

## 4 Keys to Crossing the Finish Line with Your Goal

This is the TD Fitness podcast with Coach T., episode number 80.

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

Hey, hey, what's up, guys? Coach T. here from TD Fitness. This is episode number 80. I recently finished a book called Finish. It was written by Jon Acuff. He actually wrote a book called Start, where... When he published that book, his thought process was that there are so many people that are prevented from accomplishing what they are meant to accomplish, from reaching their goals because of this inability to start. He felt like, "Man, if I can just get people thinking about how to make the leap into what it is that they want to do, how to actually start upon a journey to create some effective and realistic change, then this book will help a lot of people." That was his thought process, as he says, going into writing the book Start.

But what he realized after publishing that book and after doing some more research, is that most people don't have a problem with starting. I mean, we start things all the time, right? We start books and leave them unfinished, we start courses and leave them unfinished, we start jobs and end up leaving sooner than we really have to, because we have issues with the longterm, with staying the course, with seeing things through. And you see it in our society today in marriage, you see it in so many other things. And from a health and fitness perspective, ask yourself, how many times have you started a new training plan and then for one reason or another got derailed or sidetrack? You started a new exercise routine and find yourself a few days or weeks into it and you're just not able to sustain it? Or how many times have you started a diet and not been able to sustain it or just gotten off of it because you weren't happy with it?

So in this book called Finish, the author points out a number of things that prevent us from finishing. Some of those things that when we think about them, they can really change your outlook on meeting our goals. And obviously, this is important when you think about your health and your wellbeing because, as you know, I talk so much about habits and consistency and being able to maintain a healthy lifestyle, not just taking some short term action that's going to fade after a limited period of time.

So I thought this was an important topic for us, particularly those of us with busy schedules, and those of us trying to find time to fit things in, fit things in from a health and fitness perspective. And this book, Finish, really is one of the better ones I've read in some of the advice that it provides, because as you know, I typically try to find works that will talk to or speak to this concept of healthy habits, lifestyles, longterm change, and things like that.

So I just picked a handful of themes from the book that I think may be helpful for you, and I'm just going to kind of go through those. These are in my words. I'm basically paraphrasing, but I want to take those couple hundred pages or so and really boil it down to 10 or 15 minutes here for you.

So the first thing, and this is kind of a theme throughout the book, and this is the concept of being perfect. And what the author points out is that perfection is the enemy. And he starts out pretty early in the book saying that the most important day of your journey toward your

goal, it's not day one, it's not even the day you meet your goal, but it's the day after perfect. And what he means by that is we have this concept, this notion in our mind that the goal that we're seeking to achieve has to be... we have to make progress toward that goal in a way that screams perfection, okay?

The example that I'll use that many of you are familiar with is a new year resolution. You want to start a new plan, whether it's a diet or an exercise plan, and you do well for a few days, maybe even a week, maybe a few weeks if you're lucky, but then your motivation just starts to fade. You miss a workout or two, and before you know it, you're reverting to some of the previous, less healthy habits that you had the year before.

So what happens here? Why do you get discouraged? Why do you lose hope? And again, as Jon Acuff points out, "This is the ugly voice," he says, "of perfection rearing its head." Because we think, and I fall victim to this all the time, we think that we have to be perfect on our journey. But you don't, you just have to be a little bit better. I mean, there are times when I set out on goals and I tell myself, "Okay, I'm going to start Monday." That's the beginning of the week for me. So I'll go Monday, and for one reason or another, I don't make my goal on the first day. I don't practice the habit that I want to practice, or I don't get work done towards whatever goal or objective that I had set for that week. And it's easy for me to say, "Man, well, this week shot. I wanted to have a near perfect week and I haven't even done anything on the first day. Why don't I just start next Monday? I could probably do better at the perfection piece then."

But that's the wrong way to go because: number one, we can never be perfect. Number two, that just continues to push your goal off further and further to the right. And before you know it, you're putting things off because you're scared that you're not going to be perfect. You don't have to be perfect, you just have to be a little bit better. But everything that we've been told, everything in our society and how we approach these new habits, it reinforces this concept of perfection, but perfection is not the goal. We're told that if you want results, you have to follow this plan and then, oh, it didn't work? Well, you must not have followed the directions perfectly. I'm here to tell you that that is not the case, okay? Name one thing in your life that's perfect. It's not much, right?

Think about some of the things that you've completed in life, on the other hand, maybe college, or challenges, or a test, or driving, getting your driver's license, were you perfect through any of those attempts? Of course not, but you still finished. So he makes a good point in that perfectionism tends to maximize your mistakes and it minimizes your progress. And in some ways, this is easy to see. I mean, let's say you exercised for 364 days of the year and you missed one day, would you consider that year a failure? Of course not. You'd probably celebrate the successes, right? But I'll bet there's also a little part of you that might say, "Man, I was so close to a perfect year." Are you kidding me? I mean, why do we think this way? Why are we so wrapped up in being perfect? It's because the pressure to be perfect is all around us. So don't let your goal for better turn into a goal for best. Why? Because it's not realistic, it's not possible, it's sustainable, and frankly, it's demotivating.

Many of you know that we started the TD Fitness Monthly Membership, and my Action Takers, as I'm calling the group members, we're being deliberate about setting goals that we can meet. This is important early on because the important thing in the beginning is to get some wins, to be successful. That sets the foundation for further success. That's the primary goal for this first week of the Action Taker program of the monthly program. Because the harder you try to be perfect, the less likely you are to achieve your goals. When your goals are closer to perfect, the worst thing that can happen is that you miss your goal and you give up. But the best thing that can happen is that you hit your goal, and then you're burned out and discouraged from trying to make more progress because there's this pressure to be perfect. So

I want you to move forward imperfectly. Reject the idea that perfectionism means that you've failed. As Jon Acuff points out, the opposite of perfectionism isn't failure, it's finished. So I want you to remember that.

The next point that I thought was important from the book, prioritizing is just as much about deciding what you will not do. So when we set out on these goals, we will typically prioritize things related to that goal that are important because we have to take some action, right? We have to change in some way our focus, or change the way that we've been doing, where we are spending our time, the type of activity we're doing, the type of food we're eating maybe. But we often don't realize that what prioritizing really means, when you make something a priority, we have to understand that there are only a certain number of hours in the day, that we only have maybe a fixed amount of willpower, and that we have a limited time, and we have limited resources. That's easy to understand when prioritizing.

But what prioritization means is that we are putting something higher on our list, but that inherently means, we are moving something else down our list of priorities. But we don't often consciously think about those things that we are saying no to, or that we're going to decide not to do. And we get wrapped up in this cycle of trying to add something on the priority list, but really, we don't take anything off. So that's one of the lies of perfectionism that you can do it all. You can't do it all.

Remember that priorities aren't forever, okay? I am constantly reprioritizing. Do I have a deadline tomorrow? Then guess what? That's going to take precedent over the thing due next week. If something comes up at work at the last minute, then maybe being home for dinner just got trumped by work. On the flip side, my boss calls me while I'm on leave, "Sorry, I'm on vacation with my family. It'll have to wait until I return." So we're constantly reprioritizing, right? And we're saying, "This is what's important to me right now." And by saying that, I'm also saying, "This is what is less important just right now." Okay? It's temporary.

So to bring it back to health, were you trying to exercise five days this week? Well, this new job requires some extra hours as you get spun up over the next few weeks. I'm literally living this right now, that's why I use this example. So I know that although my health and fitness are a priority, I have to spend a lot of extra time at work here in this first week or two with the new job, okay?

So decide what you're going to let go of, again, just temporarily to reach your goal. The priorities we have really boils down to the decisions we make. And again, as the author puts it, if you attempt to do it all, you can fail, or you can choose what not to do, what to let go of, and you succeed at a goal that matters. And if there are things that you just can't let go of, some things that you can't take off your priority list, then see if there's a way that you can simplify them, okay?

The third point that Jon Acuff brings up here is that you should make things fun. We've all heard the saying, no pain, no gain, right? Well, that is wrong. Why do we feel that in order to truly achieve some level of success in our goals or in our life for that matter, that we have to suffer along the way? What is it that doesn't make us feel justified unless there's some kind of pain or suffering involved? That if we don't suffer a struggle a little bit, that we'll reach the finish line and we won't really have earned the right to be there? That's bogus. That's the wrong mentality. If you want to stick with something, if you want lasting change, don't you think you'll have a much greater chance of sticking with a habit if it's something that you actually enjoy?

If I'm going to start an exercise plan next week, I guess I better lace up the running shoes and get my motivational music ready, right? I know, yeah, I don't like to run, but I guess this is just

part of the deal. No, that's not part of the deal. Maybe you enjoy swimming. Maybe you enjoy biking. Maybe you enjoy hiking or playing with the kids. Activity that you enjoy is activity that you don't mind doing. Don't try to go on a vegetarian diet if you're a steak lover, okay? Don't try to keep steak out of your diet forever. That's the wrong mentality, okay? Incorporate things that are fun to you, things that you enjoy, but just figure out how to do those things a little bit healthier.

Simon Sinek said, "Working hard for something we care about..." I'm sorry, "Working hard for something we don't care about is called stress, but working hard for something we love is called passion." So make your hard work enjoyable, and you'll find that the habits and the consistency are so much easier to sustain.

So my next and final point here, measure the right things. For so many of us, we measure the wrong things. As an example, we jump on the scale, right? How about instead of tracking our weight, we keep track of how many miles we've run, or maybe we track how many days this week we opted not to have that Mocha Frappuccino that we usually have on the way to work every day? I track the number of hours I sleep because I know that that is important. Many people track their steps. These are all good things.

The point that the author makes in this chapter and that you probably have heard me make many, many times before, is that you can use data to celebrate your imperfect progress. Because perfectionism, again, tries to scream the failure at us and it hides progress. Focus on the process, the progress that you're making, on how you're getting there. Don't focus so much on the product or that outcome that you may or may not be able to directly control. I can't directly control what the scale says every morning when I get on it. And no, I don't weigh myself every morning. Don't recommend that, by the way. But what I do focus on is how many times I exercised this week, how many hours of sleep I got, was I able to do my 14 hours of fasting five times this week? Those types of things. Those are the things that I measure. And as I look back on it, that's how I determine whether or not I had a good week or not. And if I didn't meet my goals, my goal for the next week is simply to do better than I did the week before.

So those are the handful of things that I thought might be helpful to you this week. Don't try to be perfect. That was number one. Number two, choose what you won't do as you prioritize, and accept that. Number three, make it fun if you want it done. And number four, measure the right things.

That's all I have for you this week. The show notes for this episode can be found at [tdfitness.net/080](http://tdfitness.net/080). That's forward slash, 080. Thank you so much for tuning in. As always, I want you to have a blessed week. Coach T. signing out.