



Legendary Strength Podcast

Elliott Hulse

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Logan: Hey everyone! It's Logan Christopher with the *Legendary Strength* podcast. I know I'm always excited about my podcast but I'm especially excited about this one because I have on the line with me, Elliott Hulse. Thanks for joining me today, Elliott.

Elliott: Well, my pleasure. Thank you!

Logan: For those of you that don't know Elliott, he is a very strong guy, quite successful. I really like what he does. It's not just focused on the strength but really all aspects of life. For people that aren't familiar with you, Elliott, can you give them a little bit of a background on yourself?

Elliott: Sure. I think the best place to start would be just a few years ago when I was competing in the sports of strongmen. I was winning a lot and I was slated to receive the title as the strongest man in America at my weight class, which was the 235, 231 weight class. As I was developing, growing stronger, and preparing for this one event that would give me that title, I had a devastating injury where I popped my bicep. Those of you who are familiar with strength sports especially strongman, it's not a career-ending injury and it's not one that's very uncommon but when I tore my bicep, especially being in the position that I was, I saw it as an omen of sorts, just for a lack of better term. I realized that it was a sign that I needed to change things. I had become overly consumed with the development of physical strength that I was doing some unhealthy things and the development of my physical strength was to the detriment of lots of the areas of my life. So when that injury occurred, I literally had to kill that version of myself.

I put that character down and I knew I was about to embark upon a huge personal development and exploration. It's been about four years, I want to say, more or less, since that injury and over that time,

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I've discovered and I share with people now that there are multiple layers of strength and if we seek to develop in an invalid fashion where one is overpowering the others, we are bound to be unhappy, be it injury or dysfunction in our lifestyle, inability to have a type of career or job or business that we want, inability to have the type of relationships with our wife, our husband, our children, and really just not becoming what I call the strongest version of yourself.

Amongst those four layers, the obvious and most superficial one is neuromuscular strength. That's the one that we're typically working on when we go to the gym and we lift barbells, kettlebells, and medicine balls. We're working on developing the muscular strength. I like to remind people that your muscular strength is really far less important compared to muscular balance so a big part of it is developing your posture in such a way that you're moving from the most resourceful place and just becoming overall more athletic as opposed to just muscle bound or anything of that sort.

But anyway, that's neither here nor there because that being the most superficial form of strength, the one that is really just an expression of the deeper layer begs us to realize that there is also what I call a second layer of strength which is physiological strength, what's happening with our digestive system and our [hormones](#). How are we treating our bodies internally? The types of foods that we're eating, they may contribute to us getting stronger. I know the food that I was eating did but they didn't contribute to digestive health. They didn't contribute to hormonal health. They didn't contribute to the organ systems of my body being clean and functioning well.

Over time, that's going to express itself neuromuscularly. If you're eating poor foods that create a sympathetic responses in your nervous system because either you're intolerant to it, it's too stimulating, or it's just very polluted, crappy food, it's going to damage you physiologically and then you're just going to breakdown eventually.

One step deeper than that—this is so important it's probably the one that I spend more time than all the others right now teaching people and sharing—is energetic strength. That really boils down to your psychology, what's going on in your head that's creating the physical circumstances that you have in your life because we all know that psychological emotional stress leads to physiological dysfunction. You'll be overly catabolic and stressed out if you're thinking poorly about your job situation or the relationships with your family, and that's going to detract from your ability to look better. So what it really boils down to is what type of character are you? We'll all be able to see that on your body. How well you're taking care of yourself and what you look like is a physical expression of what hype is happening in your mind. What kind of person are you?

The fourth layer of strength is basically what do we do now that we're becoming the strongest version of ourselves? I call that presentable strength and it's literally how you go and serve others because the point of becoming the strongest version of ourselves is not for ourselves because we're all going to die. At some point, this whole thing, this whole show just ends. The whole game comes to a close. How are you supporting other people, inspiring other people, sharing your ideas and experiences with others so that they can become stronger versions of themselves?

Logan: Wow, there's so much there I'd like to dive into some more. I find I'm really the same thing. The first level that's all fun and that's a great place for people to start but the energetic strength that you're talking about, the whole psychological aspect, I find there's just so much room for improvement there that people are doing because I think I saw one time you said strength is easy. You just go in the gym and lift more and over time you continue with that but these other aspects of life, they're a little more complex. There's so much more going on there.

Elliott: Yeah.

Logan: Yeah. So how do you put all this together if someone wants to not just get stronger in the gym? The way I like to say it for myself, the way I put things in order is health first, performance second, and how I look third. For me, that's just a good hierarchy of the values of what I do and that sort of guides my training. But how do you put all this together into what you do?

Elliott: You know it's funny because even I have a tendency to reduce things down to steps, levels, and layers, like I just did with regards to the four layers but really when it boils down to it, I mean that just offers us an opportunity to easily share and consume ideas. But the bottom line is that it's all blended together. It's all really just one thing.

So if you're psychologically, emotionally disturbed, you may think you look good and the world might think you look good but you're physically going to be rigid. You're probably not breathing as deep as you possibly can. You probably have all sorts of muscular rigidities that destroy your posture. So although you may have really low body fat percentage and six-pack abs, you're really not physically expressing a truly integrated, strong individual.

So they all have to be considered at the same time. When I say all, I mean the first three layers. Don't just focus on what you see in the mirror, what's happening physiologically. So many of us walk around and don't even realize that we've got fungal infections or eating foods that contribute to visceral somatic inhibition like inflammation in the gut. I don't care what you look like if you can't hold down a good job, you can't keep a good relationship, your parents you've got problems with, your children don't respect you. What kind of character are you? Because all you present physically to the eye is really just a mask for a person who is—and I say this harshly—an ugly person on the inside. So they all have to be considered.

Logan: Yeah absolutely. Can you sort of sum up sort of your philosophy in life? If you could sum that up in just a few words. I know that's kind of a hard question but perhaps you've thought about that before.

Elliott: It's funny because it changes and I'm very hard-pressed to point to anything and say this is it. Here it is folks. Here's the thing. That's what you need to do. This is the answer. Really the answer is very subjective and it changes as we change and we've got to be courageous enough to allow ourselves to evolve based on the circumstances in our life, the level of evolution that we're in, who we are to serve while we're on this journey, so a single philosophy I think would be unfair to offer.

But an invitation that I'd like to give people, one that kind of goes against all the conditioning that we receive from compulsory education so on and so forth especially in this day and age that we live in, which is really like the dying off of the industrial revolution, is to trust yourself. We have been conditioned to trust authorities. We've been conditioned to trust our teachers, the government. We've been designed to relinquish all of our responsibility to everyone else and the minute something happens inside us, the minute our intuition guides us, the minute we feel something that goes against what everyone else says, we negate it. We turn against ourselves. This is such an insidious and complex issue, one that tends to be the root of most of the video questions that I ask. It really boils down to listening to your heart and trusting yourself.

Logan: Yeah, that's very important. I think it's something that does have to evolve over life because of the conditioning. If someone is trying to listen to themselves, that may be some subconscious conditioning that's still there, but over time you're going to grow and as you said, evolve. That's really where you are in your life. You're going to have to take certain steps there but as you evolve more, then there's going to be different steps available at that next level.

Elliott: Yeah absolutely. A lot of people get confused when I say that. They say like, *"Oh, well I feel like raping my little sister."* I have people who've literally said sick shit like that. Like wow, really? Is that what you think this is? We've become so schizophrenic, we've become so detached we've allowed our head brain to literally make our bodies the enemy that you can't realize you cannot realize, you cannot conceptualize, you cannot feel within you that there are good feelings, there are pleasurable feelings, there are joyful feelings in moving towards what your heart is asking you to do such that you have to sully with an idea that perhaps if I just listen to my body, I might go and kill people?

It really is such a sick sad situation that we would consider that perhaps that's the thing. That's more neurotic than anything. That's more of you being in your head. That's more of you listening to your head than listening to your heart, all of the dysfunctional behaviors that have caused the wars and all the shit that is disgusting about mankind.

Logan: So let's bring it back a little bit towards strength. You work with a lot of people that you find that they're able to do well in the gym maybe like you were doing when you got started but the rest of their life is in shambles. What sort of tips can you give for someone to take that success that they may have in the gym and then be able to apply it to other areas of life or if they're not very successful in the gym, if they're overweight or something and are looking to do that but are successful in other areas, how can they sort of transfer that ability from one area of their life to another?

Elliott: Because we're strength athletes, we're bodybuilders, and we're weight trainers, just my whole life has revolved around the weight so I tend to find metaphors for how we develop physically in the gym that translate literally into the challenges we see in our lives. One of the most obvious ones, the one I use quite often lately, is resistance. We go to the gym and we physically subject ourselves to resistance so that we can grow stronger. If there's no resistance against the body, the physiology, the neuromuscular system, then there's no growth. Yet we tiptoe through our lives trying to avoid resistance in every way shape or form.

I'm of the mindset and I have to admit this is probably a big part of why I have the success that I have is because I literally look for resistance. I look for challenges. This is a little bit neurotic but still it's just what's happening with Elliott Hulse. If things are too easy, if I'm not posed with enough challenges, if there's no charge in my body because everything is just kind of just flowing too peacefully, I will go and look for, metaphorically, a heavy barbell to lift. That basically means go looking for challenges.

Where on the other end of the spectrum most people, the minute challenges show themselves, they run. They hide. They do all they can not to face that and here's the thing. Not only will you not grow stronger by not facing those challenges but that challenge is going to keep showing up. It's going to keep coming up in other forms. If the challenge is courageousness, quite frankly you're a coward and you're using all these stories about responsibility and so on and so forth to mask the fact that you're a coward, you're scared then it's going to show up in your work. It's going to show up in your relationships. It's going to show up in every place possible. Until you face that thing and you build some balls, you're not going to evolve. You're just going to have to, as some people believe, live this life over again. You'll be reincarnated and have to figure this shit out again.

Logan: Yeah, it's very important that you seek out those things where you're likely going to fail because we grow more from failure than we do from success.

Elliott: Yeah. You got it, man. That's the thing there. One of the biggest fears is failure. No, please. Show me failure because I know every time you fail you're given more intel, you're given more information about what it will take to win. So go for it. Go fail.

Logan: Yeah, absolutely. I was thinking about just recently, I'm going to pick up the guitar and I have absolutely zero musical skill. I can't hear the difference between tones or anything like my auditory skills are horrible but by doing that, I know it would be able to improve. I got 1,000 other things going on with my business, my own training, several different mental and energy things that I'm practicing regularly, so I don't really need another thing but I know I'd be able to grow so much just from doing that one thing that it's really worth doing for myself. It will help me to evolve to another level.

Elliott: That's awesome, man. That's great that you're doing that. You totally get it because it's not even the thing that you get at the end of the journey. It would be nice to be able to play the guitar and serenade your woman with a melody coming from your stringed instrument but who will you become? What character traits, what virtues are you going to develop by doing this? Is it discipline? Is it courage? Is it commitment? What is it that you're going to be able to add to your repertoire of tools for navigating an awesome life by becoming the strongest version of yourself that you get by embarking upon this journey of playing the instrument?

Logan: Yeah. One of the ideas that I really like is the idea of a renaissance man, the classic example of Leonardo Di Vinci who was a scientist, a painter, all sorts of different things. He's also a really strong guy. He apparently could bend horseshoes as well. I've been called this, the idea the physical culture renaissance man, which is doing all these different things, [lifting weights](#), [kettlebells](#), [bodyweight exercise](#) and everything, which I really think gives you that idea you were talking about, the posture and

balance in the body, all the different attributes of fitness together and extending this idea further to a really renaissance man in life.

I mean in this day and age, we've got so much information available. We can so easily do things yet so many people stay in those comfort zones. They don't seek out failure. They don't seek out to grow so they aren't able to accomplish these amazing things when we really got so much time available and everything we need in order to become great at a lot of different stuff.

Elliott: Yeah, absolutely. It's really courage. If I had to boil down most people's dysfunction to the lack of one character trait, it's going to be courage because you really literally have to go against whatever you've been taught by society. You literally have to step outside the bounds of the prison that people have created for you psychologically. You literally have to become physically uncomfortable to challenge yourself in these particular areas, to grow as an individual so that if you don't have courage, if you're cowardly, you're not going to want to face those challenges.

Logan: I'm a regular reader of your blog and newsletter and watched your videos and everything, and know recently you've been doing sort of a bodybuilding experiment. Can you tell us a little bit about how that came about and how it's going so far?

Elliott: Well, there it is, exactly. It's one of those challenges that I know I have to take. I know that the weaker part of me character-wise, the character trait, the virtues associated with getting as lean as possible, are weak in me. You see, like I've mentioned in the video the other day, I'm a sprinter. I work really, really hard for a short period of time and I get what I want that way but I'm reaching a time in my life where endurance, where the marathon is going to matter more than my brute and my ability crush things. I can crush workouts.

Now my diet has always been good but getting bodybuilder-type lean requires constant attention to every single thing you eat every single day for weeks and weeks and months on end. I don't like that. I shy away from that. That has always been something that I would tell myself whatever story I had to, to justify the fact that I haven't done it. For me to grow, to continue to become a stronger version of myself, far less am I wrapped up in what my body will look like when it's all done than who I'm becoming because I really need to build some endurance. I need to be more committed. I need to be more disciplined.

Logan: That reminds me of the gym room quote, *"Become a millionaire not for having the million dollars but for what becoming a millionaire will make of you."* The same sort of idea just applies to bodybuilding.

Elliott: Yeah, absolutely.

Logan: See, I'm just the opposite. I've just been a really lean guy so for me to add a whole bunch of mass would take, well that would be a journey that would take quite a bit more effort. So for myself, I'd normally stay in my comfort zone, floating around like 185 pounds but in the future at some point I think breaking through to 200 would be quite an experiment for myself.

Elliott: Yeah, and like you're doing with the instrument, you know that you're going to be a different type of person once you do it.

Logan: Yeah. So let me ask a little bit about your workouts. How do you approach them mentally when you're going in to whatever you're training? What are some of the thoughts that are running through your head?

Elliott: Well now, today is very different than even a few months ago. Today, I don't listen to music when I train. I work to cultivate attention. I focus attention on every single exercise that I do. I'm at my best when I don't have a training partner and I don't have music on because it forces me to literally meditate with the exercise. Again, it's just one of those things where I'm doing it because I know that I'll get more out of the exercise but also it's going to strengthen my ability to focus and concentrate. So that's pretty much it. There are no thoughts. If you want to know like what I'm thinking about each rep, I'm thinking about the mechanics of each repetition and it's grueling. It requires a lot of attention and I got to be honest with you. I can only make it through about 30 to 40 percent of the workout with that type of attention.

Logan: Why is it that you try to focus on this aspect? Is that what you find works best for what you're trying to achieve?

Elliott: It just feels good. I think that's it. I think it just boils down to it feels right to me as I'm doing it. You've got to know that I've been across the spectrum with regards to training so there were times when I'm blasting heavy metal and I'm flipping tires and tossing stones and screaming and yelling and going nuts before every single repetition. I've experienced that. I've been there. I've done that. I appreciate that. I see the value in it. Coming full spectrum, coming down to where I'm at right now and doing the things that I'm doing and becoming the person that I'm seeking to become through this, this just feels right.

Logan: Definitely, I flip back and forth through time, listening to metal sometimes but like you, I'd say the majority of time is more on that meditative-type state where you can really be focused 100% on what you're doing right at the moment. We have this sort of meditative state going into it. I'd really like to see some of the finer points of what people are doing in order to achieve the results. Would you say you're really focused internally on yourself and sort of the sensations within yourself inside, or just on moving the weight or doing whatever exercise you're currently doing?

Elliott: Well, the resistance I'm fighting is between the two of them. I'm trying to do what you said, the first thing you said, but it always ends up halfway through the workout to the end it becomes, *"Okay, I shouldn't even move this freaking weight."* But in the beginning, I would always go in with the intention of, *"Let me concentrate. Focus."* Over time, I was getting better at it but the intention is always can I focus and concentrate on every single movement here.

Logan: And so you're really trying to bring everything. You're not just focused on the muscles but your whole body. What about the energy? Is there something specifically you do for that before or after your

workouts that maybe helps prime you for that workout? Or do you feel it really helps to develop the energetic strength that you were talking about?

Elliott: Well, I spend a lot of time focusing on stretching and releasing the muscular tension in the extra respiratory muscles. So there are some exercises that I've shared on several of my channels that I do before working out that really deepens my breath and grounds my energy. One of them is called the bow. It's a breathing exercise but it also is coupled with a stretch. I'll do that. It helps open up the hips, the muscles across the chest, the muscles in the jaw and face. That, coupled with sometimes leaning over what's called a bioenergetic stool, which is kind of like a foam roller that's propped out so that you can actually stand and then lean over it, are two of the staples of my stretching warm-up routine.

I spend a lot of time with corrective stretching and corrective exercise in the task. I'm pretty familiar with all my muscle imbalances so as I feel them creeping up, I work to reduce the tension in those, like I know that my whole right arm tends to get really tense. I know that my feet, the bottom of my feet become very tense so there are times when I'll give a little extra attention to those areas.

Logan: The thing that really speaks through the years of you were training and doing all sorts of different things is you gained greater body awareness which not only helped you when you're trying to lift weights but it's that specific thing, you know when you have those imbalances. Like you said, they're creeping up on you when you need to do other things in order to balance them. That's really cool. Is most of what you do lifting weights? Do you do a lot of weights like kettlebells, bodyweight training, or does it really sort of depend on what you're into at the time?

Elliott: It depends but right now it's all bodybuilding exercise, bodybuilding parameters. It's actually probably one of my most boring program but I've been pretty consistent with it. It's six to twelve reps, three or four exercises per body part using barbells and dumbbells mostly. I aim to get one or two yoga sessions in a week. I would like to get in more but the yoga keeps my body soft. It keeps my breathe deep and it keeps me grounded. It's something that I like to, especially when I'm really training heavy or doing a lot of volume, include in my program.

Logan: Yeah, absolutely. So is there anything you think would be good for listeners that we can talk about that maybe I didn't ask?

Elliott: Not necessarily. We've hit upon the most important thing which is: if it's something that is important for your training, it's important for all areas. But like I said before, trust yourself. Listen to yourself. Trust that you know what is right for you. We read books, we listen to interviews, we watch videos, we absorb ideas and we read books so that we could command our own. It basically means we're looking for ammo to load our own gun because we have to pull the trigger. So really trust yourself and know that you can do it.

Logan: Like I believe it was Bruce Lee that said, "Use only that which works, and take it from any place you can find it." I'm reading like several books every single night, I'm attending all sorts of different seminars and conferences, learning a lot, and I think that really helps to evolve myself. But you really

have to go with that idea of trusting yourself because there's so much conflicting information out there that you can't take it all in or else your brain would explode.

Elliott: Right and it's not that some things are right and some things are wrong. It's what works best for you, what is right for you, and what is right for you at this moment. Don't be afraid to change your mind. Don't be afraid to evolve. The world likes to put us in boxes. They like to keep us in one particular place that they can always refer to us from but you're an evolving creature, We're all evolving. The world is constantly changing. That's the one thing that is consistent, that there is change and you're allowed to change, too. You're allowed to change your mind. You're allowed to change your method. You're allowed to do whatever it takes in order to continue growing stronger.

Logan: Yeah, absolutely. So where can people go to find more from you?

Elliott: Well, I'll have ElliottHulse.com set up in a couple of weeks but for the most part if you enjoy the type of things that I talk about, go to YouTube and just search my name. I've got two channels. One is kind of like a Dear Abbie, where I'm just like answering questions on all the different areas of life and the other one is geared towards strength training. I upload at least once a day on both of those channels.

Logan: Yeah, there's so much stuff well worth going through. It's awesome information. Thank you very much for joining us today, Elliott. I had a blast talking about, I know we went a little deeper than most strength training conversations typically go but that's why I really wanted to have you on here because you're willing to go there.

Elliott: Great, it was my pleasure and I really appreciate it.

Logan: All right. Thank you, everyone, and we'll have another podcast for you next week.

Elliott: Cool. Take care.