

HUBERMAN GOALS PROTOCOL

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INTRODUCTION

The Huberman Goals Protocol is a neurobiological and vision based plan that can be applied to all skills in sports, music, learning, work, and life. Knowing how your brain works, you can leverage the basic tools that all humans possess. When you reach one goal, you build the neural circuits and make the dopamine that comes along with breaking barriers to achieve the next goal. You learn how to enjoy the *process* (even the discomfort) of the *effort* of pursuing the next goal.

The ultimate goal is *freedom* from the oppression of pushing through so called discipline and mental toughness (which leads to burnout), but instead feel compelled by *intrinsic motivation* and joy in the work. You have circuits within you where you can lean into effort, engage in difficult things, dig your heels in, and overcome procrastination.

If you do this in a persistent way, this allows you to reach your goals with a quieter mind and less friction. It's magic and it's science, and the holy grail of success and transformation.

This is a summary and compilation of 20+ hours of Huberman Lab podcasts to help improve the compliance rate my SVI patients, but also to help them, my own children, and myself set and achieve any goal with a proven, repeatable, reliable method. As per Dr. Huberman's style, this is available for you at zero-cost.

INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Who sets the goal matters. Today's the day you stop caring what other people think and have a sense of autonomy. Do not wait for the perfect conditions. Do not wait for permission to act. Sometimes you have to put on the blinders, stop questioning your ideas, and let the industry decide if you're right or not. Demand more for yourself. No one else will do this for yourself but you. You already have everything you need to do big things.

What the goal is matters. Is what you're working toward something you're curious enough to learn and read about? The "what" must come from within your own SELF. Not your mom and dad. Not your buddies. Not your coaches. *YOU*. No one outside of you can know what's best for you in your own uniqueness. Don't just live from achievement to achievement and check off another box. Pursue and take what belongs to you!

Change is not easy at first, but it gets easier. There are no quick fixes, and not everyone really wants to get better. The really good things in life take effort. When you make a choice outside the default programming, the subconscious will attempt to pull you back, creating limbic friction. But you can ground yourself in your sensory system (breathing, interoception, and vision), become conscious, disconnect yourself from your monkey mind, and witness yourself without judgment.

This work is empowering, profound, and bigger than yourself. A little part of you dies and a new little part is born. Find your life's work and transform into the person you've always been in your core, the person the Source made you to be. You will learn who you are and what you are capable of.

DOPAMINE

Dopamine is a neuromodulator chemical in the brain closely related to motivation. Dopamine levels shape our perception of life, our emotions, our passion, and how capable we perceive ourselves to be. We are all equipped with this tool, should know how to use it, and how to find the next healthy, productive dopamine hit.

Very simply put, it is released (peaks) in anticipation of what you want and as a reward for when you get what you want. When your dopamine is low (trough), you don't like it and you crave, so it's a trigger to get moving. In order to generally get motivated and stay motivated, you need to build up a baseline dopamine pool.

There's a certain amount of time between the craving (trough) and the reward (peak) you can leverage. This time should NOT be immediate (this is how addictions happen). The troughs are uncomfortable but good for you. The best thing to do is learn how troughs feel, cognitively link the symptoms to what's going on, and get out of the sticking points where effort and reward can accelerate your path toward a goal in a way you can do it repeatedly. We don't have to do a lot of work to get the dopamine back. Just being aware of your biology is half the solution.

For example, casinos use Random Intermittent Reward Timing to schedule dopamine release to keep people motivated to gamble and take their money. It works 100% of the time and we'll use it in the goal protocol. Celebrate your wins, but not every win. Associate winning with the effort. This way, the dopamine is not linked with an external-reward-driven experience, but an internal experience. And then when you do win, you'll get the external rewards as well.

The brain does not know if the reward is external or internal. But the dopamine system does know whether you are on the right track and under cognitive control (the prefrontal cortex is largely connected to the dopamine pathway). This allows you to have a top-down control over your own physiology, and telling yourself you are moving toward a goal is a huge stimulator of dopamine release under your conscious control. Whether you win or lose your brain will know, but your mind will register that you are progressing toward a milestone.

Limbic friction can go two ways: you're tired and don't want to do something, or you're nervous and scared. Imagine you don't like to exercise, and you're not motivated to do it. Checking your phone, for example, causes less limbic friction than exercise, so we tend to do something like that. You need 5 go to hacks to help us leverage the limbic friction and lean into effort. You'll find yourself at a better than baseline level of dopamine because you steepened and deepened the trough. Do NOT get on your phone. Examples include:

1. Get one minute or five minutes into the session. That's your first milestone.
2. Cold plunge or shower (explained later)
3. Meditation (5-10 minutes of efforted focus on self-inventory, available anytime anywhere)
4. Wait (the trough will pass)
5. Think about how bad you'll feel if you don't accomplish your goal

VISUALIZATION

In addition to physical training, visualization can accelerate your improvement and stabilize your learning. Your visualization epochs should be brief *15-20 second sessions, then take 15-20 second breaks. Repeat 50-75 times. Do this 3-5 times/week.* During your visualization, try to move your eyes in the direction they'll move during the activity.

Visualize in 1st person. Do not include a lot of elaboration, however with a high degree of accuracy and taking the exact same amount of time as in the real world. Whatever you name your activity in your visualization, name it in the real world (for example, Golf Swing 1a). 3rd person visualization can also work well with viewing video. Be obsessed with game film if you want some processing to bypass your central nervous system in games. You can also use a face swap app to allow yourself to actually see yourself as the person you want to be.

Declare to yourself that your visualization will come true. When the time comes, advance your visualization with abandon. Be a touch insane and unreasonable when you manifest your visualization.

MINDSETS

There are 2 mindsets *you and your coach/teacher/parent absolutely must have* to repeatedly & reliably reach goals. It comes down to what you believe. Just simply adopting these mindsets makes you 40-60% more likely to succeed.

1. GROWTH MINDSET

Your brain and abilities are not fixed. You can change and grow. Neuroplasticity *will* happen when you devote attentional effort. If you can't do something... you just can't do it YET.

By contrast there is the PERFORMANCE MINDSET: Your abilities are fixed. You are or aren't "talented." When you are too worried about performance, you are attached to the outcome. The reward-prediction error will work against you and the dopamine trough. If you don't get the outcome you want (which is guaranteed to happen at some point), the dopamine trough is lower, which leads to lack of motivation and the downward spiral.

Learn to attach emphasis of praise and joy on the behavior and effort, not the outcome, intelligence, and talent. Studies show that *praise for labels can actually undermine motivation for performance*.

EMPHASIS ON VERBS / BEHAVIOR / EFFORT = TAKE ON MORE DIFFICULT CHALLENGES = RESULTS & GROWTH
EMPHASIS ON NOUNS / OUTCOME / INTELLIGENCE / TALENT / LABEL = SHAME & PSYCHOLOGICAL SPIRAL

Your level of persistence and effort is a variable you can control. At the end of our life, the only thing we can control is where you place your focused attention and where you place your effort. No one else can do that for us. The cornerstone of the Growth Mindset is to be less emotional and more cognitive. When you fail, say a little "oops", observe, learn, and recalibrate. Learn how to learn. Failure is good.

2. STRESS-IS-ENHANCING MINDSET

Start to think about stress in a different way. *Leverage stress and limbic friction*. Stress allows us to adapt, engage socially, and mobilize resources in the body that allows us to pay attention to the things that are going wrong in a way that allows us to *make correction* to those things in the future. We feel stress in real time when it's happening. Discomfort (shortened breath, faster heart rate, heat, sweat, pain, etc.) is not pleasant. It does not always lead to good performance at that particular time. It often takes away from us showing up the way we want to. Shift your attention from "I feel terrible" to a mode of cognitively tell yourself *why* your elevated heart rate and sweaty hands and discomfort are fording you an advantage. *Shift your mind away from the raw discomfort. Shift your body away from a negative state to a positive state*. Failure is good.

This will actually decrease cortisol release duration and increase peripheral blood flow, which will ultimately leave you less panicked. This will aid in more cognitive control. All you have to do is adopt the Stress-is-Enhancing Mindset. Then this will plug you into the Growth Mindset as you lean into the challenge and effort.

Studies show that if you have the mindset that stress is diminishing, then stress will be diminishing. If you have the mindset that stress is enhancing, then stress will be enhancing. This is not a placebo.

Difficulty is a sign that you're expanding. Stress and failure are indicators that your understanding is deepening, that you are learning, and that you are growing. Suffering and agitation means that the synapses in your brain circuits are changing and getting better.

EXTRA CREDIT: Write a handwritten letter to someone else coming along who is trying to get good at the thing you are wanting to get good at too explaining to them what the Growth Mindset and the Stress-is-Enhancing Mindset are.

HOW TO INCREASE FOCUS

Part of the block is going to be frustration, yet we need to keep concentration. These are just guidelines.

1. ACCESS OPEN MONITORING

- Take 17 minutes, close your eyes and be interoceptive
- Be aware of and learn how to listen to physical state. Immerse your attention in your own breathing, pulse (see how many times you can count your pulse), contact of skin, pressure of back on your bed/butt in chair/soles in shoes, ringing in ears or other sounds, little itches.

-Doing this just *once* significantly reduces attentional blinks. Focus gets better nearly permanently without additional training. This can forever rewrite your brain to attend better and offset attentional drift. Open monitoring works the first time and it works every time, though it's unclear how. There's something about reducing the visual information coming in. Its effects are significant and long lasting.

2. PUT PHONE ON AIRPLANE MODE / GIVE IT TO SOMEONE ELSE – best productivity app

3. USE VISUAL FOCUS TO MAINTAIN MENTAL FOCUS

- Spotlight your visual attention on one single spot 30+ seconds, gradually work up to 90+ seconds
- Actively work to maintain your visual focus on that spot during that time
- You can do any time you are feeling a lack of motivation at any point of any training block
- This increases natural dopamine

4. SUNLIGHT & PANORAMIC VISION IN THE MORNING

- Face sunlight east as early in the day as possible, no sunglasses/windshield/window
- 5-10 minutes on a clear day, 20 minutes on a cloudy day, no sunglasses/windshield

5. OPTIMAL TIMES TO TRAIN WHEN THERE'S OPTIMAL FOCUS

- generally 30 minutes, 3 hours, and 11 hours after awakening
- It's ok if it does not happen during this time; it's more important to stick with the goal

HOW TO INCREASE DOPAMINE

1. GET GOOD SLEEP & NON-SLEEP DEEP REST, ESPECIALLY ON NIGHTS AFTER TRAINING AND VISUALIZATION

- this is when you build your natural dopamine pool (up to 65%) and build neural networks

2. COLD SHOWER IN THE MORNING

- 2-3 minutes, colder than what feels comfortable, **more than doubles your dopamine 1-4 hours**
- not after strength or hypertrophy training

3. INCORPORATE RANDOM REWARDS – after each session flip a coin, 50/50 chance

- if it lands on tails, just move on
- if it lands on heads, randomly reward yourself within the effort and between efforts
- save video games, sweet treats, fun stuff for these wins, remind yourself what a badass you are

4. EAT/SUPPLEMENT PROPERLY & EXERCISE

- Consider your gut health and microbiome. Your gut is a *second brain* with neurons/neuromodulators
- L-tyrosine, caffeine, Alpha-GPC ← be careful how you stack
- If unmotivated, every 3rd or other block try 300 mg alpha GPC, or every 3-4 blocks take 500 mg L-tyrosine and 500 mg phenylethylamine. Every 2-3 months stack all of them. **DO NOT STACK THEM EVERY TIME.** You do not want to become dependent. *Guard and protect what you love. Let the dopamine rush be the currency.*

Consult with your doctor before adding any supplementation and guidance on microbiome/gut health, especially if you have bipolar, depression, ADHD, or any other dopamine sensitive condition!

GOAL LOG

THE GOAL (must print this out and handwrite pen & paper):

Criteria (please check off):

- My goal is specific (number, measurable, length, etc).
- My goal is something *I* want (not my parents or coaches). *I* came up with my goal on *my* own. My goal is something *I* want from my inner core more than anything. (Intrinsic Motivation)
- My goal is a verb action, not a “be” comment. (Growth Mindset)
- My goal is a touch insane and more than I think I ought to achieve (my subconscious knows when the dopamine reward better than, worse than, or the same as the craving).
- I am OK with the discomfort that will come along with the process of attaining the goal (errors, anxiety, mistakes, fatigue, etc). I know for a fact this will happen, and will leverage the failure along the way. States of discomfort enable neuroplasticity and change. My brain knows I’m pursuing something big. (Stress-is-Enhancing Mindset)

EACH GOAL PURSUIT DAY:

- Gauge motivation.
 - Ask yourself “How motivated am I today? “Do I want to pursue this goal?” or “Am I feeling resistance?”
 - If 6-10/10 / more motivated:
 - Spend 1-5 minutes visualizing THE POSITIVE FEELING STATE YOU WILL HAVE WHEN YOU MEET THE GOAL.
 - If 1-4/10 / less motivated:
 - Spend 1-5 minutes visualizing HOW TERRIBLE YOU WILL FEEL IF YOU FAIL TO MEET YOUR GOAL.
 - This is NOT a time to get encouragement.

“THE MIDDLE PROBLEM”:

People have a lot of motivation at the outset of setting a goal and at the end when they start to perceive the finish line. But in the middle of the cycle, they are less motivated. We have tried to eliminate The Middle Problem by breaking it down into smaller chunks. HAVE MORE DELIBERATE VIGOR IN THIS STAGE.

- I Acknowledge that The Middle Problem will probably happen, that it is natural, and that everyone experiences it. I will have more deliberate vigor in this time.

Sign here: _____ Date: _____

12 WEEK GOAL PURSUIT LOG

Clearly define the following:

hours/week you'll spend on the Goal: _____

hours/day you'll spend on the Goal: _____

What days of the week you'll spend on the Goal: _____

BEGINNING

Start Date: _____

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
WEEK 1							
WEEK 2							
WEEK 3							
WEEK 4							

THE MIDDLE PROBLEM PART 1

4 Week Mark: _____

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
WEEK 5							
WEEK 6							

THE MIDDLE PROBLEM PART 2

6 Week Mark: _____

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
WEEK 7							
WEEK 8							

END

8 Week Mark: _____

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
WEEK 9							
WEEK 10							
WEEK 11							
WEEK 12							

FINISH LINE (End Date): _____

3 GET OUT OF JAIL FREE DAYS _____

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