

Episode 048:

Giving You the Answer...

Or Figuring It Out Yourself?

How to Maintain Long-Term Healthy Living Goals

I was on a coaching call recently, and part of the conversation made me think more about a common belief among those who are working with health professionals or really just trying to get results on your own. And this part of the conversation went something like this: I asked, "What type of habits do you plan to implement over the next few weeks to help you get to your goal?" Because I'll put those into the system so we can track them and maintain some sense of accountability. The response was, "Well, what do you think I should do?" Implying like, "Hey, you're the expert, you tell me what to do." I went on to explain that I could definitely do that, but the point is to go through the exercise of determining what you can and can't do over the next few weeks.

Understanding your schedule and things like that. Identifying areas that you have the most trouble with and need accountability in, or figuring out how to work through the ups and downs. All of those skills that you have to have in order to make healthy decisions on your own, because you don't want to have a trainer or coach forever. Right? Now, of course I provide direction and input and advice on what some of the most important areas of concern are, or some of the areas that consideration are, I should say, for your particular situation. But where do we draw the line between me giving you an answer and you coming up with a solution largely on your own. That is the topic of this episode.

This is the TD fitness podcast with Coach T. Episode number 48.

Welcome to the TD fitness podcast. Giving you ways to live a healthy lifestyle without giving up the things that make life worth living. Now your host, certified health coach and personal trainer, Coach T.

Hey guys. Welcome back to the TD fitness podcast. This is episode number 48, entitled, Giving you the Answer of Figuring it out Yourself. How to maintain longterm health living goals. You know, one of the hardest things for me as a coach, and really for those that I coach as well, is implementing your own strategy and approach that we have come up with. We've talked a lot about how important strategy is, and how important it is to have longterm goals. Having a solid strategy and a longterm outlook, working towards something, that is one of the requirements of moving forward in your health and fitness journey. Certainly it's required to maintain a healthy life. It's no surprise that the implementation part is hard. We live it every day and it's not just in the health category. Whether you're working with a trainer or coach or just going at it on your own, the difficult part is doing the things you need to do day in and day out, because they are stepping stones toward your longterm goal.

But where I find the rub is that, as a coach I want to coach them on how to succeed, but often times many people want answers on what to do to succeed. There's a subtle but distinct difference here, and I'm gonna explain a little bit about that. I acknowledge the fact that it is natural to want the answers given to you. I usually want the answers given to me. Just this

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past weekend I told my wife, "Hey, I'm gonna make the dinner for the next few days." I was gonna do a pot of chili. I didn't exactly know what to put in it. I had a general idea, but a quick search on the internet brings back all types of healthy chili recipes. It was so easy for me to just grab one of those then head to the store, get what we need and knock it out. Even when I buy something that I have to put together for the kids.

I'll get it at the store, I come home and I can crack open the box and try to figure out how to put it together, or I can just look at the instructions, the picture instructions and they tell me exactly what to do. We like the easy road. Usually that's quicker and that's more efficient. It's normal to want the answer, to wanna save time. But when it comes to healthy living or living a healthy life, what I wanna do is show you how to live healthy. You may want to know exactly what to do to live healthy. Again, they sound like the same thing but it's actually two different things. Heres a question to think about. This is one that I often ask those that I coach when they come to me and ask me, "Okay, what do I do now?" So I'll ask, "All right, do you really think the problem, up to this point in your health, fitness, diet history, is that someone hasn't given you the right answer yet?" Think about it. There are hundreds of dietary approaches. There are infinite numbers of exercise plans.

Is it really that no one has given you the right one? The one that will get you results? Or is it that you haven't found the right approach yet? Because having someone give you an answer and the difference between that and you finding it out on your own, those are two different things, right? When you're looking for someone to give you an answer, this approach implies a few things. First, it implies that there is a solution that someone else has. That when you follow it it'll give you the results that you seek. I will tell you that, that is sometimes but very rarely true when it comes to weight loss, or at least in maintaining the weight loss and living healthy. This approach might work for things like headaches or minor medical issues when someone can give you an asprin. That's the solution to your problem then right, for that very short term issue you're having. But it's not the same for things where you are going to be the responsible party for the longterm.

The person that has to live with you for the rest of your life is you. So you want to have some vested interest, some stake in how you go about that. The second thing that someone giving you the answer that approach implies is that, being given a solution implies that the solution that worked for someone else will also work for you. We've talked in the past about how we are all different, we're all unique individuals. The third thing, if you're looking for someone to give you the answer, that creates a reliance and a dependence on that other person. Trust me when I tell you, you do not want a trainer or coach forever. Forever is a long time and it's a lot of money too, by the way. What you wanna do is, set yourself up and what a good trainer or coach should do is help you get to the point where you can make these decisions on your own. You can identify problem areas before they come up. You have an idea of what direction to go in, and then maybe you might seek a little bit of advice.

But generally speaking you know how to manage your schedule and incorporate those healthy habits into that schedule. You know when there are gonna be times of more or less stress. You know when you are going to be busier or have some free time. You know when you're gonna be, your back's up against the wall and you may not have time to get a healthy meal so you can plan ahead for that. These are all the things that no matter how much you talk to a trainer or a coach, the things that are just inherent in what you know. What you know about yourself and what you know about your way of life. Those are the types of things that have to come from within you and those inputs all have to go into developing an approach and a way forward. So, let me give you a couple of examples. At one point, before I was actually certified as a health coach, I was a personal trainer. I still am a personal trainer but I tend to focus on the health coaching more now.

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At this point I was providing services just as a personal trainer though. I was training a couple, a very nice couple. My wife and I are still good friends with them to this day. But I would give them exercise routines based on my experience. I would advise on nutrition to the best of my knowledge and to the best of my ability, but there was frustration, honestly, on both sides. Because after a while we found that the results were only temporary. They would go up and down. The couple that I was training, they would do what I recommended, and sometimes frankly they wouldn't. I remember thinking, "Man, am I a bad trainer, or are they bad clients?" This is how I was thinking then. Of course the answer to that is that there's no such thing as a bad client. There may be times when you and a client aren't compatible, but there is no bad client. The truth was that they were fine clients, fine individuals, looking for help. I was a more than capable trainer, but what was the issue?

This is actually the scenario that led me to pursue the path of becoming a health coach as well. Because I realized that the way to truly help people wasn't to tell them what to do, but rather it was to empower them to make healthy decisions that were right for them, and based on a foundational knowledge that I would provide or coach them through. Now, when you find a solution, you really find so much more than that. When you're given the answer, that's different than finding a solution. What I mean by when I say you find more than a solution when you actually find a solution is that, you not only find what works for you, but you also figure out how it works for you, and a lot of times why, and how you can apply that to other areas, to other successes. You also find out what it takes to bounce back from lapses.

Let me tell you the story about one of the fit lifers currently in the fit life program. Her name is Heather. I reached out to her earlier and asked if I could share a little bit about her story, and she gave me permission to do so, so I'm really excited about that. Heather, as I said, is currently enrolled in the fit life program. I will tell you from the very beginning she has really had a longterm outlook as we go through these coaching calls and talk a lot about what is it that you want your goal to be? Where are you trying to get out on the other end of this program? She understood that change does not occur overnight. She really bought into the concept that big goals need to be broken down into smaller goals, smaller habits if you will. And those habits need to be practiced regularly. So, fast forward part of the result and she's still in the program, but she's down, I think, as of now since the beginning of the year, she's down approximately 25 pounds.

She's accomplished one of her goals, which was to complete a hike in the Himalayas. She recently went on a cruise vacation and, this is what I'm talking about when we talk about learning how to live healthy. On the cruise, on the vacation, she didn't eat necessarily like she wanted to. She didn't exercise much. When I talked to her after her vacation, she was feeling a little down. She was feeling like she had let herself down. All of the work that she had put in was maybe all for naught, and didn't know where to go from here. When we talked, basically what we did was just reassure her that that setback was just that. It's just a setback. It was only temporary, because she had worked to develop the habits that she knew she could maintain and that would help her get to her goal. Okay? So, she was happy to report, maybe I think it was just two weeks later, that it was really easy to get back into her normal groove, and she had already lost.

I think she said she had gained maybe 10 pounds or so over the course of time that she had stepped away from her healthy habits. Well, that weight dropped off like that. The lapse that she had did not turn into a relapse like in previous attempts throughout the years at weight loss and living healthy. It's because she had the tools and had the mindset and the outlook and the right approach. It's not because I or any other coach or trainer told her what to do. I have no doubt that Heather is gonna continue to live healthy, because she is fully equipped to do so. Again, it's not something I gave her, but it was her realization and understanding that she

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can make a change, and so can you. Now, as I think about another example, a personal example. This isn't a health and fitness related example but I think it still applies. You know, when I was in college I majored in computer science. We spent a lot of time learning how to program in a particular coding language. A computer programming language. It was called C++.

Now, you can ask, what good is that? After a few years this language is probably gonna be pretty outdated. I mean, technology changes, these days, at the drop of a hat. So what I learned then is largely not even applicable now when it comes to programming like that. What it did teach me was how to think critically. How to think critically about approaching a technology problem, how to break a problem down into its component parts. All of those things, those skills that went beyond the immediate, okay, you need to learn how to program in this language. These are things that I took with me and that I applied in all different phases of life, all different types of projects if you will in my life. The value in that instance wasn't necessarily in the short term product, or the short term result. I.e. creating or getting an A on this computer science project, but it was in learning the process and how to apply that to future projects down the road when I could take another tool, another computer science language or computer language, and create another program.

Think about it like this. I can either give you what worked for someone else with the hope that in the off chance it might work for you, or I can coach you in figuring out exactly what works for you. Understanding that it's not the golden workout plan or the sure fire weight loss diet, but rather it's living a way of life that is healthier than the one you're living right now, and improving on that day after day. This is really the fundamental difference, when you think about it, in a coaching approach, in a straight forward personal trainer approach. I feel like I can say that having done both and having lived both. Neither is necessarily wrong, but they have to be, the right approach has to be paired with the right goals. For example, if I have pretty healthy living habits, but I'm training for a marathon or I wanna be able to lift a certain amount of weight, or I'd like to take up tennis without injuring myself.

A trainer can help with that by using their knowledge and expertise to create a program that will get you to that tangible shorter term goal. But if I don't practice healthy habits and if I'm not consistent with exercise and if I struggle with the what, the when, the how, and why I eat, then maybe a coach is a better way to go. Because in this case you're looking for a deeper understanding of what it takes to reach your goal. Not just a solution that someone gives you, because that won't stick for the longterm. You know, there are two parts of healthy habits, right? Determining what you're going to do and actually doing it. If you want the what, then I or any other good trainer can help with that. If you want to learn how to start to practice and to keep those healthy habits, then I or any other good coach is a more appropriate partnership. As a coach I want you to get results. This means short term and longterm results. In my mind the long term is always a healthy lifestyle. One final example for you.

I have been working with our oldest daughter, she's five years old now, we've been practicing riding a bike. I took the training wheels off not too long ago, and she's been doing a good job. But one of the habits that she has is when she's pedaling she looks down at her feet or immediately in front of the bike. That's common, that's what with wanna do. When we say, "Oh, I wanna lose weight. Okay, what's the quickest way I can get there? Let me look right in front of me and see what it is I need to do." But I try to keep our daughter focused on the long goal. So, I'll have her lift her head up and look farther out. Maybe 30, 40 feet out or so. Have her look forward. Because what that does is takes your sights and your thoughts off every little balance imperfection, and every little turn or twist in the wheel, and it has you

looking forward because your longterm goal is gonna be a straighter line. You can't just keep your head down.

You can't just look at the immediacy and the short term goal of trying to get to what it is you wanna get to quickly. You have to think about the longterm goal. Again, that longterm goal being healthy living. So, similarly, we have to keep our heads up. We have to look farther out and understand that we're not trying to keep from falling right now, we're learning to ride a bike. We're not trying to lose a few pounds right now, or get a solution to satisfy a trainer or a coach in the next couple of weeks, no. We are working towards being able to live a healthy life on our own. That is the goal. I'm gonna leave you with one final quote. Amy Porterfield, who is a podcaster, entrepreneur. She puts out a lot of good material on business and leadership. There's a quote that she wrote not too long ago, that I picked up and I like to use this from time to time. She said that, "People quit because it takes too long to see results, but the truth is that learning the process is the real result."

I want you to think about that for a minute. That is the quote that is in the very first lesson on mindset of the fit life program. Within the fit life program I should say. People quit because it takes too long to see results, but the truth is, that learning the process is the real result. All right? Think about that as you think about your short and long term goals. What is it that you're trying to achieve? Is it really just a quick reduction in weight, or is it that longer term goal of building a healthier, longer, pain free life. As I wrap up, I wanna remind you that the show notes for this episode can be found at tdfitness.net/048. Also a reminder, if you'd like to try out my 10 day healthy habit challenge and take the next step in living healthier, then you can find that at tdfitness.net/10habits. That's the number 10 habits. If you're really ready to change for the better, the fit life program may be for you. You'll hear a short outro clip on the fit life program next.

You can find out more about that at fitlifeprogram.com or tdfitness.net/fitlife. Thanks again so much for tuning in guys. You all have a blessed one. Coach T, out.

Why did I create the fit life program? I wanted to provide something that wasn't just for weight loss. Not just for feeling better. Not even just for better health. I wanted a more complete solution. I also wanted to make it sustainable. It's not just about starting something or sticking with it for a month or two. Healthy living, which includes fitness, nutrition and a healthy mindset is about practicing healthy habits consistently. Not all the time, because no one is perfect. But practicing those healthy habits more than you are right now. That's how change begins, and that's how healthy living continues. Find out more at fitlifeprogram.com or tdfitness.net/fitlife.