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- 1 - Draper here... Train till You Drop, Pop

"I'm still trying to figure this stuff out."

Those were my exact words to one of the early afternoon muscleheads, a gal I've known for the life of the gym, 15 years. There's not much conversation going on during this hour of the day. The participants are serious, busy, few and not exactly sociable. Now that I am no longer the gym's owner, "not exactly social" describes my nature rather accurately. Some might call it cantankerous. It's the bloodshot eyes, the groaning and look of madness that gives them this false impression.

Anyway, she laughed aloud, knowing precisely what I meant. There's at least a dozen years between us, but the lady's been around the gym for many tough and persistent years. You'd think the longer you train, the more you'd know and the less you would not know. That's true until the longer you train catches up with the older you are. The older you are, the more things change from year to year, month to month and day to day. Follow me? Maybe you're not old enough.

Try this: The older you get, the more you change and the less of what you know applies to who you are. Thus, I'm still trying to figure this stuff out.

I insist on training with intensity, but is intensity training becoming destructive -- counterproductive -- now that I'm... er... not as young as I used to be? I prefer to weigh 220 to 225 pounds, but is that too much weight for a guy... um... my age? Heavy squats and deadlifts and rows suit my training appetite, but am I a glutton for punishment and injury? I'm not a kid anymore, ya know. Train till you drop -- is that no longer a good philosophy for... gulp... an older fellow? How about a pound of red meat, six eggs and two quarts of milk a day -- is that pushing the protein diet over the edge now that I'm... ha... mature? I use wraps and belts and straps, tape, paperclips, glue, gum and spit to keep myself together while shoulder pressing. Though resourceful, is that unwise? My insurer wants to know.

Hey, I don't care. Ask me. I don't care. How else am I going to get the job done? Yoga and yogurt? I'm careful. I'm focused. I was kidding about the glue and paperclips. I have tried to leave the gym without exhausting myself, but I cannot get past either the front door or the back door. Today I didn't push the reps to failure; I doubled the pace instead. Last week I refused to do my singles and doubles in the squat -- too much overload, old buddy; I, sneak that I am, added five extra sets of leg presses. Back day called for deadlifts, bent-over rows and one-arm dumbbell rows. I boldly eliminated the one-arm rows; did four sets of ultimate Farmer Walks around the perimeter of the gym before I would permit access to my homeward-bound my pickup.

I consumed a can of tuna and a protein shake while in traffic en route to my digs and ate an early dinner of skirt steak, eggs, milk and salad as soon as I arrived. No dessert, didn't want to spoil my appetite for my late supper, a meal not unlike my lunch.

I wish I could sleep better. No comments from the peanut gallery, please.

It's gonna be tough to change my ways. But, do I have to? I don't think so. That is, my ways are ways that continuously evolve; thus, they change regularly. Each workout takes on its own form to meet the shape before it, me. From one workout to the next, my body's capability, distribution of injuries and soreness, level of muscle fatigue, strength, energy and endurance vary and demand special consideration. When I was younger these variations were relatively slight and no-brainers: blast it, burst, rock and roll, bob and weave and repair overnight, get huge, feed me, feed me... more, more.

Today it's different, yet it's the same.

I continue to take it to the edge, the edge having up-to-date modifications, but still the edge. I seek 8s, 9s and 10s in intensity, accepting the weight is often less than the weight used in days gone by. I push and pull with all my might for two hours, though less iron is moved over a shorter distance. Muscle endurance and energy allow me to superset, but age-induced limitations require I train with measured caution. Most of the joints are good, the back and the knees outstanding, only the right wrist and elbow -- weak links -- make bitter the task. I wrap them, unwrap them and wrap them again. It works and I grin through the frustration, hurt and challenge.

You've got to take it to the edge without slipping or losing your grip. I don't see a net. There are examples in my experience if you can sift through the rubbish:

~ When I manage 5 to 10 riotous workouts in a row, I often fatigue and suffer squealing insertions. I work around the interruptions by foregoing a workout or two, recuperating through dedicated rest and a superior anabolic environment (sleep and eat) and a plan to return with extra vigilance and might of the mind. This does wonders for the system and frequently more discipline and intelligence is required to replace a workout with rest than to train seven days without pause. A step forward in disguise.

~ Have you arrived yet? I can't press with the weight, zeal, freedom or delight I once did, yet today's muscle exertion seems greater through slower, more cautious repetitions and wrenching concentration. Pain is no friend; I don't boast of my relationship with it and I am not alone in enduring it day by day in the gym. Many of you know the wicked creature better than I -- no doubt contributing to our kinship. But pain can certainly get our attention and gain our obedience. By pain's direction intensity within the muscle is still achievable, providing sufficient muscle overload and hypertrophy. I see red, but it works and I don't think that's unhealthy or wrong. Crazy, yes; wrong, no. The alternative isn't bad; glide, go with the wind, do what is unthreatening and settle for local destinations.

~ Last week, all week, I dared injury and the most unpleasant of its attendants that stood in my way. The more I hurt, the more I ignored the fiendish confrontations. I was resolute, unremitting and ruthless. Don't ask me where that state of mind came from -- and it was most certainly a state of mind -- but I blasted through my training sessions like a 16-wheeler through a pumpkin patch. Smashing. I returned to the gym Monday, a domestic lion, declawed, no growl, no aggression. I didn't ache. I wasn't weary. I didn't care. Where do the moods come from? I wandered the gym floor looking for a place to scratch, to dig. What did I want to do, not what

was I scheduled to do, that was the question. I tried this. Nope. Too boring. I tried that. Nope. Too much like work. How about the other thing? Ahha. A few sets of the other thing got the juices flowing, heated up the tank and got me rolling. I built up momentum and cruised freely for two hours -- swooping and looping. Good for the heart and ailerons.

Does this sound familiar? You walk into the gym, sure-footed, but not sure -- and begin sniffing around the equipment like an unhurried, well-fed hound on a warm afternoon. You want to hit the iron, not putz around, cycling, stretching, warming up and doing midsection. It's not a waste of time, but later already on the dinky stuff. Where's the beef? Also, you are absolutely not interested in setting any world records in weight or speed. Slow, hard, deliberate and confident; these are the adjectives to describe your present demeanor. To feel, not fight -- to spar, not struggle.

You're cool, unstressed, limber, in-tune, mildly excited, carefree and alive. And you don't even notice; it's just there. You pull up a utility bench and decide to do some isolated front presses on the Smith Press. The shoulder mass has had its share of hard, heavy work, and a course in smooth, dedicated muscle action sounds just right. If it sounds right, it's right. The sets go from light to friendly with a six-rep cap on each set... and nobody is counting the sets.

The prize sought today is the perfect repetition, one after another; each slightly different by your persuasion, yet still perfect. The effect is euphoric muscle extension and contraction without demand of forced reps, heavy overload, required volume, calculated pace and drawn blood. Just pump and burn, sweat and exhilaration.

The last four achievements are hot, and assure muscle and power and continued training. They also account for a happy heart, a joyful soul, a sound spirit, a clear mind and a big smile.

What was my point? Forgot again. Not important, bombers, just don't take 'er up too high today. The higher up you go the more fun it is and you might not come back. I'm selfish, you know. What would I do without you?

Go with God's direction... Dave Draper

2 - Laree here, taking over with Draper News...

"Plenty" of time is just a pipe dream; still, an extra hour today or a couple yesterday is making a big difference in my attention to the website. (This will come after the clean-my-desk phase I'm in right now, of course -- haven't seen the surface in several years now that I have time to notice.) I've been gathering material and ideas for new collections since we started the website -- February 1999, do you believe it? -- and the horizon now looks open to bring the new material online. Retirement from the gym biz doesn't mean not working, after all.

3 - IronOnline Forum Report and Bash News

Forum Report:

In addition to the diet and training guidance and support from our camaraderie group, this week's authoritative articles include: The Metabolism Myth by Clarence Bass, the Draper Nutrition Guide Compilation, and Nutrition and the Immune System by Fred Fornicola. The Officer's Club forum includes thoughts from Frank Zane and Dave... with Dave in a story-telling mode in Travels with Zane. The main forum covers 172 different topics blanketing a range to suit all levels of weight training enthusiasts... that is to say, you.

<http://www.davedraper.com/forum/ubbthreads.php>

Bash News:

New York City, September 24, 25, 26, 2004 -- The Crowne Plaza on Times Square reports enthusiastic action in the reservation department for our Bash weekend attendance. They'll work with us as much as possible, but once our block is full, it's first come, first served, so if you're confident you'll be able to make the trip, make your hotel reservations soon. Reservation details are at the link below -- if you make a reservation, please drop me a note to let me know so we can save you a seat at the table.

Friday evening workout, followed by dinner at the Roxy Deli on Broadway
Saturday seminar, 11-ish, with Dave and Dr. Ken Leistner, Mid-City Gym
Saturday buffet lunch, 2-ish, Planet Hollywood, Times Square
Sunday brunch

<http://davedraper.com/IOL-Bash04-invitation.html>

4 - What's New at davedraper.com

In the new products department, let's give a big yahoo to our friends at Health Science who've incorporated ibuprofen into a new transdermal cream and roll-on lotion. Look in the new products section of the online store for details.

Beats working for a living, that's Dave's take on our sale of the Santa Cruz World Gym to our friends Larry Corum and Ed Evans. Click below to read the rest of his musings if you missed the email newsletter last week. Taking a look around the gym floor, Dave brings us Away from the Maddening Crowd, and in the prior week's commentary helps us consider our purposes for training.

All of this new stuff can be found at the What's New link below.

<http://davedraper.com/iron-online-whats-new.html>

5 - Trailing thoughts...

Dave writes this week of his changing workouts, with his eye on the aging process and its effects on his training. He's more aware of this than most -- partially because introspection is his nature, and the rest because as he writes weekly perhaps people are following his moves, hoping to replicate one or two. Or, maybe, readers wouldn't mind sidestepping a mine field.

The rest of us just rub our aching joints (in my experience watching the achers, it's generally the right shoulder, followed by the right knee), then we grumble a little and grin, usually at a nearby aging boomer who knows the drill.

Between grumbles yesterday, I noticed I was benching on an incline using a normal bar. It's been a while; usually I use the thick bar on rare stops at the bench. After a few minutes I realized the weight on the bar was as high as when I trained with a partner, pushing hard, over ten years ago. Female, 48 years old, training for 23+ years and as strong as ever, in fact stronger in pull-ups and curls.

There are exercises Dave can claim that status in, or at least will say he's making strength gains, and who can forget watching the video of Dr. Ken Leistner's 23 reps with 407 pounds at a -- what was it? -- 168-pound bodyweight?

So what I'm wondering is this: Does our strength really have to diminish through all the previously "known" age points, 40, 50, 60? What about 70? Maybe... and maybe not.

Do whatever it takes to surround yourself with striving people, at home or at the gym. If that's not working for whatever reason, jump on over to our forum where you'll find the lifting camaraderie that may be missing in your neighborhood. Let's check out this aging thing and see if the non-existing research is true.

<http://www.davedraper.com/forum/ubbthreads.php>

Laree

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Quick links to support IronOnline

Dave's new Top Squat

<http://davedraper.com/top-squat.html>

IronOnline bookstore, including the new West Coast Bodybuilding Scene and the sale on Your Body Revival

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mv?ID=Books>

Dave's Bomber Blend whey protein powder

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mv?ID=Bomber>

Super Spectrim, Anabol Naturals, Beverly International, Ageless Growth & Body Ammo

<http://www.davedraper.com/go4x.mv?ID=Supplements>

PS: If you know people who might want to receive this weekly newsletter, forward them this copy and have them send a blank email to this address.

join-davedraper@dd.lyrishosting.com

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