

Red Pill Logic: Willpower and Consistency

Black Label Logic | 17 April, 2017 | by Black Label Logic

✘ As with many other men in the manosphere I engage in near constant self-improvement in one or more areas of my life, and one that that I've discovered is how important consistency is in order to gain progress. Perhaps the best example is the influx of people who start using a gym right after new years chasing their resolutions only to drop out a few weeks to a few months later.

They may get a little bit of progress, but they never end up losing as much fat or gaining as much muscle as they desired. This is our innate wiring screwing us over in a way, because historically speaking the people who survived were those who had programming that ensured the biggest energy surplus over a longer period of time.

The other day I saw a tweet by Ed Latimore regarding how underrated consistency is as a value.

Consistency is an incredibly underrated value. You can go very far if you practice a little bit everyday.

— Ed Latimore (@EdLatimore) [April 15, 2017](#)

This tweet, in addition to inspiring this post, got me thinking about some of the great books I've read so far this year that deal with diet, nutrition, training and general self-improvement, and what tends to get in our way when attempting to reach our self-improvement goals. Furthermore, what principles have I adopted over the years in order to remain consistent on various paths of self-improvement.

The Role of Willpower

The way I see self-improvement is that it consists of picking the path that has the most positive benefits for you long-term, or at the very least is perceived as having these benefits, while requiring a sacrifice of your first instinct. For instance, going to the gym and lifting despite being tired as all hell, or holding off from savaging the cake table and sticking with a ketogenic diet. This requires enough strength of will to resist the temptation and instead selecting the reasonable option.

I tend to think of willpower as being limited to a certain amount over time, a bit like a health-bar in a video-game, in that you only get a certain amount, and you expend a little bit at a time when you have to resist temptation not to follow the easy path. Walking past the cake table may take 5% willpower, forcing yourself out of the chair and to the gym may require 15% willpower, and not going out to party may require 25% willpower.

These costs are naturally modified by each other, and external factors, for instance not getting sufficient sleep affects your total willpower, not getting sufficient nutrients for a long period of time increases the odds of cheating on a diet, getting the flu affects the amount it takes to get out of bed and into the gym. Time has an effect, for some, the longer they stick with a routine, the easier it becomes to follow, to some the longer they stick with it, the harder it becomes to follow.

In my experience, you can power through for quite a while if you are determined enough, however relying purely on willpower, as opposed to building a system that takes willpower out of the equation most of the time, tends to be very high risk.

This comes from the fact that if you have to “will” yourself to train, follow your diet, do your work or many other things, you will eventually run out, and end up losing progress. I spent quite a bit of time

working out factors that make the willpower costs lower and the systems easier to establish and maintain in order to secure progress. In my opinion it comes down to the following principles.

Simplification

This principle is something I found quite late, but which has worked wonders especially when it comes to diet. For those who follow my twitter feed, you'll know that I tend to follow low-carb/ketogenic/paleo diets most of the year, and to begin with I would seek a lot of variety in my meals. However, this variety had a very high price on multiple fronts.

First of all, it would make keeping track of macro and micronutrients more time consuming, owing to the total number of different ingredients and components of my eating plan. Secondly, it required more focus and planning when it came to grocery purchasing. Thirdly, it required a lot of time spent on food preparation.

Once I switched to eating 3 – 4 different meals, requiring simple ingredients, and having a minimum of preparation time, it became much easier to stick with the program, as it was simple. It also meant that if I wanted something outside of the simple ingredients required to prepare ketogenic meals, I had to run out to buy them. People tend to underestimate how having something available in the house acts to enable inconsistent behavior.

In stealing a concept from Total Quality Management (TQM), you must make it easier to adhere to your program, than it is to not adhere to your program.

Measuring

Tracking whatever you are doing is another important factor, not only to keep motivation up by making progress easy to see, but also to ensure that you are managing your program correctly. Business guru Peter Drucker is known for the quote “*What gets measured gets managed*“. If you are not tracking whatever self-improvement journey you are on, how do you know if you are still on the journey, making progress or if you have stagnated completely?

If you set a goal to approach and meet more women in the new year, how are you going to track your progression and thus, the effect of the applied methodology? The classic tool for this in the manosphere is the field report, where men write logs of their attempts, successes and failures, so that they both keep themselves on track, and ensure accountability.

I view measuring as assisting in navigating from point A to point B in the most direct line possible. Once you lay out and begin on a path, you need to make sure that you stay on that path. Once you find your mission, the process must be designed and performance indicators created, to ensure that you do not stray from the determined path.

Accountability

This factor is a double-edged sword, some prefer to run out and tell all their friends what they are doing, hoping that their friends will be the enforcers of the program. A friend of mine recently gave up cigarettes, and enlisted his entire circle of friends and family to keep him accountable. Others prefer to not tell anyone and trust their own ability to keep themselves in line.

I tend to prefer the latter for the simple reason that friends and family tend to be very poor at keeping you

accountable, unless they are the type of person who feels comfortable meddling in the lives of other people. On the other hand, those who are highly comfortable meddling in your life, will be overly invested as they finally have permission to bitch at you, and this often results in an “over-invasion” in your life. Rather than only keeping you accountable in the specific area you requested, they tend to hear “*Please shape me into your vision of a better me*“, which is a surefire way to ruin a relationship.

There is also the added factor of “*concern trolling*” when it comes to self-improvement, wherein people pretending to have your best interests in mind, try to convince you to abandon the path you are on prior to you reaching the goal you have set for yourself.

Program Fit

Program fit refers to how well suited a given path is for your situation, psychology and abilities.

Adapting a program for your situation, refers to the fact that if you adopt a program that does not fit your context it promotes putting yourself in unwinnable situations much of the time. If the college classes you want to take require 50 hours a week of dedicated time, but you only have 20 hours available or your workout program requires a 2 hour drive to find a gym that has the required equipment, the program is not tailored around your life.

Finding a program suited for your psychology is similar to the above, in that you want to avoid programs that rely on your psychological weak-points to be strong-points or vice versa. As an example, if you cannot just have 1 drink, it’s better to give up drinking all together at least for a period of time, instead of ending up on binges twice a week.

Finally, a program that fits your abilities is crucial in order to ensure that it has a path of progression that encourages adherence. Entering a class that requires advanced math abilities you do not have, a weight lifting program best suited for advanced lifters or running out to do your 100 approaches before learning basic social abilities is almost guaranteed to be a discouraging experience.

I cannot remember who told the story, but a guy who trained people tended to put his first-timers through absolute hell the first session, ensuring that they could barely move the next day, the result of this being that few, if any ever showed up for a second session.

Summary and Conclusions

I referenced total quality management earlier in this essay. Now TQM began as a management approach in manufacturing companies in order to improve the quality of the end product. In order to ensure this, the company would build the production process in a way that made it very easy to do the right thing, and very difficult to do the wrong thing. Think of it as seeking to eliminate Murphy’s law through process engineering.

This does not mean that every aspect of your life has to be structured completely, it means that you must be aware of the things that tend to take you off course and create systems to minimize their impact.

Personalities tend to manifest as either process oriented or goal oriented. A process oriented personality tend to view the world as “*If the process is correct, the goal will be achieved*” whereas a goal oriented personality views it as “*If the goal was achieved, the process was correct*“. The former tends to sacrifice the goal in order to maintain a flawed process, whereas the latter tends to sacrifice the process to reach a flawed goal.

Knowing your preferred approach tends to dictate where you need to focus your attention to ensure

consistency, as the process oriented person tends to frequently adjust their goals in order to be better in line with the process, which often leads to failing to attain the original goal. Whereas the goal-oriented person often adjusts their process, which hinders progress towards the original goal as an unforeseen consequence.

The former is the guy who has been doing the same weight-lifting program for 5 years with little improvement to show for it, but who never considers changing his program. The latter is the guy who changes his weight-lifting program every week because he read an article about “*keeping his body guessing*”.

A note:

I recently launched a [Patreon page](#) where I will be posting additional content every month for those who support me and I will do a Google Hangout for the highest tier Patrons (limited to 10 people).

I’ve also had some requests for consults, which I’ve declined up until now, but due to demand I’ve chosen to open up for doing some consults on request. For details please check out my [Consulting and Patreon Page](#)

[As always you can buy my book Gendernomics at Amazon.com as both paperback and Kindle](#)

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