

The Fitness Parable by Rafi Bar-Lev:

*Learning From Charlie's Mistakes in His
Journey to Getting Strong, Fit, and
Healthy For Life*

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Introduction

The one major problem I have with all the fitness information currently out there, is that all of it fails to explain what the journey to getting strong and fit is really like.

What I mean by that is this. Say for instance that you're interested in strengthening your legs. So you read an article online or in a book that tells you to do the squat exercise three times a week.

Then you go and actually do the squats for the first time in your adult lifetime, and you find that your legs are so sore from the workout that you can't exercise them again for a week and half.

Then because you read in the article that you should be able to do the squats three times a week, you start to question yourself. You must have done the exercise wrong, or maybe there's something wrong with you. When in truth it's completely normal for someone starting a new exercise to be sore for a week and a half.

The people writing about fitness are also aware of this. They're also aware that everyone's bodies are different, and that there are differences between age, expertise, genetics and so forth between every person.

Because of these differences between people, they are incapable of transferring real, hard knowledge on what exactly you will go through as you travel on the road to getting strong and healthy for life.

Instead, they just give you general tips, and you're supposed to go about training by way of trial and error, not entirely sure about what the normal setbacks are that you should be having during training and what you're doing wrong.

That's why I wrote *The Fitness Parable*. A parable is an awesome tool for helping the reader gain greater understanding of a subject that would be otherwise impossible to explain in any other context.

In *The Fitness Parable*, you will follow the journey of a young medical student named Charlie on his journey to get strong and healthy for life, and analyze his mistakes.

By reading about Charlie's journey to getting fit and strong for life, you will gain a greater understanding of your own journey to greater strength and health, and with that understanding be able to more easily and efficiently accomplish your personal fitness goals.

Sincerely,
Rafi Bar-Lev

Charlie's Journey

Charlie was a medical student who wanted to get into shape since college, but could never seem to find the time because of his studies. So Charlie concentrated completely on his studies, and didn't worry about eating healthily or exercising.

In fact, not only did Charlie not worry about eating healthily, he did not worry about eating at all, and skipped meals. After all, Charlie just didn't have the time, and his studies were the most important thing.

For many months, Charlie continued neglecting his body and living the way that he did. He rationalized that it was only temporary until he would have time to work out, and that in any case, most other people around him were living just as poorly as he.

One day, while visiting his family, Charlie noticed something that disturbed him quite a bit. His Uncle Harry, who genetically always leaned towards having a bit of fat, had completely let himself go.

His Uncle Harry was now so overweight, that Charlie had trouble reaching around his massive belly just to give him a hug. Charlie's beloved uncle now needed a cane to walk, and even seemed grumpier than usual.

"Uncle Harry. Didn't your doctor tell you that you have to lose weight? Why aren't you listening to his advice?" asked Charlie.

"You mean that hypocritical fool that calls himself a doctor!? He's in no better shape than me! And who are you to tell me what to do? You look like you've been on a starvation diet!" Uncle Harry scoffed.

"That's different. I don't have time to keep in shape because I'm in medical school. Once I'm out I'm going to start taking better care of myself." Charlie said defensively.

"Ha! What do you know about not having time? I work two jobs and have four kids to take care of. All you doctors and medical students are the same. You all think you're the only ones who work hard for a living and that excuses you from having to practice what you preach. What a bunch of phonies you all are!" said Uncle Harry.

This time, Charlie didn't respond to his Uncle Harry. Because deep down inside, he knew that his uncle was right. For so long, he had convinced himself that he didn't have time to keep in shape or live healthily, and that he would change after medical school.

But would there really be more time after medical school? After all, being a doctor is a full time job.

More than that, how could he tell his patients to live healthier if he himself didn't live a healthy lifestyle? Right away, he knew the answer was that he couldn't. Charlie understood that part of being a doctor is to be a teacher, and part of being a good teacher is to be a role model to your students.

That day, Charlie made a promise to himself that no matter what, he would begin living healthier lifestyle. If he did not have the time, then he would make the time.

So Charlie began reading about fitness. He took out books at the library, read fitness blogs on the internet, and even subscribed to a few fitness newsletters and bought himself some whey protein.

Finally, he made a beginner's workout program for himself and was ready to go. There was however, a problem. When Charlie was about to start doing some pushups, he started noticing things

about his body that he hadn't noticed before. All of Charlie's body was hurting. His shoulders hurt, his back hurt, and even his wrists hurt. More than that, he realized that he was hungry.

Still, Charlie had made a promise, and he was not one to break promises. So he kept going. Day in and day out, he continued with his exercise program. Unfortunately, he was not having great success.

Not only was he not stronger than before, but he was weaker. He felt that he had less energy, and his body hurt more than before. He was constantly sore, and he felt physically unable to continue working out.

After only two weeks, Charlie did something he had never done before. He broke his promise. He was just physically unable to keep going, and felt terrible. He returned to living his poor lifestyle, feeling broken and beaten. After all, he had done everything just like he had read, and didn't understand where he had gone wrong.

Where Charlie Went Wrong

Charlie shouldn't feel bad. He's not the first nor the last person not to succeed the first time they attempt to get into shape. But there is always another time, and I'm sure Charlie will be back to try again another day.

Let's make sure that when Charlie makes his second attempt to get into shape that he succeeds. Here are the three fitness tips that will ensure Charlie's success the next time he gives it a go.

The First Step To Getting Strong is Eating Right

What Charlie didn't understand is that all those guides on building strength were aimed towards people who were already nutritionally healthy.

Charlie was completely unaware that all those years of skipping meals and ignoring his body meant that he was vitamin deficient.

Instead of rushing to work out, Charlie probably should have gotten a blood test to see what he's deficient in, and then he should have taken a month to eat three healthy meals a day before working out. He should make sure to eat a variety of different foods, including nuts, lean meat, vegetables, fruit and some whole wheat bread.

Within a week, he should start lightly working out. Within a month, he should be ready to throw himself full throttle into getting into shape. This of course, brings us to the next tip...

To Train For a Lifetime of Strength, Pace Yourself

Charlie understands that truly excelling at anything in life requires years of training, and that's what allows him to accept the long track necessary to become a doctor. So why does Charlie approach getting into shape as something that can be done in a month?

Once Charlie understands that gaining strength for life is something that can take years to master and perfect, he can go about it more slowly and with greater confidence.

Charlie will understand that in the beginning, he might be so sore from a workout that he will need to take a week off from working out that body part.

He will also use the first month or two of working out as a testing period, learning about what works best for his body and how his body works, all the while making significant strength gains. He now knows that the most important part of training is sticking to it, which brings us to our last tip...

Surround Yourself With Other People Who Are Dedicated to Staying Strong and Healthy For Life

Some people are unique in their ability to resist overwhelming peer pressure and to stick to living the best way they believe to live.

Charlie isn't one of those people. He needs to be surrounded by like minded individuals who are also trying to reach their strength and health goals. The problem is that Charlie cannot change his environment unless he decides to drop out of medical school, which for him is not an option.

Fortunately for Charlie, there's the internet. To help him reach his goals and keep to them for life, Charlie can become part of the online fitness community by commenting on fitness blogs he enjoys and subscribing to helpful newsletters.

Now whenever Charlie needs reassurance, he knows he has the support of millions of people around the world just like him who are trying to keep to their fitness goals.

Epilogue

I suspect that we haven't seen the last of Charlie, and that he'll be back to trying to get into shape soon again. I'm also sure that he'll keep making mistakes along the way, and that you and I will continue to be there together to help him on his journey to getting strong and healthy for life.

If you have any questions about fitness or injuries, or have a specific topic that you would like me to write or blog about, feel free to email me at rafi@thefitnessadviser.com.

Sincerely,

Rafi Bar-Lev

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