't be accomplished without drugs."

Although I understand their frustration, I just shake my head.

They don't realize their problem: being stuck in the pattern of applying archaic strategies of the past over and over again. They do the same thing more and harder. They refuse to take advantage of the advanced information on training, nutrition, and supplementation. Almost everybody and everything in society is bigger, stronger, faster, and more efficient than in the '70s. To borrow a line from an old *En Vogue* song, "Free your mind and the rest will follow!" Not doing so may make you feel a little better and more important in the short-run, but will ultimately deprive you of your dreams.

"If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always gotten."

-- Anonymous

The bodybuilding world is filled with examples of athletes who have demonstrated incredible persistence. IFBB professional Flex Wheeler failed many times to win at the national level. Many people, even Flex himself, wondered if he had the heart to ever reach his true potential. Before winning the overall title at the NPC USA, he had come to the decision that it would be his last show if he did not win. He would pursue a career as a police officer in Fresno, California. Fortunately he had the courage to persist. Wheeler is now one of the most successful professional bodybuilders in the world and, as he racks up

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victory after victory, has guaranteed himself recognition as a bodybuilding legend.

Craig Titus, whether you like the guy's personality and behavior or not, has demonstrated tremendous tenacity and persistence. After he walked off the stage at the '95 USA, many people felt he might as well "hang 'em up." Many authorities and fans were certain that a person with that kind of attitude would not win a national show. One person who did not believe this, however, was Titus. In the following months he battled legal problems, relationship troubles, a torn pectoral muscle, mountains of bad publicity, and an up-and-comer by the name of Tom Prince. Titus, too, came to the decision that this would be his last attempt in bodybuilding if he did not win. Through everything, Titus prevailed and left no doubt – even in his worst critic's mind – he was the best bodybuilder on stage at the contest just 365 days later than his tantrum. Persistence has enabled Titus to fulfill his longtime dream of becoming a professional. He has earned a lucrative endorsement contract and has a fast-selling video. Titus is currently one of the most photographed bodybuilders in publication.

Now for my militant natural bodybuilding brothers around the world, relax for a moment. I make it a point to try to look for the very best and learn something from everyone – even if I don't agree with their approach 100 percent. Besides, our segment of the sport is too new and too under-publicized for an abundance of testimonials of persistence.

In Hollywood, actor George Clooney now enjoys enormous popularity. With his hit television show *ER* and his starring role in the *Batman* movie, his popularity will undoubtedly grow larger. Overnight success? Hardly. Did you know that he was on 27 different canceled television shows?

Major box office attraction Jim Carrey is another example of incredible persistence. He lived in cardboard houses on the streets while he was struggling

to succeed in the business, instead of giving up his dream and getting a “real” job.

Sometimes when you are working toward your goals, the payoff will seem as if it’s going to be one-tenth of the amount effort you put forth. If you persist, however, you can expect a return that is 10 times or more greater than the effort you have invested.

“A big shot is just a little shot who kept on shooting”

--Zig Ziglar

Oftentimes the most gifted or intelligent people are not the most successful. The more successful people are usually those who have focused on a particular goal, vision, or dream and have worked towards it just long enough to succeed -- and were rewarded accordingly. History is filled with examples of people who have proven this time and time again.

I often tell people that part of my attraction to bodybuilding is that the challenge of the sport is both fascinating and frustrating. I am sure that you have experienced these same emotions. The trick is to create the mental perspective that your training is more fascinating than frustrating.

I would suggest adopting the belief that significant improvement may require at least 20 different routines or methods before a body part starts responding. This philosophy will accomplish four things: First of all, it will help you avoid immediate frustration. Secondly, this way of thinking will help you persist as you attempt to build your physique or certain stubborn body parts. Thirdly, if you do experience measurable growth, you will get excited by the fact that even more growth may be possible when you find an even better method. Lastly, this strategy will insure that you anxiously devour every bit of information in anticipation that it will help you get better and better.

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If the challenge of bodybuilding were easy, you wouldn't enjoy the sport so much. Think about that for a moment. What if every person who walked into the gym could use a very limited amount of time training, apply a limited amount of knowledge, and exert a limited amount of effort -- but still received awesome results? How insignificant would that make all of your hard work, time, and dedication? What would be so special about having a great physique? Instead of feeling the emotion of frustration when you come to "sticking points" or training plateaus, get excited! Get excited about the fact that with enough effort, intelligence, and – most importantly, persistence – you will surmount those obstacles and enjoy bodybuilding success.

I know what you might be saying to yourself: "This *Thinking Big* stuff sounds real good -- but get real! This is bodybuilding!" I would suggest to you that this is very "real." What is unrealistic is that you expect to see awesome results after just trying two or three different training routines or strategies. Bodybuilding is far too complex for that.

Making excuses for yourself may make you feel better in the short run, but you will still have the same disappointment every time you look in the mirror. Instead of rationalizing your mediocrity, use your creative energy to find a new strategy or distinction that will launch you into a new level of growth. Realize the fact that you may need to devise and apply 10 or 20 different approaches. Have confidence that if you are truly committed and persistent, you will be successful in the end.

"I could've been a contender," was Marlin Brando's famous line in the movie classic *On the Waterfront*. His character, a washed-up heavyweight boxer, regretfully expressed these words as he remembered the prime time of his career. He lamented the time he had wasted with misdirected efforts.

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Put yourself in the future for a moment. If you were 80 years old and your youth, size, and strength were just faded memories, how would you remember these precious years when you had the *privilege* to work out? If you were honest with yourself, would you say you made the most of this time by being hard-working, focused, and persistent? Or did you squander your chance to build a great physique by making excuses for yourself, being too rigid in your approach, or giving up too quickly or too easily?

Now come back to the present. How do you now view your setbacks? Don't rob yourself of your dreams. Will you be persistent enough to work through your challenges and enjoy the rewards of achieving your goals? I sincerely hope so.

WHY YOU NEED PERSISTENCE TO SUCCEED

EXERCISE #12

1. Identify 10 challenges, problems, or roadblocks you are currently facing as you try to fulfill your bodybuilding goals. You may use some of the same challenges from the previous chapters.
2. Creatively and resourcefully think of at least three strategies you could implement to overcome these challenges.
3. Determine a time period in which you are committed to giving this strategy a chance to succeed before moving on to the next one.

Challenge #1 _____

Strategies/Time Period:

- | | |
|----------|--------------------|
| 1. _____ | Time period: _____ |
| 2. _____ | Time period: _____ |
| 3. _____ | Time period: _____ |

Challenge #2 _____

Strategies/Time Period:

- | | |
|----------|--------------------|
| 1. _____ | Time period: _____ |
| 2. _____ | Time period: _____ |
| 3. _____ | Time period: _____ |

Challenge #3 _____

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Strategies/Time Period:

- | | |
|----------|--------------------|
| 1. _____ | Time period: _____ |
| 2. _____ | Time period: _____ |
| 3. _____ | Time period: _____ |

Challenge #4 _____

Strategies/Time Period:

- | | |
|----------|--------------------|
| 1. _____ | Time period: _____ |
| 2. _____ | Time period: _____ |
| 3. _____ | Time period: _____ |

Challenge #5 _____

- | | |
|----------|--------------------|
| 1. _____ | Time period: _____ |
| 2. _____ | Time period: _____ |
| 3. _____ | Time period: _____ |

Challenge #6 _____

Strategies/Time Period:

- | | |
|----------|--------------------|
| 1. _____ | Time period: _____ |
| 2. _____ | Time period: _____ |
| 3. _____ | Time period: _____ |

Challenge #7 _____

Strategies/Time Period:

- | | |
|----------|--------------------|
| 1. _____ | Time period: _____ |
| 2. _____ | Time period: _____ |
| 3. _____ | Time period: _____ |

Challenge #8 _____

Strategies/Time Period:

- | | |
|----------|--------------------|
| 1. _____ | Time period: _____ |
| 2. _____ | Time period: _____ |
| 3. _____ | Time period: _____ |

Challenge #9 _____

Strategies/Time Period

- | | |
|----------|--------------------|
| 1. _____ | Time period: _____ |
| 2. _____ | Time period: _____ |
| 3. _____ | Time period: _____ |

Challenge #10 _____

Strategies/Time Period

1. _____ Time period: _____

2. _____ Time period: _____

3. _____ Time period: _____

NOTES

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HOW POSSESSING THE ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE CAN ENHANCE YOUR BODYBUILDING EFFORTS

Do you sometimes find yourself concentrating on how small you think your calves are? At the same time, don't you appreciate owning one of the biggest chests in the gym where you train? Do you ever belabor over the fact you must lower your body fat percentage -- but fail to be grateful for being one of the strongest and most intense trainers around?

If you do, you are not alone. Far too many people fall into the habit of focusing on what they *don't have* without taking the time to appreciate or be grateful for the gifts with which they are blessed. You see this occurrence in every facet of life -- whether our focus is on the car we drive, the part of town in which we live, the amount of money we have accumulated, or the type of job we have.

Unfortunately, this type of thinking is especially true in the world of bodybuilding.

Being unappreciative or focusing on what is *not* right with our training efforts can make our quest to build our bodies less productive and less efficient. This way of thinking can eventually make bodybuilding an endeavor we quit pursuing before reaching our genetic potential.

Have you ever had the experience of being on a tremendous "roll" at any time in your life? Do you remember a certain period of time when *everything* seemed to be going your way? Do you remember those special times when your training was going extremely well, you were eating the way you should, looking fantastic, and feeling great about yourself? Reflect back on those extraordinary times when other areas of your life were going equally as well. Have you had times when you

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were productive and satisfied at work and enjoyed close, connected relationships with those around you? Of course you have! *At that particular moment in time*, when things were going so well, how much did you really appreciate and thoroughly enjoy those moments?

We are too often not truly grateful until we view those times in retrospect. After the fact is surely not the appropriate time. The true challenge is to value, appreciate, and to possess an attitude of gratitude for those times *while they are happening*.

The reason why we are challenged to keep this mindset of appreciation is not difficult to understand. What we now consider acceptable will no longer be considered quite as good at some point in the future. Having this perspective is simply human nature. One of the keys to enjoying our lives thoroughly is to continually grow or progress in everything we do.

We need to understand this way of thinking is human nature. We need to make a point of appreciating the good times while they are occurring. You must remember this important point if you are to truly enjoy the bodybuilding process and improve your mental and physical training efforts.

Why is having the right perspective so important? To reach your full genetic potential as a bodybuilder, *how long* you stay committed and dedicated to your goals is very important. I believe how long you stay committed is more important than how gifted or knowledgeable you are from the start. As I discussed in the last chapter, those who are the most successful in life are usually those who have persevered the longest, not necessarily those who are the most talented. Building yourself a great physique is a very similar scenario.

If you give yourself enough time to develop physically and intellectually with your bodybuilding efforts, the process can oftentimes become easier and easier. Unfortunately too many people do not afford themselves the time needed to

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mature adequately because they focus on what is *not* right or do not appreciate what *is* right in their training endeavors.

Being grateful for what you have accomplished and appreciative for the opportunity to develop further can provide you the patience needed to fulfill your bodybuilding dreams. We as bodybuilders are so fortunate to have our passion. For many of us, bodybuilding is an endeavor in which we are willing to invest a good portion of our time. Many people in this world have nothing to look forward to in life. They don't have anything they are even *remotely* interested in doing.

Getting caught up in the trap of not appreciating all the positive things we have received from our training is easy to do. Comparing ourselves to other people and noticing all the things we don't have is often a common way of thinking. Be careful not to do so.

Your drive to push yourself to higher and higher levels of achievement has gotten you where you are. I understand this fact. That same drive makes you the achiever you are. That same drive directs you to read this book to expand your knowledge and improve your physique. That same drive, however, can be a "double-edged sword." The downside is your drive could ruin the entire bodybuilding experience for you if you are not aware of the harm that ambition could possibly do.

"Success is consistently creating pleasure in your life and causing yourself to grow. Failure is being able to find fault and pain in your life – no matter how good it is."

--Anthony Robbins

Too many people come in and out of this sport. How many times have you seen a bodybuilder with a great body allow himself to become absolutely miserable because he placed only second or third in his contest? He made himself so

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unhappy because he did not do as well as he had hoped that he quit competing – or even quit training altogether. What a shame. That, to me, is failure.

There is also a “path of least resistance” that you want to avoid following in your efforts to gain the right viewpoint. Avoid “tearing down” those who are better than you in an effort to make yourself feel better. Unfortunately, that’s too easy a lure for many people – in bodybuilding and in life. Too many natural bodybuilders today make themselves feel better by convincing themselves that everyone bigger or better than they are *must* be using drugs. That type of gratification is short-lived and non-productive. All this belief will do is redirect the responsibility away from yourself -- and force you to settle for far less that you are genetically capable of achieving. That, to me, is also failure.

Now, I want to make my point clear: I am not saying you should be satisfied with or settle for your current level of development. I still believe you should continue striving for a higher and higher level of development -- just be sure to enjoy the process along the way.

But no matter what a person has accomplished in the past or advanced level of development he or she is currently experiencing, everyone can be reminded of this important message.

Becoming a national champion is a dream for many bodybuilders all over the world, but accomplishing this feat will be realized only by a very special, dedicated, and select few. Robert Washington, who convincingly won the 1997 NPC Team Universe, said to me just two weeks after his win, “Everyone looks at me as a national champion, but I do not see my situation that way. I am not finished. After I finished powerlifting, my goal was set to become an IFBB professional. I knew accomplishing my ultimate goal might take five to 10 years, but I knew if I stayed with my plan, I would accomplish my dream. Winning the

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Team Universe was just a stepping stone toward that goal. I can't feel I have accomplished *anything* until I become an IFBB professional."

I know first-hand of this more-more-more attitude. When I look in the mirror, I don't see an awesome bodybuilder. And I certainly do not see a bodybuilder who should be questioned if he is truly drug-free. I really don't. I see a bodybuilder who has a lot more potential to develop; someone who must build up some lagging body parts and create an illusion to create a stronger impact. To make matters worse, I believed being in the natural bodybuilding spotlight just created more distractions!

I am optimistic that I will get better and better. As a bodybuilder, I have the privilege to communicate in print with many people around the world, influence them to train drug-free, and live my passion in life. I truly love bodybuilding and I have a very good situation. But constantly focusing in on what is not right with my situation made bodybuilding an uncomfortable task at times. To continue with this kind of thinking would be failure.

What's the *real* truth regarding your training and development? Are you the person with small calves – or, are you the person possessing an outstanding chest and working to improve his calves? Are you the guy who is too fat – or, are you the strong, son-of-gun trainer who is determined to get leaner? How you view the answers to those questions has a tremendous impact on how much success you will enjoy.

Life is a self-made project. Making the most out of life and fully appreciating what it has to offer is up to you. Not many people are going to shed tears for Robert Washington if he does not reach his goal of becoming an IFBB professional, or for my challenges and me. At the same time, no one is going to feel sorry for you if you are frustrated with your training and not grateful for your opportunities.

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Not very many people are going to cry for you because you *want* to believe you can't build a good physique without drugs. There won't be many people feeling sorry for you because you *want* to hold on to the belief that everyone who says they are drug-free really are not. You will not get much sympathy if you *want* to believe bodybuilding success is all determined by genetics.

Now is the time to “step up” and take responsibility for your own development!
Now is the time to start focusing on what you have -- not on what you don't have!
Now is the time to feel grateful for your passion for bodybuilding!

You will never be “there.” When you get your squat up to 400 pounds, no matter how long you took to reach that mark, you will almost immediately start shooting for 450 pounds. When your arms reach the 16-inch mark, your brain will instantaneously start focusing on the target of 17 inches. When you win your next local bodybuilding show, you will probably immediately start dreaming of your national contest debut. That's just the competitor in you. Realize and appreciate this aspect of human nature.

So, what can you do to gain a more suitable outlook? Try stopping for a moment and realizing just how great your training is. An unfortunate injury would help you realize that just having the ability to train is a great gift. Having to take time off because you have no other option makes you appreciate your health a lot more when you can train again. Develop that appreciation now, without having to be injured.

Linda is a woman who trains in the same gym as I do. She is probably one of the most consistent “gym rats” who show up with the 5 AM crowd. She always has a smile on her face and always seems to be in a good mood. She thoroughly enjoys the process of training in the gym although she gets around to her exercises very, very slowly. Linda, you see, has multiple sclerosis.

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I once asked her how she manages to get in the gym so consistently and happily. She told me, "So many people make excuses for not coming into the gym and not exercising. They can get in here if they really want to be here!"

When you stop and think about Linda's challenges, not having big enough biceps seems pale in comparison, don't you think? Couldn't you be more grateful – right at this very instant with your circumstances – by focusing on what is great about what you are doing?

Have you ever had an awesome feeling after leaving the gym -- the feeling of knowing you gave your all during your workout? The next time you have that great feeling, stop and savor the moment. Ingrain that feeling into your brain and remind yourself that this is the paramount reason why you are going to great lengths to build your body. Try reminding yourself to feel this way even *before* your next workout.

Conversely, the next time you feel frustrated or disappointed, learn to create the feeling of enjoying the tremendous challenge that bodybuilding has to offer. Anticipate the next time you will have that great feeling of accomplishment and commit yourself to working hard to regain the feeling of satisfaction.

With your new perspective, ask yourself: What if you were to make feeling grateful for your passion for training just as high as a priority as training itself? Or, what if you were to make feeling appreciative just as high a priority as eating right? How much happier would you be if you were to feel grateful for having the *privilege* to partake in the adventure of bodybuilding on a consistent basis? How much more committed would you be? How much more consistent would you be? How much hungrier would you be to discover the strategies that will propel you to a new level of growth? Now is the best time to start possessing the attitude of gratitude!

**HOW POSSESSING THE ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE
CAN ENHANCE YOUR BODYBUILDING EFFORTS**

EXERCISE #13

1. List as many benefits or “gifts” as possible that you have received from your bodybuilding efforts and for which you should feel grateful.

2. Identify some of the challenges, problems, or areas for improvement you tend to focus on too often and too negatively, diminishing your enjoyment of the bodybuilding process.

3. Restate each challenge above in a positive, confident, grateful manner.

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WHY ARE YOU A BODYBUILDER?

Recently I read the book *Over the Top* by Zig Ziglar. I am a big advocate of personal development and motivational reading material, and Ziglar is one of my favorites.

I was surprised to come across the examples he used when describing the difference between *self-fulfillment* and *personal growth*. Ziglar states, “When our thoughts are primarily on ourselves, then our motivation is self-fulfillment. Self-fulfillment is a self-centered approach to life that ultimately prevents us from reaching our full potential.” He continues, “Personal growth, on the other hand, is becoming the best you can be to somehow share that experience with others so they can benefit from it also.”

I have always had the belief that bodybuilding is a great way for anybody to develop personal growth. When you are feeling your best physically, you have more to offer the world. Living the bodybuilding lifestyle definitely helps you feel great. But what do you do with that feeling afterwards? Do you share it with others? Does that feeling help you become a better son or daughter, father or mother, husband or wife, boyfriend or girlfriend, friend, employee or employer?

Ziglar describes self-fulfillment as the “the bodybuilder who develops a sculptured physique so he can parade in front of the mirror and hope that others will oooh and aaah.” He describes personal growth as the “the athlete who gets in marvelous condition to make a contribution to the team that benefits him personally as well -- another win-win situation.”

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I found his analogy about bodybuilders quite surprising. Could this assessment be accurate? Is this how the people in the general public view us as a group of people? If their opinion of bodybuilders is accurate, how can we use the tremendous benefits of bodybuilding such as discipline, motivation, and positive mental attitude in ways to help others? How can we to create win-win situations with the people who are close to us?

Ziglar also often says, "You can get everything you want out of life, if you just help enough other people get what they want."

Arnold Schwarzenegger was conscious of this fact during his rise to the top as he succeeded in bodybuilding and other fields. In 1970, five years before Arnold's first retirement from bodybuilding, he knew how he wanted to give back and create a win-win situation. He went to producer Jim Lorimer and told him his intentions of collaborating to legitimize the sport of bodybuilding. His goal was to create bodybuilding contests with larger cash prizes. The Arnold Schwarzenegger Classic has become one of the premier events in the bodybuilding world today. All of us in the bodybuilding community – competitors, fans, and media – are benefiting from his vision.

Although Arnold was, and continues to be, one of the most ambitious people in the world, Arnold gives back in his desire to teach the value of physical fitness to the general public. He dedicates time to the Special Olympics. He was chairman of the President's Council on Physical Fitness under the George Bush administration, spreading the importance of physical fitness -- especially to children. He visits schools and taught children first-hand about the importance of exercise.

In his efforts to give back to this country which provided him so much opportunity, Arnold headed a project to help inner-city kids stay away from gangs and drugs by introducing them to fitness. Rumors are constant that his ultimate plan to

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make a difference by attaining a political office. Arnold Schwarzenegger is an example of a bodybuilder using his success as a vehicle to help others.

Other bodybuilders have been great contributors also. Two-time Arnold Classic winner Kevin Levrone is a supporter of the Grant-A-Wish Foundation, Johns Hopkins University Children's Center, and the Special Olympics. His success has surpassed the world of bodybuilding. Levrone has been honored with the key to his hometown and is rumored to have been awarded a lucrative, mainstream-company Nike shoe contract. I have not had the pleasure of meeting Kevin personally, but I can bet the mayor of his city and the people at Nike are far more impressed with Kevin Levrone "the giver and contributor" than by Kevin Levrone "the bodybuilder." As the Bible says, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

I believe that in order for bodybuilders to be happy and satisfied, they must accomplish two things: First of all, they must constantly try to better themselves - both in their physique and in their level of knowledge. Secondly, they must become so good and passionate about what they are doing that they willing contribute that knowledge and passion to others.

In his book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey describes two basic mentalities of people. One is the "scarcity mentality," i. e., thinking that there is only so much fame, publicity, and accolades to go around. You see this kind of thinking quite often, from the professionals down to the local gym rats in bodybuilding. They are bodybuilders who are constantly "tearing down" their rivals in an effort, either conscious or subconscious, to make themselves feel better. Those caught up in this way of thinking feel *any* recognition anyone else receives takes away from their own importance.

Then there is the "abundance mentality," i. e., understanding that there is plenty of accolades and recognition for everyone who has earned such praise. People

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who live in the abundance mentality are usually very secure individuals and understand that one person's accomplishments do not necessarily diminish what they have done successfully.

So why are you a bodybuilder? Surely the reason is not merely to draw attention to your big biceps. If so, you will not be totally satisfied. If so, you are a prime candidate to fall into the trap of using steroids and other physique-enhancing drugs. But even if you do that, all the drugs in the world will not necessarily guarantee that you will even win your class at a local amateur contest.

Obviously you are passionate about building your physique naturally and are seeking for more knowledge on how to do so more successfully. Use this passion to help propel our sport forward by sharing your knowledge with others. Choose someone to mentor today. Doing so will solidify your foundation of knowledge and give you more incentive to "walk your talk."

"To teach is to learn twice."

--Joseph Joubert

People have said to me, "Boy, you must be really upset that Robert Washington used the information you wrote in your articles to beat you in the heavyweight class at the 1996 Team Universe!" Although I work hard to win every contest I enter -- and am not satisfied with anything less -- I certainly was not upset. You see, my goals are subdivided into immediate micro-goals and long-term macro-goals. My immediate goal is to become the best heavyweight natural bodybuilder in the country. My long-term goal is to help others learn what is needed to train successfully without drugs. Although I have failed in my short-term goal, I have discovered that I am well on my way toward my long-term goal. There is more time to regain the heavyweight title by becoming more focused, determined, and employing better strategies.

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I understand that many of you who have used bodybuilding to overcome such terrible situations in life like low self-esteem, drug addiction, divorce, and more. Overcoming these challenges is a great accomplishment! But now, you must try to grow continually and take your progress to the next level -- far beyond self-gratification. Sharing the tremendous benefits you have received from our sport to help others overcome similar difficulties will help them and also make you feel incredibly happy.

I once read how a popular, successful bodybuilder was inspired to greatness. As a teenager, he saw his bodybuilding idol driving around town in a Mercedes-Benz, a luxury produced from his bodybuilding earnings. The article detailed the elaborate possessions and wealth this current pro accumulated by being so inspired. I thought to myself how truly amazing that someone could be propelled to such a level of accomplishment by being influenced by a single person.

What kind of influence could this -- or any -- popular pro bodybuilder have on the next generation of youngsters if he was seen as a contributor? In your opinion, what would make a more meaningful, longer-lasting impression on young minds: A magazine photograph of this pro helping the less fortunate or another picture of him in his car? How could his tremendous worldwide influence make a positive difference in this world?

You may say, "It sounds good, but what can I do to become a bodybuilder/contributor?" Good question! The best way is to be an awesome example of what a bodybuilder *should* be. Bodybuilding is a very difficult sport requiring much dedication, discipline, hard work, and intelligence. Conduct yourself like a positive ambassador or role model of our sport. Show your peers, and the general public that the sport of bodybuilding is an activity that has far more value than merely self-fulfillment. Show them by example that bodybuilding has positively influenced your *entire* life. Share your passion, experience, and knowledge with others so that they too will benefit.

WHY ARE YOU A BODYBUILDER?

EXERCISE #14

1. Name several benefits you have enjoyed from bodybuilding besides improving your physique.

2. Of the benefits listed on the previous page, which ones can you share with others so they can enjoy the benefits also?

3. Name five people whom you could help experience the benefits of bodybuilding.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

4. How would you feel if you had a positive impact on the lives of these people by sharing with them the benefits of bodybuilding?

5. What can you do to help these people?

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HOW TO MARKET YOUR MUSCLE AND TURN YOUR PASSION FOR BODYBUILDING INTO A CAREER OPPORTUNITY

So you want to earn a living as a pro bodybuilder? Well, join the crowd! Literally thousands of men and women around the globe share that same desire. This fierce competition will make your goal challenging. You *must* develop a strategy.

First of all, I would *never* tell anyone *not* to follow his or her dreams. Just having a passion or a dream in your life makes you an amazingly unique person. Many people, unfortunately, do not have dreams. Without dreams, I believe people have a more difficult time finding true happiness in life. Consider yourself fortunate -- you have a reason to get out of bed energetically in the morning.

EARNING A LIVING AS A PRO BODYBUILDER

A popular expression, "If you do what you love, the money will follow." But is this philosophy always true in the world of bodybuilding?

The percentage of probability that you can actually make a living from bodybuilding today is incredibly small. As a bodybuilder develops his or her physique, it is imperative he or she develop their marketability along the way.

Enhancing their marketability is an important aspect often ignored by the vast majority of bodybuilders today. Not marketing yourself correctly and consistently

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throughout your career makes your chances of being able to make a living as a bodybuilder even less likely.

Earning a living in this sport takes a unique individual, not just a genetic freak. Let's examine for a moment the financial opportunities of a bodybuilder. First of all, bodybuilding is an extremely competitive sport. Amateur contests pay nothing and photo shoots pay very little, or nothing. Becoming a professional, an achievement realized by only a handful of people, doesn't necessarily ensure that you'll earn a nickel. Out of all the competitors in the world, probably less than 100 earn a paycheck for being a bodybuilder/endorser.

CONTEST WINS DO NOT NECESSARILY EARN ENDORSEMENTS

By all means, try to be the next Dorian Yates, Kevin Levrone, or Flex Wheeler -- but recognize that they are in the genetically elite, the very top 1/10 of one percent of the bodybuilders in the entire world.

Chances are, unless you have won some major titles, your physique *will not* set you apart. As a matter of fact, if you are too outstanding as a bodybuilder, your tremendous development could actually *hurt* your marketability. Why? If a company promises "150-pound Average Joe" that he will turn into a ripped 250 pounds like the guy in an advertisement, that company will lose credibility quickly.

Supplement companies try to appeal to a younger age group (ages 18 to 22) in most cases. This younger age group has usually been training less than three months and is at the very beginning stages of development. There is a new group coming into the market every day. Some company owners believe that if your physique is too good, your development will seem unattainable to that younger age group. You don't believe it? Explain how amateur Danny Hester earned a lucrative contract from EAS and *Muscle Media*, while a proven

professional who is also a top-ten Mr. Olympia competitor has no contract whatsoever at the time of this writing?

Bill Phillips, EAS, and *Muscle Media* magazine are masters at marketing. They know very well the way consumers think. They are currently on a campaign using natural and smaller bodybuilders, operating on the belief that the younger age group will more easily identify with this type of physique.

Even winning a major title will not necessarily do anything for you. For example, one particular NPC national champion went soliciting endorsements after his victory. He called two supplement companies and told them who he was and that he used their products. Of course, the two companies were happy this champion was using their products, but as soon as the conversation turned into any type of a paid endorsement request, it quickly ended. These companies were actually *offended* that this gentleman had the audacity to ask for money.

I challenged the owner of one of the companies by asking, "What's wrong with the very best amateur bodybuilder in the entire country asking for the opportunity to earn some money from such an awesome accomplishment?" He paused, not knowing exactly what to say, but offered, "You may be right. But Skip, that's *not* how it works."

MARKETING YOURSELF: FINDING YOUR SPECIAL NICHE

I met Ron Harris, associate producer for ESPN's *American Muscle*, back in 1993 when I competed in the Musclemania Natural Bodybuilding Championships. Ron and I quickly became friends, and there isn't a better person who understands the "ins and outs" of marketing bodybuilders. One of his duties for the television show is to find talent attractive to its national audience. Ron has seen many bodybuilders come and go during the time he has worked at the television show. He has seen a few bodybuilders market themselves well and many fail miserably.

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I have been lucky enough to have Ron advise me in many of my bodybuilding career decisions, and his wisdom and experience have been tremendously beneficial.

Harris says, “There are so many awesome physiques just in the United States. Truthfully, there are probably thousands of bodybuilders out there now who have far surpassed even the ‘king of bodybuilders,’ Arnold Schwarzenegger. And as we all know, Arnold was given the royal treatment for his bodybuilding accomplishments. Joe Weider brought him to America, set him up with a car and apartment, and offered a place to train and eat so he could become the greatest competitor of his era. Therefore, our modern-day bodybuilders reason, their super bodies should warrant an equal display of financial gratuity.”

Harris continues, “But look at the situation in 1968. Did Joe Weider bring Arnold out to California and give him a contract just because he thought Arnold had a great physique? Of course he did not. It was because Arnold could sell magazines and supplements through the combination of his muscles, his handsome face, and his charismatic personality. Then, as now, legions of young men wanted to be like Arnold. People were drawn to him. And that draw translated into sales, pure and simple, for the Weider magazines and products.”

Step back for a moment and put yourself in the place of a supplement company owner. To help generate a strategy, ask yourself: Why you are so special? What makes you unique? Most importantly, since businesses are in existence to make a profit, how would you increase the sales of this product?

“You would not believe the number of people who call for sponsorship -- men or women, from the amateurs to the pros,” says Angela Frizalone, in charge of advertising sales at TWINLAB. “A very small percentage of them have anything unique to offer. You *have* to have an angle,” she emphasizes.

Many bodybuilders take the same, typical approach for attracting endorsements or sponsorship. They thumb through current issues of bodybuilding magazines, page by page, and compile the addresses of all the supplement, equipment, and clothing companies, and send them a letter, their photo -- and a request. Do you realize that 99.9 percent of the bodybuilders in the world looking for endorsements do the same thing? Most supplement, equipment, and clothing companies receive literally hundreds of letters just like this every year. Mike Pendergrass, former owner of the now defunct LiftMaster training straps, once revealed to me, "I don't even look at them [the sponsorship request letters]. They go right into the trash can."

Marketing can be defined as a strategy to sell a person or product. Marketing is finding and exploiting your special niche. What can possibly be so special about doing what 99.9 percent of everyone else is doing?

VIEWING YOURSELF AS A POTENTIAL EMPLOYEE

Instead of believing so much in the saying, "If you do what you love, the money will follow," your creed should be more like, "You can get everything you want in life -- if you just help enough other people get what they want." This is a phrase I adapted from motivational speaker Zig Ziglar years ago.

Think about this philosophy for a moment: What you are doing is applying for a job -- trying to get hired as an *employee* for a particular company. Approaching an endorsement from this angle, what would you want from an employee if you were an employer? You would probably want signs of good character such as integrity, honesty, a solid work ethic, politeness, and respectability. Having a great physique is considered a very *low priority* in a company owner's criteria for selecting potential employees. Unfortunately the vast majority of bodybuilders have this concept totally reversed. They either imply or actually state, "Hey, I've got a great body, give me free stuff!" I've got news for you, buddy, there are

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thousands of people out there as big or bigger than you. That method is usually unsuccessful.

“You can get everything you want in life -- if you just help enough other people get what they want.”

--Zig Ziglar

You must step inside the supplement companies' minds -- or “walk in their shoes,” so to speak. If you owned a small supplement company, would you pay Shawn Ray \$50,000 to pose for an ad? Shawn would definitely deserve it with all of his accomplishments. Or would you get a “no-name” who would be ecstatic about doing the ad for *free* -- simply for the publicity? Even though the unknown's physique would not be nearly as good, using Shawn Ray would mean you would have to sell about \$100,000 worth of product just to break even.

So you think you have what is needed to become a bodybuilding star? Great! How are these companies going to know? How will you communicate the tremendous opportunity you have to offer this company? You must develop a marketing plan *early* in your quest, if you are to fulfill your dream of earning a living as a pro bodybuilder.

THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

Here is a situation that I witnessed recently. As I was solidifying a deal with the owner of a clothing company, he wanted to let me know that, although we were going through with the agreement, he had reservations about dealing with bodybuilders. He believed that most of them have a bad attitude. We were talking for over five minutes when a recently turned pro bodybuilder interrupted our conversation, leaning up against the table and saying, “Hey, I want to know if you guys need any models.” The owner of the company, dumbfounded by the man's rudeness, said he should try talking to an agency. The bodybuilder quickly

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retorted, "I did -- and he said to come talk to you." Not knowing exactly what to say, the owner stood silently. The bodybuilder offered, "Well, can I give you my card?" and walked away.

The owner looked at me and said, "That is *exactly* what I am talking about." Needless to say, that bodybuilder did not make a favorable impression. I can safely assume he probably won't be getting an endorsement contract from this company. To make matters even worse, after walking about 20 feet away, he turned around, walked back, interrupting our conversation again without excusing himself and said, "Oh, the reason I am telling you that now is because I am in shape *right now*."

At bodybuilding contests or gyms, I see bodybuilders approaching ESPN's *American Muscle* producer, Lou Zwick, and Ron Harris, all the time. The bodybuilder tells the two of them how huge he is and how he should be on the show. Lou and Ron are so numb to this occurrence now that this talk "goes in one ear and out the other." If these bodybuilders even knew that being *big* wasn't an important prerequisite, they would reconsider their approach.

And don't think that once you're a pro, things change. Even pros are replaceable. If you disagree, try naming five professional bodybuilders who competed in 1988, just a decade or so ago, who are still doing well in the sport. There will always be a new "flavor of the month," a new commodity, or a new rising star.

Some companies are simply just not interested in signing bodybuilders to endorsement contracts or even providing free products. Such was the case in LiftMasters' situation. But just because they are not interested now doesn't mean they can't be convinced of the opportunity you can provide for them.

EARNING EXPOSURE

To become marketable, the name of the game is exposure. To earn exposure, winning a contest can be very helpful, but a big victory is not the ultimate vehicle. Getting your picture published in the national magazines is. Very few photographers, especially the top photographers for the national bodybuilding magazines, will go to the local amateur shows around the country. Getting in contact with some of the best photographers is a very important aspect in getting this much-needed exposure. But how do you get these photographers interested in shooting you? The keys are finding out who they are and where they live. Next, send them pictures of yourself in great shape. Let them know when you can travel to meet with them if they are interested. If they see someone they like, something in that person that will be beneficial to them, or something they can sell to the magazines they will be more than willing to get in touch with you. Since selling pictures of a great physique would equate to dollars in their pockets, they will be motivated to photograph the most marketable bodybuilders.

You will have to do these photo shoots for free. Not even high-level amateur or professional bodybuilder should *expect* any type of compensation for these sessions. Also, be aware that at all costs incurred such as airfare, hotel, meals, rental car, and the like are at *your* expense. Getting exposure will take not only a great physique and getting the right contacts, but also a certain financial investment.

Once you have been published in a magazine, use the photos of yourself as a stepping-stone to get more exposure and to introduce yourself to companies. Bodybuilding photographer Jim Amentler often speaks of being approached by many frustrated bodybuilders. They wonder why they are not getting the publicity they feel they deserve. Amentler says these are the same bodybuilders who are never available for photo shoots. What often happens is that a bodybuilder will train hard and diet meticulously for 8 to 12 weeks, win a show in awesome shape

-- then immediately go back home, gorge himself, and lose that conditioned body before getting in front of any photographers. Bodybuilders need to realize that being photographed in the best shape possible is *critical*. Being in your best shape may require you to do photo shoots a couple of weeks before your show -- no matter how mentally tired, nutritionally deprived, or weak you feel.

DEVELOPING A MARKETING GAME PLAN

Here are a few suggestions for developing a marketing game plan:

1. *Honestly* assess your strengths and weaknesses. Take inventory of your strengths and weaknesses in your physique and character.
2. Define your “unique point of difference,” that one certain thing that separates you from the thousands of others. Do this as early as possible in your career.
3. Aggressively market and sell yourself according to your strengths. Improve upon your weaknesses, or even devise a way of disguising them.
4. When you are convinced that you are a worthwhile “employee-type” candidate, approach companies and emphatically let them know what you can offer *them* and why you feel *they would profit* ten times as much as they invest in you.
5. Get their attention! Be creative in your approach. Remember, you are competing against thousands of others with the same intentions as you.

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6. Get in front as many cameras as possible. Set up photo shoots when you are in your best condition possible. Use this exposure to earn even more opportunities to be seen by the bodybuilding public.

SUMMING UP BODYBUILDING MARKETING

According to Ron Harris, “The concept of getting ‘something for nothing’ is a well-known myth. If you are a bodybuilder and plan to get money handed to you simply because you've crafted a great physique,” he says, “you're going to be buying your chicken breasts with food stamps pretty quickly. Rather than asking what the magazines, supplement manufacturers, or clothing companies can do for you, ask what you can do for them. Are you the best in some specific field, such as the best natural bodybuilder like Skip La Cour or Chris Faildo or the best-looking bodybuilder like Mike O'Hearn or Frank Sepe? Do you have a unique theory with a large group of followers like Mike Mentzer? There has to be something unique about you other than the fact that you have a great body. A lot of people have great bodies.”

To make a career in the difficult world of bodybuilding, you must be intelligent, optimistic, patient, and persistent in your pursuit. Only a very few will make it. With the right perspective and game plan, you will greatly enhance your odds. Good luck!

**HOW TO MARKET YOUR MUSCLE AND TURN YOUR PASSION
FOR BODYBUILDING INTO A CAREER OPPORTUNITY**

EXERCISE #15

1. What are the greatest strengths in *your physique*?

2. What are the greatest strengths in *your character*?

3. What needs the most improvement *in your physique*?

SKIP LA COUR'S VISION

Mission

- To inspire, educate, and empower both competitive and non-competitive bodybuilders around the world to improve the quality of their training, physique development, and mental development strategies. In doing so, they will apply the lessons they have learned in the gym to create quality lives for themselves and the people they have the privilege to come in contact with in their lives.
- To supply drug-free bodybuilders around the world with information and inspiration to develop their physiques to the highest level of their genetic potential. I will provide information in the many articles I write and the seminars I give on training. This information will be generated not only from my experiences, but from the most successful drug-free bodybuilders. I will provide inspiration through my motivational articles and speeches, as well as from the example I set by what I accomplish without drugs.
- To give those who currently believe that bodybuilding takes the use of steroids and other physique-enhancing drugs hope that building their bodies can be done successfully with the proper attitude and knowledge. I would like to welcome with open arms those who are searching for a viable alternative to drug use.
- To communicate in a “real world” manner – not overly scientific or in a “know-it-all” fashion, explaining concepts in a “bodybuilder-to-bodybuilder” style using real life situations.
- To get our community to focus on what is great about bodybuilding – instead of focusing on what is negative. To unite the bodybuilding world to work together to solve our internal problems for the greater good of our sport, competitive bodybuilders, and fans.

Identity

I want to be considered the most effective and passionate communicator of drug-free training, physique development, and inspiration in the world of bodybuilding.

Values

My “ends” values are connection, intelligence, joy/happiness/fun, gratitude, cheerfulness, flexibility, and contribution. My “means” values are people, ideas that make a difference, all opportunities to learn, action, and relationships.

Core Beliefs

I am here to make a difference by learning, growing, and passionately sharing. If I meet people's true needs with total sincerity and commitment to serve, I hope that they will continue to do business with me. My work is a privilege and a gift. Everything that happens to me serves me.

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Strategic Plan

1) Develop my physique to outstanding standards. 2) Develop quality relationships with *everyone* I have the privilege to meet in the bodybuilding industry. 3) Strive for constant improvement in my writing and public speaking abilities 4) Develop my skills in human performance motivational skills. 5) Develop my abilities to coach, challenge, persuade, and influence bodybuilders around the world.

Daily Commitment and Short-Term Goals

1) Build people's confidence and abilities. 2) Positively impact the emotional state of everyone I have the privilege to come in contact with during my day. 3) Constantly improve the quality of my relationships through continuous concern and interest. 4) Expand my impact through my reputation based on the quality of my character, actions, and effective communication through media. 5) Continuously cultivate the attitude of gratitude and enjoy each day. 6) Read my book of goals five days a week.

Bodybuilding Goals

Long-term goals

1. Establish a long-lasting reputation as a great, national champion drug-free bodybuilder.
2. Establish myself as the leading drug-free bodybuilding writer.
3. Establish a long-lasting reputation as a bodybuilding motivational speaker and writer.
4. I will take the disciplines of bodybuilding to a higher level of personal development far beyond the physical benefits. I will show that the benefits can be mental and emotional as well. I will show that bodybuilding can be a catalyst that can lead its participants to a lifetime of happiness.
5. Through my example of character, integrity, and presentation, help influence the inclusion of bodybuilding in the Olympics.
6. Help change the general public's stereotypical perceptions of bodybuilders.

The end results of accomplishing these things will ...

- Ensure that I will make a tremendous impact on the sport of bodybuilding. I am a leader who is taking bodybuilding to a higher level.
- Earn my living working on my passion in life.
- Help people improve their lives. Be a positive influence on the lives of many.
- Improve the reputation, attitudes, and standard protocol of bodybuilders around the world.

I am...

Passionate, intelligent, ambitious, positive, enthusiastic, articulate, respectable, professional, polite, considerate, dependable, teachable, studious, motivating, giving, focused, determined, hard-working.

Foundation of accomplishments to build upon...

- Natural column in *All Natural Muscular Development*
- Motivational column in *All Natural Muscular Development*
- Feature article writer for *Ironman Magazine*
- Feature article writer specializing in bringing out the human elements of the person
- International drug-free champion
- Highly-in-demand speaker
- High-profile endorser
- Book author
- TV personality
- Bodybuilding personality committed to helping the hungry
- Information-packed Web site on the Internet

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About Skip La Cour

Skip La Cour has established himself as a leader in the bodybuilding world with his outstanding physique and by unselfishly communicating his training philosophies to others.

In his passionate effort to propel training, nutrition, supplementation, and mental strategies forward, he has authored nine books, produced five videos, and has frequently contributed to several international magazines. He has accomplished all of this and more while simultaneously becoming one of the world's best drug-free bodybuilders.



Competitive Bodybuilding Career



Skip La Cour has been training for more than 14 years and has been competing in bodybuilding contests for over 13 years. During that time span, La Cour has competed in 29 bodybuilding show around the world. At 5' 10", La Cour's competition weight ranges from 213 to 230 well-conditioned pounds.

Skip La Cour has won the NPC (National Physique Committee) Team Universe Overall titles twice (in 1998 and 2002). No other man has won the overall title twice. He has won the heavyweight class five different times (1995, 1998, 2000, 2002, and 2003).

Those five victories are the most class wins in the history of the NPC Team Universe contest. He is also the only man who has competed in all 10 of the NPC's top drug-tested annual amateur event. The contest started back in 1994.

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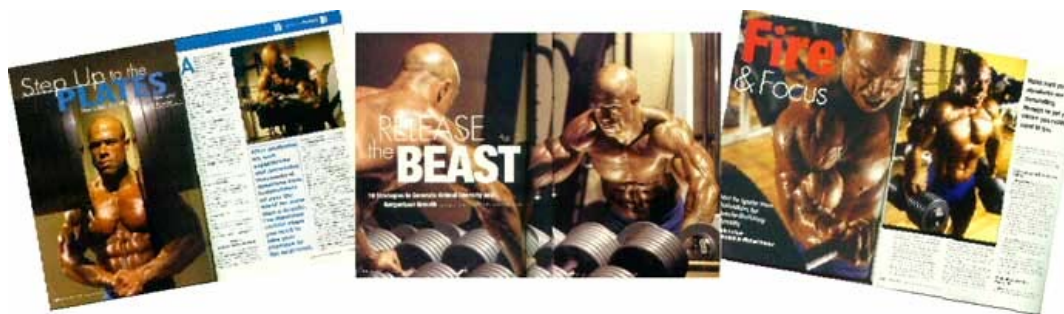
Skip La Cour is also the only man to have ever won the overall titles at both the NPC Team Universe and the Musclemania Natural Bodybuilding Championships—the two most competitive and most recognized drug-tested shows in the United States.

The Academy of Bodybuilding, Fitness and Sports Awards named La Cour “Natural Bodybuilder of the Year” in 1998 for his outstanding efforts.

Drug-free for life, La Cour first appeared on the national scene in 1994, when he won the Musclemania Natural Bodybuilding Championships, which aired on ESPN television. Two years earlier in 1992, he became the first man in the history of the AAU to win the Mr. California and Mr. Natural California in the same year.

Featured Magazine Writer

La Cour is currently a contributing writer for Ironman Magazine. He is also a featured writer MAX Sports & Fitness. In addition, he is regular contributor to Natural Muscle, a monthly bodybuilding and fitness magazine.



Over the years his work has appeared in MuscleMag International, Muscular Development, Great Lakes Fitness Guide, AST Sports Science's High-Performance Muscle, Steele Jungle and in such international publications as Bodybuilding Monthly Japan, Ironman Japan, and Natural Press in England.

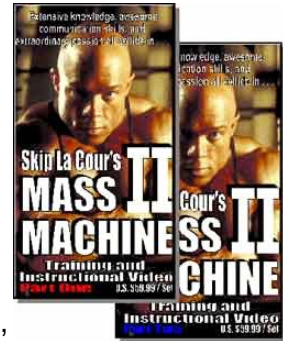
La Cour's Books and Videos

He has accomplished much as a writer, in his books *Thinking Big*, *Thinking Big: The Next Level Workbook*, *Thinking Big II: Aspiring to a Higher Level of Bodybuilding Achievement!*, *Skip La Cour's Daily Training Journal*, *Skip La Cour's Daily Training Journal 2000* and *Skip La Cour's Answers The 101+ Most-Often Asked-Questions about Bodybuilding and Training*; his special report *How I Packed-On 16 Pounds of Drug-Free*

Skip La Cour

Muscle in Just One Year!; and his contributions to several regional, national, and international bodybuilding publications and Internet websites.

His latest contributions to up-and-coming bodybuilders around the world are his hot-selling videotapes Skip La Cour's Mass Machine Hardcore, Skip La Cour's Mass Machine Heavy, and Intense! Training Video, II Training and Instructional Video, Dare To Dream!, Success is a Planned Event: A Day in the Life of Skip La Cour, and Skip La Cour's Live! Bodybuilding and Training Seminar.



Business Experience

Before thrusting his total time, focus, and energy into his passion for bodybuilding and helping others become the best they can be, Skip La Cour worked for the Raley's Superstores for 15 years. He worked from the bottom all the way up to the top, becoming one of the company's youngest store managers at the age of 27.

La Cour's successes in the business of bodybuilding and fitness include earning multi-year, paid endorsement contracts with large supplement companies such as Met-Rx, TWINLAB, and AST Sports Science, all of which he has earned while still only an amateur bodybuilder. Impressed by La Cour's efforts, Champion Nutrition and Musashi have also supported his efforts in the past by supplying him with free product.

In addition to negotiating those business relationships, he created other opportunities with House of Pain (the workout clothing company), Jan Tana (the tanning supply company), and Jagware (the competition suit maker). He has also starred in national television commercials and currently appears on Anthony Robbins' Personal Power II infomercial.

La Cour lives in Walnut Creek, California (San Francisco Bay Area).