

The Quest4Life Podcast Show Notes:

Season #3, Episode #26: Arguing Against Your Potential

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What is potential?

As an adjective, potential is “having or showing the capacity to become or develop into something in the future.”

As a noun, potential is “latent qualities or abilities that may be developed and lead to future success or usefulness.” In thinking about each definition, I recall hearing a professional football scout say in response a question about what potential is and he said, “It means you haven’t done anything yet.”

There is no doubt that there is truth in his statement, but what isn’t known is whether a person who hasn’t done anything yet hasn’t done anything because they argue against their own potential.

Another way of stating this is that some people never pursue or intend to pursue their potential because they’ve talked themselves out of it. They’ve already decided that pursuing this or that it’s too difficult or too time consuming or wouldn’t be accepted by others.

And thus, they win the argument with themselves by NOT putting themselves out there in the first place. They prove themselves right by not being able to realize their full potential because they never gave realizing their full potential an honest shot.

What follows are 5 ways to begin arguing *for*, rather than *against*, your potential and engaging with any number of them will level-up your mindset.

#1: Develop a Growth Mindset

Based on research from psychologist Dr. Carol Dweck, embracing challenges, focusing on effort over outcome, and having a belief that you can grow and improve are all critical components to reaching your potential.

Each component speaks to the notion of having a growth mindset, which gives you the ability to view challenges as opportunities, to prioritize learning over seeking the approval of others, and even taking pleasure from and being inspired by the success of others.

By contrast, having a fixed mindset keeps you mired in a mental space that actively avoids challenges or giving up easily or even being threatened by the success of others.

#2: Hire a Coach

At the height of his success, Tiger Woods had 6 coaches. From a swing coach to a personal trainer to a nutritionist, Woods understood that, to reach his full potential as a world-class golfer, he needed to surround himself with people that could help to bring out the best in him.

Working with a coach or, at minimum, having an accountability partner can absolutely change how you go about pursuing your potential.

In fact, just the act of hiring a coach connects to the idea of arguing for your potential...not to mention that the coach or coaches you hire act as a force for encouraging you to press on, especially when adversity strikes.

Check out the coaching options at thequest4life.com

#3: Set Goals

In terms of potential, it's not enough to simply manage a To-Do list. You need to create a To-Be list. To create such a list, ask yourself:

“What would a new and improved version of yourself look like?”

“How would I feel if I achieved my goals?”

“In what ways would I be changed if I accomplished my goals?”

#4: Be Fractionally Better

One of the pits people fall into with respect to achieving their potential is that they believe doing so is daunting or the challenges they must overcome are insurmountable. But by focusing on becoming fractionally better every day, moving toward your potential becomes manageable.

It's this idea that if we can “chunk” our efforts into smaller bits and pieces, we can make fractional improvements that, over time, lead to transformative results. So, take an inventory of those things that are “micro-habits,” which are things that you do each day that take 30 seconds or less and identify the ones that support you reaching your potential and those that don't.

From there, identify new micro-habits that you'd like to create and begin working them into your daily routine.

#5: Take Time to Recharge

You've probably heard the adage that each of us are “Human beings” not “Human doings.” And yet, most people fill their lives so full they have no time to rest and recover. Their lives are always “on” in the attempt to feel productive.

Keep in mind that the quest toward your potential is a marathon, not a sprint. Thus, taking time to recharge, whether that's focusing on getting better quality sleep or by adopting mindfulness practices or engaging in regular meditative practices, is over-the-top essential to achieving peak performance.

Research is clear that recharging is critical to memory function, learning, and avoiding cognitive decline that accompanies getting older.

Final Thoughts

Consider having a conversation with people you trust to give it to you straight and get their take on the ways you've argued against your potential.

Afterwards, have them describe what they would do to argue for your potential if they were living in your shoes.

There is no doubt that, at minimum, you'll gain a fresh perspective on what it means to live to your fullest potential. Such a shift can be game changing for your life.

As usual, it's food for thought, Fellow Questers.

