

Why Do We Do the Things We Do?

Just about every Saturday, on one of my days off, I'm up at 4am...to spend time preparing this podcast...something that I don't get paid for, and that even if I didn't do, I wouldn't be punished in any way. Why would I do that?

Before I explain and share how this question is related to balance and thriving in your life, let me explain a bit about motivation.

Have you ever wondered how it is that you're highly motivated to do some things but not as motivated to do other, seemingly more important things? Sometimes this difference can be explained through the distinction of where our motivation comes from.

You see, when we're driven by something inside of us, which usually stems from things that we value or are passionate about, we tend to be more motivated...and therefore, we tend to go farther in our efforts to reach our goals.

We see that the converse of this is true as well. When someone tells us to do something, something seemingly important, if the motivation and desire doesn't come from within, then we're less likely to follow through. There are numerous examples of this, particularly in the health domain, which is why there's so much talk, an entire industry, even, on adherence to healthy diets and consistent exercise. You may be surprised to know that even in the health conditions most directly relate to life and death, among those who suffer from chronic disease, approximately 50% of patients don't take their prescription medication. Medical nonadherence, as it's called, is a thing. And it causes up to 100,000 preventable deaths each year and \$100 billion in preventable medical costs each year.

What's going on here? Why not just take your medicine? Well, perhaps to bring it closer to home, why not just eat healthy? Why not just exercise regularly? Those questions are viewed differently when it applies to us, right?

It all comes back to where our motivation comes from. Motivation from within is called intrinsic motivation. External motivation is called extrinsic motivation. When we do something that we're passionate about, we're intrinsically motivated. When we're told to do something, by a doctor, by a boss or by society, those are extrinsic motivators. And extrinsic motivators simply do not provide the same level of motivation over the long term.

And since we aren't necessarily intrinsically motivated by everything, we have to find a way to relate extrinsic motivations to our value system so we can be internally motivated.

Hence the question...what's your "why?" What's your true reason for doing anything you do?

Last week we talked about belief in yourself and starting your journey by envisioning that person, the better version of you, that you want to be. These are important concepts because they help us define where we're going and what we're driving toward. Your 'why' is important too because it's what's pushing or driving you.

So, I've thought a lot about this question. In fact, I think about it all the time. You see, I have a number of things competing for my time. But it's actually easier for me to justify having to go to work each day when I think of balancing that with demands of family. I mean, I have to provide for my family, I'm somewhat invested in my career, and I actually love what I do in my military capacity. It's also relatively easy for me to justify time away from the family to go exercise. In our household, we all understand the importance of health and fitness, and frankly, the amount of time I spend away from the family doing that is fairly minimal in the grand scheme of things.

But what about this work that I do? The TD Fitness work...the work that I don't (at least currently) provide any services through. It's all content production, the podcast, social

media and other mechanisms of coming to you. Why would I spend time on this, and more importantly, why would I take a couple of hours each week away from the family to do this? You all know how important family is in my life.

For the past couple of years for me, this has been pro-bono work...partly because the demands of my military career keep me pretty busy these days, but also because I just have this passion to provide something for you, because I've been blessed in my life. I'm intrinsically motivated in that regard.

I started this journey as a personal trainer, over 15 years ago with the goal of helping others. I've provided exercise plans, met people at the gym or in their spaces, but after a few years, I realized that the impact I could have was ultimately limited. First, by my availability and secondly, by the amount of hours in the day. I could only help a certain number of people. That's why I started to create content that could be shared. But I also realized that healthy living is about more than exercise alone. And that's why I sought to learn more about behavior change, and ultimately was certified as a health coach in 2014. This allowed me to help others with true lifestyle change.

So for me, I want to be able to use my talent, skill and education to help others. I want to do this because I view it as a gift and I want to be able to share that. Who am I to keep this to myself, right? But I also use these opportunities, opportunities such as this one and through this podcast, to grow myself, to step out of my comfort zone and work to be a better communicator.

So those are the reasons why I get up at 4 am to work on my message to you. That's why I spend hours each week creating content that will hopefully help you. That's why I spend money on software, equipment and assistants. I do it because I feel called to. Not because anyone necessarily asks, but because I want to make a positive difference in people's lives while using my God-given talents and abilities to fulfilling His purpose. That's a 'why' I can get behind. And I know it continuously drives me.

That's me. That's who I am. But the question is, "who are you?"

It's important to make your goals, and by definition, your actions, an extension of your values and things that are important to you. Because the more you can relate your goals to things you deeply care about, the easier it will be to stay motivated.

Remember, intrinsic motivation is important when you're trying to change behaviors, instill habits and grow in a particular area of your life. Intrinsic motivation is also more often associated with higher levels of adherence and consistency, meaning you're more likely to stick with a habit and grow if you're doing it for a reason that is important to you. That's why intrinsic motivation and internal desires are key. And that's why it's so important to identify what those true desires are. When your motivation is connected to those deep, personal desires that are important to you, you hardly have to worry about staying motivated. Lasting motivation comes from within.

I am a servant at heart, just like many of you are servants as well. I don't use that word in a negative manner. Serving, in my mind, is actually the highest calling. When I refer to servants, I'm talking about anyone who sacrifices to provide for others. It can be military, first responders, leaders of organizations, caregivers at home, even parents, sons and daughters. Almost all of us serve in some way.

And it's important for us, as servants, to remind ourselves of our 'why.' For those who serve it's even more important. There may not be a paycheck or any tangible reward in what you do, but it's the act of serving that's important. Not only does it bring us closer and closer to our purpose in life, it's also about the example we set for others...for your coworkers and subordinates, for your kids and those who observe you.

If you serve, then you're a person of influence. People are looking at you trying to decide if they want to be like you. What did I see my dad do? I saw him putting others first all the time. What did he see his dad do? What are my kids observing of me?

Seth Godin is quoted as saying, "Enrollment begets more enrollment. Possibility begets more possibility. When we turn on lights for ourselves, we turn on lights for other people as well."

Isaiah 60:1 says, "Let your light shine for all to see. For the glory of the Lord rises to shine on you."

And one of my favorite quotes from Marianne Williamson, "Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, 'Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?' Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

Look at the things that take up most of your time in life...the things that compete for your time. Ask yourself, what's your why? Are you doing this thing for a higher purpose? Are you doing it for yourself? That's not always bad. Personal fulfillment is important too. Or are you doing things for others? This is about understanding yourself better, getting the most out of life and reaching your full potential....and ultimately, it's about living a more balanced and well-rounded life. My 'why' for seeking balance and fulfillment in each area of my life my desire for peace of mind and calmness. I know that when I feel this way, I can be a better spouse, better parent, more productive and less stressed when I put in the work to do what needs to be done. That's part of what drives me...always striving for that place of calm.

We'll talk about your why in family and your why in health and fitness in future episodes. But in the meantime, consider this question. "Why do I work?" Do you live to work or do

you work to live life? If you live to work, is that where you want to be? Is that what you want to be doing? If you work to live, how much work is actually required for you to live the life you want? Really, how much? Or how little? Answer that question.

Think, too, about what 'why' (or purpose) is big enough to drive you to make a change in your life. Napoleon Hill wrote, "the urge to continue [must be] greater than the desire to quit." Identify your why. Determine your true "why" and let this drive internal motivation.

Thanks for listening. Have a blessed one.