

A Quote for Motivation

by
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In college I got turned onto the idea of using quotes for motivation. My college baseball coach used to post the practice plan up in the locker room every day. Each practice plan had a quote of the day and at the end of every practice he would ask one of the players what the quote of the day was. If we didn't know the quote word for word then we had to do extra conditioning that day. When I started to coach, this was something that I implemented with my teams. In fact, when I coached at the high school many of the kids would actually ask me to give them quotes. I was surprised at how many 14 and 15 year old kids looked forward to hearing the quote and how it applied to their lives. Each day I would have various quotes from people such as Abraham Lincoln or Warren Buffet, who were successful in all different areas of life. My goal was to show them that the formula for success is the same for anything you want to accomplish whether it is in athletics, business, health, or whatever. Throughout the years there is one quote that I always come back to. The quote is by Aristotle and it states:

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act, but a habit."

I think that this quote pretty much sums up my beliefs about how to achieve excellence in any field.

We are creatures of habit and these habits determine who we are and what we can accomplish. In order to accomplish a task you must have the proper habits. I really believe that this quote is very similar to what I try to teach my clients about health, fitness, and nutrition.

One of my biggest goals when working with clients is to get them to change their lifestyle habits. The reason that most people come to me is because they want to look better. What most people fail to realize is that the physique that they have right now is the result of their habits. Those habits could involve being sedentary, eating the wrong foods, not performing the right kind of exercise, or a number of other factors. It always shocks me when people say they want to change their body but they do not want to change their lifestyle. Obviously, if you are not happy with your body then it is because your habits do not support the body that you desire. You may want the body but are not willing to sacrifice changing your habits to attain the better body. If this is the case then you will never change your body. If you do what you have always done then you will get what you have always gotten. Change your habits and you can change your body.

This is easier said than done. I once read that the thing that humans fear most is change. But, we are creatures of habit and we do not like change. We are set in our ways and the uncertainty that change brings scares us. I often say that my hardest job is to get people into my gym for the first time, because everyone is scared of the uncertainty that a new workout (and especially a new trainer) can bring. Once they have gone through a workout the uncertainty is lessened and the workouts are not quite as intimidating.

My favorite part of this quote is "Excellence, therefore, is not an act, but a habit." Great things such as extraordinary strength or a great physique are not accomplished through one hard workout. They are accomplished through years of doing things the right way. No one act creates excellence. Persistence and hard work create excellence. Our society today is so caught up with having everything right now. Everyone wants to make a million dollars and have six pack abs within the next week. These things are not easy to accomplish and it takes persistence and hard work to make them happen. The reason most people do not get results is that they do not stick with their program long enough. The majority of the population sticks with a workout program for about a month and then they fall off the wagon because they are not getting results fast enough. These people are getting results even if they are small, and these small results will eventually add up if given enough time (for more about this see the previous Kaizen article). They say that patience is a virtue and I believe this to be true because great feats take time to accomplish. So the take home message today is that if you want to change your body you must first change your habits.