



Legendary Strength Podcast

Deceptive Strength

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Hey, what's up, guys? It's Logan Christopher with the [Legendary Strength podcast](#). We're going to be having a fun episode today when I'm going to be talking about [Deceptive Strength](#), my new book, and really giving you some of the ideas of what's in it, how it came back, and all that.

Before we get into that, it's my birthday so happy birthday to me as of the time I'm recording this on the 13th. As a part of what I do for my birthday, one, I like to buy myself some things. So there are two new additions to what I've been doing lately that I'll be talking about. One, actually you may hear this slightly if you hear sort of a humming in the background. This is because I'm walking on a treadmill. I didn't buy myself a treadmill but what I bought was treadmill desk. I'm not a huge fan of treadmills as far as exercising but I'm tired of sitting on my butt all day long as I work in my home office, delivering all this information to you. So I decided to mix it up. I've been hearing about this a whole lot. In the future, I will be writing an article about its benefits and my experience of all this so be sure to look for that coming soon.

Also just the other day, I went to my local sporting goods store. My plan was just to buy a couple more 45-pound plates because I've been doing some weightlifting exercises in the gym where I required more weight. I basically maxed out all the weight that I was using for some partial lifts and that sort of thing. What I wanted really were 100-pound plates but I didn't expect they have them locally. I was just going to have 45s but they actually happened to have 50-kilogram, those are 110-pound plates there, so I happily snapped those up. They're rusty, they're used, but that also means they're quite a bit cheaper than what I was looking to spend on some plates. I've been using those. I just got one workout in.

It's really cool. When you have a new piece of equipment, if it's something that's completely new, then of course you're going to set PRs because it can be in movements that you've never done before but just sort of the excitement of having these weights, I knew I'll be able to set more of them. I'd maxed out on the rack pole before with the weights I had so I knew I'd be able to go further with it. I went up to 815 pounds, once again maxing out the weights I had. I think I'll actually have a video up of that within a couple of days, when this podcast goes out, showing you that it's really cool. Now that I'm at 815, even though I'm not going to buy more plates, I figure I can actually hang some kettlebells from that. I want to break 1,000 pounds in this lift.

Part of it was just having the newness of being able to do that but even after this, after I've maxed out on a rack pole, I went and did the [Jefferson deadlift](#). Although I didn't require these new weight plates, I had them on the bar and I was able to hit 465 pounds, which is an all-time PR in that variation of deadlift, which is really cool. So I'm working back up to my previous best of 505 and then once I hit that, I'll just be moving beyond it.

Once again, in case you aren't aware of all my goals, I want to get up to 605 sometime this year. That's a pretty significant amount of gain, over 100 pounds over a previous best. I'm still building up to that but getting closer and closer. Well, we'll see just how close I get or if I can accomplish it in that time. I believe I can because deadlifts are something I love doing, I really enjoy doing. I've got a lot of variations. Using biofeedback, I'm able to go really far with those.

So that's kind of the new stuff. Along with that, on my birthday, I decided to launch my new book. I want to give you a little bit of a back story on this. The name of the book is *Deceptive Strength: Becoming Strong while Staying Small*. The idea of *Deceptive Strength*, I forgot exactly when that came about. I could be wrong but it may have been when we did the workshop with [Dennis Rogers](#) a couple of years back, maybe a year and a half back.

Anyway the idea of [Deceptive Strength](#)—I believe I had it before that time now that I think about it—was that I don't look personally like I'm as strong as I happen to be. The reason for this is that the public is ignorant of what true strength really is. When I first started training, the only thing I was exposed to was bodybuilding. That's how most people think about strength. That's all there is out there. Nowadays there's a little bit more. [CrossFit](#) is definitely huge and that is helping to spread more effective training. Yes, there are problems with CrossFit but there's an idea beyond you need to get bloated muscles and get strong. That idea is still very pervasive out there, that big muscles mean you're strong and that if you don't have big muscles then you can't be strong.

This is a fallacy. Muscular size is correlated with strength but it is not causative. It's not exactly equal. Just because you have big muscles doesn't mean you're that strong. We've all heard of plenty of bodybuilders that do nothing but pumping exercises that can grow up their muscular tissue but won't necessarily be very strong. Now there are definitely some very strong bodybuilders out there. I don't want to completely say that bodybuilding is worthless. It's not at all. But the idea that strength and muscle are one and the same is not true. There are several different ways that you can be much stronger than what your muscles look like they can do. That's only one facet of strength.

Just because the size of a muscle means there's more, stronger, or bigger contractile proteins that allow you to contract harder against whatever resistance you're working on, the truth is there's so much more going on. You need the nervous system to be sending those signals that get those muscle fibers to contract. If you just strengthen your nervous system, strengthen that neural wiring from the brain through your nervous systems to your muscles, you're going to be stronger because you're able to do that.

Even with the same amount of muscle fibers if you can actually just contract more of them, because the truth is not all of your muscle fibers contract at any one time, if they did they'd be so strong. People that have been struck by lightning have in fact had their bones broken because their muscles contracted with such force because of that electricity that is part of what our nervous system runs off of. That lightning strike would cause their muscles to contract so hard that their bones would snap.

We've all heard stories of little old ladies lifting cars off of family members in order to help them survive. There are probably some mythological proportions to these stories but there's a bunch of them and people in those sorts of situations have much more strength than they normally would have. It's because all the inhibitions have come off. The nervous system actually allows the body to fire much more of the strength that it has.

This is one of the reasons I've gotten so far into the mental and energetic training. If we have all this strength available, it's not just a matter growing strength or just growing our muscles so we can be stronger but unlocking what is really already there so that we're better able to use it.

Now of course this must be done in a safe manner. You can learn how to shut down those sort of inhibitions your mind and your body has on itself in order to get stronger but there can be a cost to doing that. What many people don't know is that when people do these Herculean [feats of strength](#) after not training in a life or death situation, a lot of times they end up injured afterwards because things break down. It's because our body is trying to protect us by not allowing us to exert all of our strength at once.

Anyways back to the whole idea of deceptive strength. In performing in different strongman shows and just showing off even on the internet, I don't look that strong. I would always hear that statement, *"You don't look that strong."* *"You don't look like you should be able to do the things that you do,"* like [bending horseshoes](#), [ripping phone books](#), [lifting different sorts of weights](#), [bodyweight exercises](#).

Bodyweight's a little bit different because that's sort of the realm of the circus performers or gymnasts who are often really small. But the whole weightlifting, especially the grip strength, that is the flawed perception people have out there, that you need big muscles in order to do this. As I've already said, muscular strength is such a small part of everything that is going on. The nervous system, as we've already said, is a huge part of it. Just your mind's power, which is going to be driving the nervous system that drives the muscular power as well is such a huge part of it. We've also got tendon, ligament, and bone strength, which are huge parts, especially for the grip feats. You don't have a lot of muscle in your hands and forearms. True, there's some there and it does play a part but really more of the strength comes from the tendons and the ligaments in being able to perform these feats of strength.

So when someone says, “*You don’t look that strong,*” what are they saying? How does someone look strong? It’s because they have big muscles. That’s really the only way you can look strong, or I guess if you’re just big in general, which just like a huge fact I didn’t necessarily look strong but just bigger people in general look stronger because they are going to have some more muscle mass than other people. A huge stocky fellow has much mass there even if they’re not cut up like a bodybuilder. You just need to be big in order to look strong.

That’s why I really like the cover for *Deceptive Strength*. If you haven’t seen that, just head over to my website LegendaryStrength.com and look around. You’ll find the book there. I have an art guy that does my covers and other stuff along those lines. He always surprises me with the ideas that he has so I usually say, “*Hey, I need a cover for this. Come up with something.*” Most of the time, it’s really awesome and I’m quite happy with it. This one I decided to use a picture of a 505 deadlift, my record deadlift, holding that in the front and what he did was take that and I’m not very big. I’m 6’2”, 185. That’s one thing on the internet. You really can’t tell height, size, weight, all that from videos. A lot of times, people are surprised when they meet me or I meet other people and they just don’t look like they do in the videos because it all depends on how it comes across.

Anyway with this picture, you’ve got the 505 deadlift and there’s basically a shadow of a bodybuilder behind, a huge, muscular person right behind. That’s sort of the idea. You have all this strength but the appearance of strength isn’t necessarily there. That’s not to say that I look like I’m weak. My genetic build is certainly to be along the smaller lines and we’ll talk a little bit about genetics but I don’t look like a weak person. If I never got into this whole strength training and fitness thing, I would likely probably weigh around 150 pounds. I would be extremely skinny. So yes, I put on muscle mass by doing it but part of it comes from my genetics. I’m not going to deny that but a lot of it has to do with how I train and that’s what I lay out in this book. I give 25 key concepts that I’ll help you along these lines with.

Now it’s kind of a funny thing to write a book about this because there are not that many people interested. Most people who get into training do it for two reasons. One is to lose weight. That’s by far the biggest but that’s not what I specialize in though I certainly give some ideas here and there. It’s really fairly simple. It can be complex in certain ways but if you do the right things, losing weight is not too hard.

Other people want to put on muscular size. Really the whole strength component isn’t done as much but for me, that’s the most fun and a certain number of other people out there who also enjoy it as well. For certain people, this can be a big component in some sports where they have weight classes where of course you want to be as strong as possible. That can help you in your sport like wrestling, different martial arts. In even other sports as well where there may be some weight classes, you want to stay at a certain weight class so you can be adding muscle size. Getting much stronger is certainly going to help with that so that can be a big part of it.

For me, it’s more really just a matter of not wanting to look that big. It’s really not just my goal at all. At some point some time, depending on goals like right now I’m working towards a 605-point deadlift, adding muscle mass would certainly make that easier to do but I’m not going to go up to 250 pounds in

order to be able to do it. I might approach closer to 200 while I'm doing this but really I could stay about my same size and just build up my strength to do it. Certainly adding muscle can help but it really depends on your goals. This book is all about people who aren't concerned with that or really don't want to add muscle mass.

What are the steps you need to do in order to do it? I want to talk about one of the key concepts in here. This is key concept number 2. In your training, focus on performance, not on the scale or muscle measurements. This is something we've been talking about here. That is my number one focus when I'm training. What can I do? How much weight can I lift? How many reps can I do it for? What body weight exercises can I do? What feats of strength can I do? These are all performance-based goals.

The funny thing is back when I was in high school and I got started with strength training—you can't really call it that when I did bodybuilding because I didn't know anything else was out there. That's all I was exposed to so I was literally doing routines out of bodybuilding magazines. I did play football, too, and we did some sort of powerlifting but our strength coaches weren't the best in the world. I did have some, I guess, some other exposure but my goal during that time because I was so scrawny—I weighed less than 100 pounds when I entered high school—was to look a little better because it's funny, if I look back on some pictures of me there, wow, I really was very skinny back then. The term “*bean pole*” would apply to me.

Back then, I wasn't really into the whole strength thing. I was just training in order to look better. You know what? It didn't really work. I was doing all this stuff and granted my training was not the most effective training out there, I wasn't getting that sort of result I wanted. Fast-forward a little bit and I get into doing bodyweight exercises. With this, I was actually aiming towards performance-based goals, being able 100 reps of a Hindu push-up, for instance.

I remember one of my first big goals was to be able to work up to a [handstand push-up](#), just touching my head to the ground and pushing back up. I couldn't even come close to doing this. If I unlocked my arms I would come tumbling down. That's how weak I was when I started out. So I had these performance-based goals and when I had these performance-based goals, the body took care of itself. I added weight without even focusing on that. I really don't remember when I was at what weight but I've been around 180 or 185 for the past few years, just floating up and down, around that level because once again, my training is focused on performance. The scales take care of themselves. The muscle mass takes care of itself. If I wanted to add more, I would change my training in order to reflect that.

That's what I do in this book here. I talk about what it takes in order to gain muscles mass and we're going to do the opposite. So we're reverse engineering what it takes to become bigger in order to not become bigger and there are certain factors in how you play with your training in order to achieve one goal over another.

Let's move on to another key concept in there and this one has to do with genetics, which I do discuss in the book. This is number 4: What you do is far more important than what you were born with. If you have a goal to become the best bodybuilder in the world, a world champion at that, with something like that genetics are going to play a big role. Let's face it. With such an elite level of competition where

there are so many focused on it, you have to be born with certain qualities in order to be able to compete there. Not everyone's muscles are going to look great despite how big they are. That's going to be a very important component of that competition. In that regard, what you're born with is very important. Can you, no matter what your body type is or anything, work really hard and become a great bodybuilder at some level of competition? Absolutely, but to be the best at something like this, it may not work so well.

What I mean with this statement, *"What you do is far more important than what you are born with,"* is you can't control what you were born with so why focus on that at all. There's this whole fallacy of genetic determinism where people say, *"Oh, it's not use."* This goes along with health issues as well. *"Oh, my whole family has cancer so I'm going to have it as well."* Okay, you may have a genetic predisposition to cancer but what you can with your life is so much more. There are so many factors that you can do with nutrition, lifestyle, and everything that can impact your health on that level and make it so you don't get cancer. There are so many things you can do.

Yes, genetics do play a role but because we can't control it, why even focus on that aspect? Instead, focus on every single thing that is within your control. That's what this is about. So yes, I was born skinny so staying at a small size despite getting much, much stronger and continuing to increase in my strength, it's not a genetic disposition for me to be able to add muscle mass easily. So everything I'm doing here falls in line with my genetic capabilities. But if you were someone that does add muscle mass easily and you don't want to, by following these same things that I outlined in the book, these different rules, you're going to be able to get results along those same lines.

I believe that genetics is one factor but part of the reason I don't add weight is because of all the training that I do and how I do it. If I wanted to add size, I would have to change up my training in some regards in order to be able to do that. That would be going against my genetics because I'm genetically predisposed to staying small but it can be done. So if you're genetically predisposed to being big, by following these same steps you can keep your size down. It really can be that simple.

So because we don't control what we're born with, don't focus on that at all. Focus on what you can control. Even if this isn't true, even if you are still going to get cancer or you can't possibly lose the weight because you're born into a big family, by having this belief that there is something within your control that you can do about it, you're going to be able to get greater results. Just believing it, you're going to actually then take action rather than giving up before you've even started.

Moving on, number 10 is something we've already discussed a little bit. Increase your neural wiring and mind power to become stronger. As already stated, muscle size is a factor in strength but it's not even the most important factor. There are several other factors. Here are a couple of them: the neural wiring and the mind power. It may be hard to see the exact distinction in this.

One way you could look at this is, for instance, in the skill of a movement. Every exercise takes skill, some of them more than another. For instance in a bench press there's a good amount of skill involved in that. A lot of people don't think so. It's just like brute strength but if you look at the technique of someone who competes in that versus your average gym goer, you'll see very different techniques. Part

of that is just learning what the right technique is but there is skill in how you apply your power in that movement. If you take something like a handstand push-up, a freestanding one, there is a lot more skill in that movement. It's less strength-focused and more skill-focused.

A great book to read on this is [The Talent Code](#) by Daniel Coyle. He talks about the myelin being built up. Myelin is a protein that basically encapsulates the nerve fibers when you practice a skill and it makes them become better conductors for the nerve message. This is the same sort of thing that happens with musicians being able to play at levels so far beyond the average person's. They are encoding within their nervous system the ability to be able to do it better and better and the body is laying down myelin in order to be able to do that. The same thing happens with strength. The more you practice the exercise, assuming that you're practicing in such a way where your skill is growing, the better you're going to be able to fire that neural firing in order to be able to get that. That's sort of the whole neural wiring aspect of this.

The mind power and the mind is so huge. Just some of the techniques I've come up with based on my studies of neurolinguistic programming where we actually have got a great interview coming up next week with [Garin Bader](#) talking about the concepts of the Core Force Energy and how just accessing different sounds, different mental images, and all that allows you to access more of your body's power, more of the mind power, all tied in there. I've seen people literally double their strength or be able to go from something they couldn't do, that was impossible for them in the moment, to being able to do it and actually usually quite easily and sometimes just able to do it but struggling to be able to do it. All it takes is actually some sort of mental shift to get there.

How does this work? This is because once again, we have all this strength. It's just a matter of activating it within our body. By changing how we think, often times that's all that is needed to instantly become stronger. Now is some sort of progressive training needed? Absolutely. That's a lot of fun. It can also be a place for you to experiment and practice with these different mental or energetic training drills. This is a huge part. If you want to get stronger, you don't need more muscle. That's low on the list of importance but learn how to use your mind and learn how to use our body, everything behind it, practice the skills of the movement and you can get much stronger very, very easily. This is huge.

If you want to get stronger, you're going to learn some cool stuff in this book. Even if you don't want to stay at a smaller size or you're looking to gain mass, just because we reverse engineer you can do opposite of some of these things and you can gain it. There's some really cool stuff in this book. It's probably actually one of my biggest books yet. It just kept growing in size because there was more I had to add to it like a whole bunch of exercises. I cover bodyweight exercises, kettlebells, barbells, grip training, stuff like partials and supports which are huge, important things for becoming really strong. It depends on how you use them. Supports aren't really going to add size but partials can do that, depending on how you use them. You've got to look at some of the other factors.

Just some other key concepts, every workout is full body. You've really got to read the sections that have to do with all these to get all of it. In general, lift fast with most of what you do. That's rule number 18. There's a whole bunch in here. Right now it is Tuesday as of releasing this podcast. Through this

weekend, there is the big bonus package that comes with the book. You can get the physical book or the ebook and you get the five different bonuses that come with it.

One is a video on 14 different deadlift variations and how to do them. One of the huge factors on how I'm able to increase any of the lifts that I'm going after is I always play with different variations. Different variations allow you to attack different components. Certain ones will help you with the weaknesses in whatever the movement happens to be. For instance, those rack poles are going to make any other deadlift feel lighter. It's also going to really help especially in the lockout component of your deadlift.

Bonus number 2 is the shovel lift. I put out a video just showing that. It's one of my new favorite lifts. This video shows all sorts of different ways you can do the shovel lift, including thick bar work, different positioning for your hands, doing the high-rep and low-rep, different variations of the exercise. That's also included in the book but I put together this video because it really needs to be seen in action. I had a lot of fun with that.

I decided to include a hypnotic track, which goes along with the whole mental power thing. That's funny because actually before setting this rack pole PR as well as the Jefferson deadlift PR that I did, right after it I was in a sort of a study group for neurolinguistic programming and hypnosis. A guy there led me through hypnosis focused on this goal and there is some cool stuff. I'm going to play with that and share it later but I think that was actually one of the components that helped me set these PRs quite easily. I was being led through hypnosis which activated more of my power in that moment that I was able to apply later in order to be able to achieve those goals. So you're getting a great hypnosis that has anchors, visualization, a whole bunch of things in it that can really set you up to become much stronger when you need to be stronger at any time. All you have to do is command yourself and it's going to access more of that power you have inside.

Bonus number 4 is my *Cardio without Cardio* ebook. This is just a short book I put together talking about why so many people are doing aerobic exercises wrong. You probably know a lot of this stuff but the focus on the anaerobic, which goes along with the deceptive strength type stuff, conditioning is an important part of that. Actually all the attributes of fitness are important, not just strength and I talk about that in the book.

Bonus number 5 is how to become a physical culture renaissance man. This really does go quite well along with *Deceptive Strength* in that part of what I do is do a wide variety of different things. That's where the term "*physical culture Renaissance man*" comes from. That was actually coined and given to me first by Geoff Neupert. He came up with that and I really liked it so I've sort of taken it and run with it. This idea is that you can do a whole bunch of different things and in this ebook, *The Physical Culture Renaissance Man*, you're going to learn how to put it all together because that's another common question. I get the question, "*How are you so strong without being so big?*" and then, "*How do you do all the different things that you do?*" This book is my answer to that.

So you get all five of these bonuses and you can pick up *Deceptive Strength* at LegendaryStrength.com/Deceptive-Strength or if you just go to the website and look around, you'll be able to find it quite easily there. So this very cool stuff available in an ebook format and physical book so

you can have it sent to you, shipped to you. I personally prefer to have a hardcover book in my hand but not everyone's like me so I want to make that available for everyone.

If you have any questions specifically on this stuff, be sure to ask me. Besides that, that's going to wrap it up for us today. As I mentioned, I got a great interview with Garin Bader coming up and also, down the line, an interview with [Elliot Hulse](#), which I'm really excited about, and even more cool stuff coming at you in the future.

Thanks for listening. Be sure to head to [iTunes](#). If you would do me a favor, go ahead and rate my podcast. Also you can just send me an email, Logan@LegendaryStrength.com. I'd love to hear your feedback on this. I've been doing it for a while now. I think we're up to episode 30 or so. I'm planning on keeping it going but I'd love to hear your feedback on it. Thank you very much for listening and I'll talk to you next time.