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Secrets To Being A Winner

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Winning, a desire to be the best, a need to be recognized for hard work, is instilled in us from the time we are young and affects every aspect of our lives. The sport of bodybuilding demands that we strive for perfection to achieve our personal best as long as we've truly given it 100 percent and we've learned to appreciate how far we've come along the way.

What most people want to know is "How do you get that winning attitude?" From 8-time Mr. Olympian, Lee Haney to first woman physique pro in NPC/IFBB history, Dana Linn Bailey and all the top athletes we've ever watched and wanted to be like, here are the top 8 strategies to becoming the best.

- 1** First and foremost, **Mental Toughness** is the single most important factor in developing a winning attitude. Day in and day out you need to:
- Realize your mind has total control of your body. What you want to get out of your body, starts with your mind.
 - Truly believe it will happen.
 - Have a positive attitude, which will allow you to perform your best. Block all negative thoughts and replace those with positive thoughts.
 - Have confidence in yourself that you can win this regardless of who shows up,
 - Never give up.
 - Visualize success

"The mental edge not only can be the difference – it is the difference."
– Zero Regrets, Be Greater Than Yesterday – Apolo Ohno, 8-time Short Track Speed Skating Medalist, Winter Olympics

2 Trust and Support. Surround yourself with people you can trust and that they have your best interest in mind. They are your ego-control system, the people who will be honest with you and will tell you what you don't want to hear, if need be. They counterbalance your natural drive and they also help shut out the noise from everyone else trying to give you advice or sell you on what they can do for you. Additionally, having the support of a good team is vital for creating success. It takes a team of people to make you stronger. Don't be afraid to ask for help and be *grateful* for all those people who helped you along the way.

"A coach is someone who tells you what you don't want to hear, who has you see what you don't want to see, so you can be who you have always known you could be."
– Tom Landry, NFL Coach, Dallas Cowboys

Figure competitor and mom, Ashley Parris, says, "I think it's important to remember that results don't happen overnight, it takes time and consistency. Don't give up because you feel your hard work isn't paying off as fast as you'd like it to. Stick with it and it will happen."



One of Ashley's favorite quotes that still inspires is...

"I will workout, even when I don't feel like it, No matter what temptations come my way. I will eat clean so I don't blow hours of hard work in the gym on a few minutes of pleasure in the kitchen. I will do this day after day, no matter what life throws my way because I want results and will not compromise. No one will doubt me because my action will be the evidence of my desire. It's not a matter of if I will reach my goal, but only when."

3 In his book, *No Regrets*, Apolo Ohno has this to say about **consistent effort**, "it may take years to develop but the repetitiveness of the most basic skills create good habits that allow you to perform better than the competition." It's this kind of work ethic that has helped Jason Parks, a relatively new competitor of 18 months, in Classic Physique rise to the top of his category and prepare him for national level shows in 2017. Ohno goes on to say, "Consistency over time will create momentum, which can make the journey quicker and more powerful." This is true in life in general – on the field, on the stage, and on the job.

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then is not an act, but a habit."
– Will Durant, American writer, Historian and Philosopher

4 Train Smart. NPC Junior USA Champion Kevin Rainey, Super Heavyweight Bodybuilder says, "In the gym, consistency is key, but learn to train smart. Even if you feel weak, and some days you will, do something. Engage the muscle." Lee Haney concurs with his popular saying, "Stimulate, don't annihilate!" Kevin adds, "If it's not going to build muscle, I'm not going to do it. I lift heavy weight with controlled, moderate reps for most body parts and exercises. If you're doing it correctly, you don't need to spend hours in the gym." It is the difference between weight lifting and bodybuilding. Another key tip - track your progress. The simple act of documenting will allow you to have a better understanding of what makes one day better than another.

"Don't count the days, make the days count."
– Muhammed Ali, Professional Boxer and Activist

5 Focus. When you are training at this level, to be the best you can be, you have to shut down the outside world's distractions and negatives as much as possible. Being focused is dedication, with a central purpose – to love a particular sport and compete within it. Both, Classic Physique Competitor, Jason Park, and Super Heavyweight Bodybuilder, Kevin Rainey believe bodybuilding is a sport that takes time and requires patience and discipline. Beyond that, in order to be at the elite level you not only have to want to win, you have to have the desire to win and the hatred of losing. For anyone who has been around a competitor close to show time, they know that there's a selfish component to this level of competitiveness. Every single task during your prep has to have a purpose towards improving your body for your "Day of Show" and must not have an adverse affect on your prep.

"A clear vision, backed by definite plans, gives you a tremendous feeling of confidence and personal power."
– Brian Tracy, Motivational Public Speaker & Author

6 Learn to show your assets and hide your flaws. Knowing where your strengths and weaknesses are allows you to focus on where you need work. Learning how to overcome obstacles and accentuate your strengths will help you efficiently and effectively develop the skills necessary to be successful.

“We can’t control who shows up or whom the judges choose, we can only control ourselves. We may not always win, but we don’t lose. We show up and fight for it.”

– Steve Payne, *IFBB/NPC Expeditior, Personal Trainer & Co-Owner House of Payne Personal Training*

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7 Have a passion for the process. If you want to compete at an elite level, you must love what you do. The desire to win, to be the best without a doubt, comes from deep within. You have to love the process or journey that takes you to the top spot on the podium because if you don’t have it, it’s too easy to get sidetracked or distracted. Kevin Rainey notes, “having a passion for the process, and a passion for the sport is what’s important but it’s also important to live your life. Keep in mind, for most people the sport of bodybuilding is only a hobby. When it gets to the point that competition is truly affecting your life, you need to step back and look at reality. There is a show every week, every month, and every year, keep working towards your goals but keep it in perspective and realize what’s important.”

“The way you prepare is going to dictate what you get in return.”

– Scott Hamilton, *Olympic Gold Medalist, Retired Figure Skater*

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8 Will. Vince Lombardi famously said, “Winning isn’t everything, but the will to win is everything.” Your path will not be without challenges, obstacles and setbacks. How you react in these situations will help you rise above 99% of the competition. Can it be discouraging? Absolutely, but having the desire and determination to fight through it is critical to achieving your goals. Bikini competitor Leah Humphrey says, “I’m motivated by wanting to know that when I step on stage I did everything I could to be ready to fight for first place. No matter my placing, I feel I succeeded as long as I didn’t cut any corners and didn’t leave anything on the table.” Kevin agrees, “There is something to be said for being your best --even beating your last ‘best self’, but to take it to another level, you have to want to destroy your last ‘best self’”

“The power to hold on in spite of everything, the power to endure-this is the winners quality. Persistence is the ability to face defeat again and again without giving up-to push on in the face of great difficulty, knowing that victory will be yours. Persistence means taking pains to overcome every obstacle, and to do what’s necessary to reach your goal.”

– Anonymous

These 8 strategies for a winning attitude are some of life’s greatest lessons. Combined with your physical body, applying these strategies to your sport will provide you with the tools necessary to go from good to great!

Kevin’s Training Tips

- Engage the muscle - in the gym, less is more
- Be 100% committed, including the diet
- Clean cheats and healthy choices get results
- Have a coach that works with you as a team
- Be patient, you’ve got to love the process
- Passion for the sport means having drive, determination and discipline
- The will to win and hate to lose is necessary to take it to another level
- Have a good support team
- Continue to learn everyday

