Legendary Strength Podcast
NLP for Strength Training 3

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Hey, it's Logan Christopher here with the *Legendary Strength* podcast. This episode will be Part 3 in our series on using neurolinguistic programming for strength training purposes. I'm going to have a little bit of a shorter episode today but it's jam-packed with some very cool stuff that is going to help you out.

I'm going to start out with a story. In the last episode, we talked a whole bunch about limiting beliefs and this is one area which is great to focus in on because these beliefs will hold you back from getting where you want to go and it can be really interesting seeing where they show up. So as part of this thing, just as a sort of way to have fun at the NLP U that I'm attending, they have a special night where basically people get together, groups. There's a talent show. Of course, I decided to bring my strongman talents together and I do a bunch of feats which are really easy for me to do.

There was one thing that I wanted to do that I was somewhat unsure of and that was pointing off a back flip. Now I can easily do a back flip just about anywhere anytime however that's always in comfortable shorts and barefoot and I feel very comfortable doing that. However for me, even small changes to an exercise can make it dramatically different. A while back, I wrote an article about how just changing a foot position and trying to do a back flip from there made it much harder to do, even just a little bit at a time. So I was actually in shoes and jeans when I wanted to pull off this back flip and I realized that I had the limiting belief around this, that I couldn't really do it safely in this. By having just shoes on, it adds weight to the exercise, especially with the lever because you're pulling your legs over and jeans aren't as flexible so you don't feel as free in the movement to be able to do it.

In thinking about this, I thought about the past times where I tried doing this and hadn't quite pulled it off too well. I had landed really short and low so it scared me a little a bit and this I'd sort of formed a limiting belief. But I'd reframed it for myself right there. I thought I know how to jump high. I just need to get a really good jump and then I could pull hard enough and I'll absolutely make this. I ran through that visualization of the process just a little bit and then I was able to do it pretty much effortlessly. It really wasn't any harder than a normal back flip to be able to do. But there was really a limiting belief that I couldn't pull this off in shoes in a normal situation like that, that I had to be in a more optimal situation to do it. So with just a little work, I was able to do that and now from this point on, having had that past experience where I knew I could do it easily, I should be able to do it easily in the future.

So it's a just a limiting example of how limiting beliefs can show up—I was able to identify it there—and then what you can do to be able to fix it. If you just run through negative movies in your mind of what could go wrong, what could happen in doing it, and back flips are a prime example because there are some very serious things that can go wrong in this, if you get stuck there you're not going to be able to do it. But if you can make a more positive movie where you're able to pull it off, you're going to get much better results.

During this course in the past week, one of the things we were working on was a bunch of stuff. We're working really at that higher level like beliefs are a higher level than what you're doing in the gym, the sort of the behaviors that you're doing, the training that you go through, and the beliefs are going to guide and direct everything you do. A higher level than that is your identity, who you really believe you are as a person on so many different levels. One thing that has contributed in a huge, huge way to what I do, why I'm able to do the different things that I do is because really with an identity, it's beliefs about who you are. So it is more of this belief stuff but it's kind of a higher level than that because it's a belief of who and what you are, like *"I am a strongman."* That's different than saying, *"I practice strongman stuff."* It may not seem different but really when you believe you are a certain thing, and this can be both positive and negative, that's going to impact yourself in a big way.

I was reflecting on this. What really got me into wanting to pursue strength to a really high level and see how far I could take it to become a strongman was reading the Mighty Atom's book, his biography, *[The Spiritual Journey of Joseph L. Greenstein](#)*. I highly recommend you get that book if you're interested in strongman stuff. There's just something about that that has motivated more people to become strongmen than probably any other book. So I read that book and it was like I want to be able to do this. There's just something that drew me to it. I was definitely getting into training at that time, getting pretty serious about it but that just was sort of the catalyst moment.

I won't say my identity immediately became *"I am a strongman"* but I was certainly working towards that goal and I can't say that there's a specific area of time when I felt like I was doing that. Maybe it was when I did my first little strongman show and got called a strongman by someone else that helped to build up this identity and in having that as part of my identity, it drives so much of what I do so that I'm able to do all these things.

Another part of my identity, since being called this—thank you, Jeff Newport, for coming up with this name—was the Physical Culture Renaissance Man. That's actually become part of my identity. I don't just use it online, I don't talk to myself in a sense about it but that is someone who I am. I do these wide variety of different things within the realm of physical culture and this, having that as a belief about myself, about who I am, guides and directs my training.

So you can think about this from the opposite example. Having these beliefs about myself has allowed me to get to this high level. In some areas, that might be at an elite level, in other areas not so much, but I'm definitely working at there, closing in on the red nail, gone over two and a half times bodyweight deadlift which is not world class but it's certainly pretty good, and I'm pursuing up towards a three times bodyweight deadlift, and I'm really good at kettlebell juggling, all these different things that I do.

But if you have an average person, what is their identity? What may that be? *"I am fat." "I'm a fat person." "I've always been this way."* These are all different beliefs that are going to help to keep you stuck in that area but even if it's not such a negative thing like that , if you just think you're an average person of average strength levels, these are beliefs. So if you don't put yourself into really becoming as strong as you can be, I think that's going to limit you on getting as far you may want to go.

Now not everyone desires nor should be a strongman in any sense of the word but for those people that do, you can look at how you identify yourself and really see if there's anything that should be changed along those lines in order to further expand it or change up some ideas there. That's very important stuff. I will be talking about beliefs a whole bunch more. Like I have mentioned before, I have a book coming out that's going to give a whole lot of details on mental training and also there's going to be a good section on beliefs because this is an area where, like I said before, if you have a limiting belief that's holding you back, if you change that limiting belief you can often get immediate dramatic increases in what you can do. If you have empowering beliefs, that's just going to allow you to go faster and faster.

It's not a black and white thing. It's an important distinction. It's not you either have a belief or you don't have a belief. In some ways this can be true but it's not always the case. You can have a belief in something that is sort of true. A thing that I recognize myself saying from the past was my upper body was really weak and that's because it was really weak in the beginning of my training. It took me a while to even bench press 135 pounds back in my gym-going days, my bodybuilding days. So if you have this, recognize that it's a pretty solid statement*, "My upper body is really weak."* You can sort of have a belief and it may resonate in your head but not really in your body. So there are different levels to look at these different things.

Next what I want to talk a little about are goals. The term used in NLP is *"well-formed outcome"* which is an interesting thing. I was talking about to someone that for a lot of people, goals can have a negative connotation because—it's not necessarily negative but a lot of people have heard stuff about goals and they think they know how to do it but really when you change the frame of it—we're talking about outcomes rather than goals—you may start to listen a little bit more. One way you can look at your

outcomes, what you want to do, is all the classic questions for a news reporter: who, what, where, when, why and how. Let's go into each one of these a little bit.

Who? Who is the outcome or the goal for? If you're setting a goal, it absolutely should be for you. It shouldn't be for another person. You can't really change other people. You can but it's not very easy to do so you need to be in control. You need to be responsible for your goal. That's great with the gym stuff, strength training, all the different goals you may have there because it really is centered around you. You must be responsible. You must be the one to take action in order to be able to hit it.

Now there are some goals that incorporate other people, which is fine. Let's say you're involved in a competition where there are judges. This isn't 100% in your control but a lot of it still is. You can focus in on the part that is within your control. You can't control how other people are going to judge you but, let's say it was a bodybuilding competition, if you have the best body you possibly can, that is within your control in order to get where you want to go.

Next, let's move on to What? This is sort of the easier part of this question. What do you want to achieve? In positive terms and specifically, what is it you want to achieve? The reason I really like strength training, and I was thinking about this more recently, is it can be great laboratory. Not only are you getting strong, are you getting fit, are you getting healthy, but you can learn how to use these mental training tactics and everything in a way that seeing progress, hitting goals is actually very easy to do and then you take these abilities and translate them to other parts of your life. It's not a hard thing to do, to use these abilities in one area and use them also on another. So this is a great place to do it because you can set so many different goals or so many different things you want to achieve. Tracking progress is very easy to do in the gym whereas with some other goals it can be harder to do. *"I want to lift 605 pounds in the deadlift."* That's a very specific what.

The next question is where? In some cases, this will only be important and other ones not so much. Where does the goal take place? For me, most of my goals are going to happen in my home gym or it may happen elsewhere. For a lot of training goals, this isn't going to be an important thing. For other goals, it may be very important and you may want to include that in there as well.

When? When is it going to happen? Any goal you set should have a deadline, a timeframe of when you want to achieve that goal. This is important because of something I heard described as Parkinson's Law. The time needed to achieve something will expand in order to fit in the time allotted for it. That means if there is no timeframe, your goal can continue to get pushed back and pushed back. But if you have a specific timeframe by which you want to hit something, 1) that's going to help you to figure out beliefs regarding the area. Do you believe you can hit it within that timeframe? Just having the possibility of hitting the goal sometime in the future, if that goes far and far out, that's really easy but can you do it within that timeframe? And then your planning in order to get there is going to be very important. This is an essential step. I highly recommend you set deadlines. There are a lot of details that can go into doing each of these steps. I'm just really giving you an overview here.

How? How do you want to hit your outcome? How are you going to do it? This really goes into the planning of doing it. Once again, strength training is a great place to do this because you can get those

progressive steps along the way. Progressive strength training is a fairly easy thing to do and this includes being able to do stuff like [handstands](#) and acrobatics as well as lifting weights and also changing your body. You've got specific measurements of all this stuff that you can use. So how are you going to hit it? What is your training plan to do it?

Now I'm not a person that uses very specific, drawn out, written training plans for months at a time with periodization in that I listen to my body so I have a rough outline of what I'm doing. But at any given point I can see, is what I'm doing working on getting me towards that goal? There's a feedback built into all this so you have the deadline when you want to hit that main goal. You can set sub-goals along the way. If you do all that, you're going to have a very good plan of action to do. Based on the feedback you get, how you're working towards it, you may need to change it at times but have this plan and figure out at least the first step so you can get started.

Sometimes you don't know all the information you need to get to the end but as long as you can get started and have an idea of where you want to go, you're going to get feedback along the way and you're going to be able to adjust that plan to change it as needed in order to better get you there. Nothing is ever really a linear path so you're going to have to take this into account as you progress with it.

Now what may be the most important question—all these are really important. Some may be important than others, say the when and the how, and what specifically you're doing. I mean where can be important, too. Who can be important, too. But why, why do you want to achieve this? There's that saying—I forget who this originally came from—if you have a big enough why, you'll figure out how. I'm paraphrasing here. That wasn't exactly it. It sounded better the original way but you get the point. If your why is big enough, if you have a big enough reason to achieve something, you're going to get it done. You're going to figure out the steps required in order to be able to do that.

What is your why? Why do you want to achieve those goals? This goes back a little bit to the identity thing, at least for me personally. To achieve these bigger and bigger things, that's just something I have to do. Not only is it a sense of personal achievement and satisfaction I get but it's actually tied into my job, my career, what I'm doing with you guys. If I'm not constantly performing, and by performing I mean hitting new goals and doing new things, then I don't have things to write about, I don't have things to talk about, and in a sense I'm living a lie because I'm talking about training and setting PRs for all these people but I'm not doing it myself. So for me, it's a very important thing that's tied into everything that I do. That is why I want to achieve those.

I can't say specifically why I want to achieve this one thing. It really is that sense of personal sense of satisfaction. If I explored that further, that will actually be a very interesting thing for me to do during which I could probably gain more ideas on what it is that drives me and why it changes from time to time. As I said before with the whole renaissance man thing, all the different things I want to do, there are times when I want to go after one goal, times when I want to go after a different one. I've just got to find where that motivation is in the moment.

That covers the main questions you're going to want. If you go through this process, just those six simple questions, you're going to have a very good idea of what you want to achieve, why you want to achieve that, how to achieve it, and have all that stuff, and then actually be able to go and take action, which is a very important step.

One thing you're also going to want to look at is will this goal impact my life in ways that may be unforeseen? That could, in some ways, be negative or in conflict with other parts of me. In NLP this is called **ecology**. Is the goal ecological with the rest of what you do and who you are? This is a very important step that if neglected will cause you in one form or another to sabotage your goal, not necessarily sabotage but maybe just lose focus and not actually pursue it.

With the gym training goals, often it's not going to be a huge thing as far *as "I want to deadlift 505 pounds"* but there could be a problem if you're also trying to run a marathon at the same time. Those may in some way be in conflict. Can you do them properly together? Yes, it's possible but you're going to have to balance them out and also perhaps prioritize. I've noticed with some things, for instance doing handstands and bending at the same time, it just doesn't work out well. I haven't been able to figure out how to balance those two. It's better to do one at a time for a period of time then switch to the other one. They don't go well together but you have to look at the other factors.

If your goal is to lose weight, what is that going to mean for you? How is that going to change your life? What are its effects? Are you going to lose your friends because they're also overweight and they're going to feel like you're trying to become better than them? This kind of stuff happens. You have to be prepared for that, for the comments these people may make. They may be well-meaning when they do it. They may not be intentionally mean but if you don't take this stuff into consideration, it can throw you off your plan, the action you are taking as you pursue that goal if everything is not in check.

Sometimes some things may come up that you couldn't have foreseen beforehand. This is where the idea of feedback and the altering your plan as you go along but you can do this as part of the outcome or goal setting process in the beginning. What may stop you from doing it? Is everything in alignment? If you get this right then achieving your goal just becomes a matter of going through the motions of taking the time, taking the actions in order to hit that. This is an area that will definitely stop people if it's not taken into consideration.

Now one other thing I want to talk about a little bit is the idea of a sentry-based evidence. For many of the goals that I've been talking about, pull off a back flip, be able to [hold a handstand for 30 seconds](), be able to squat 405 pounds, whatever you're going for, those are pretty easy because it's quite clear if you achieve something and quite clear if you do not achieve it. But there are other goals that aren't as clear. Let's say you want to be healthier and have more energy. That's a good goal to have, a great thing to go for but what does that mean specifically? How do you know you're healthier? In what way can that actually be evaluated so you know whether or not you have achieved your goal?

Doing blood tests, for instance, could be a great thing. If you have elevated cholesterol or some blood marker you're looking at, too much C-reactive protein, if you could bring those down then have your blood tested again, that could be your evidence that you're in a healthier position. That would be a

great thing to have. So you have to figure out what it means to you to actually achieve these goals. If you want to have more energy, how can you evaluate that? In what way? Could it mean instead of needing to hit the snooze button on your alarm five times before you wake up every day, that you actually jump out of bed and are excited and start exercising each day every day of the week?

This might work for you. You might need something else. But how could it be evaluated in a way that you can say yes, I achieved that or no, didn't? It's great to set these sort of generalities, being healthier, being more energetic. Even something like losing weight, how specifically are you going to know that? The scale isn't always the best thing. Some people want to measure it by how their clothes fit but how specifically will you know? This is really goes into that what part of the outcome. What is going to be the specifics of how you achieve it? If you can get that, if you do all these things and yes, there's a lot more detail I can go into this but this is a basic and very important part of achieving something, knowing how to properly set yourself in motion to get it in the first place.

So that's going to wrap it up, a little shorter episode but I've got to run. I've got some more neurolinguistic programming training to do so thank you very much. I hope you enjoyed this series. I'd love to get your comments and your feedback on it. This is an area that I'd have to say is largely unexplored for most people, taking these mental training aspects into the strength training that you do or whatever sort of training you do in the gym. It can make such a huge impact so I hope you enjoyed this. I had a lot of fun putting it together. I'll talk to you next time.