

## Injury Can Be A Beautiful Thing

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We workout to progress, to grow, to better ourselves. Through this process, we develop a tendency to glorify the work, prioritize the training sessions, and vilify all that might keep us from them.

However, this places the value on the external physical realities of a training program and **ignores the fact that the true purpose of a fitness journey is self-work**, and self-work comes in many forms.

So easily we judge an injury to be inherently negative, a set-back that keeps us from progress, a storm that must be weathered offering no value of its own. The true set-back of this outlook comes not from the physical injury but **our unwillingness to view an injury for the gifts it can bring.**

## The Gift of an Injury

This statement goes much deeper than a clever mental trick to reframe a negative situation as a positive. It is far more than simply finding the silver lining. The deepest form of self-work comes from knowing that everything that arises in your training, whether seemingly negative or positive, **has the potential to move your journey forward. The growth just may not come in the area that you expected or planned for.**

## Adaptability and Non-Attachment

The first gift of an injury simply comes from being forced to let go of your expectations. This does not mean never setting a goal or not prioritizing accomplishment. **It means relaxing your hold on your expectations** so that you can easily let go when being pulled in a different direction. Nothing redirects your journey like an injury.

Will you allow this new direction to bring you down while clinging desperately to the direction you thought you were moving? Or will you hear the message, reassess your current state, and begin moving forward from where you stand now? **Grappling with these questions, while uncomfortable, teaches a value lesson.** The maturity and awareness you must develop in your fitness journey applies broadly to all areas of life.

## The Invaluable Ego Check

I often tell athletes, “You are invincible, until you aren’t.” The earlier you learn this lesson, and the more you understand its implications, the better. Many of us remain convinced that we are indestructible until we suffer our first significant injury. The paradox of great coaches is that most were once immature athletes. As much as I wish it were untrue, most of us need the slap in the face that an injury so willingly provides to truly understand what our limits are.

While I never wish an injury on anyone, I understand that **the deepest learning comes from self-discovery.** All my injuries have come packaged with some

epiphanies that were initially difficult to swallow, but I now look back on them as invaluable gifts.

In addition to showing us that we are but human, **injuries also spotlight specific issues that you did not know needed work** or that you did not understand to be as glaring they are.

## Identity Crisis

You are not your PRs. You are not your abs, arms, or butt. **You are not your training plan or your committed schedule.**

These are all aspects of your life and your journey. They are perhaps telling pieces of your nature, but actually they say little of who you are. They are important and valuable, but not vital.

When our ability to train (or train how we want) is suddenly stripped from us, we can feel like we are missing a major piece of who we are. Unwilling breaks from our regimens will never feel joyful, but **they provide an opportunity to understand who we are outside our fitness journey.** We get to observe which thoughts, ideals, and projects rise to the surface in the void left by our training schedule. This can break our hyper-focus on our physicality and allow for growth in other aspects of life.

## Apply Your Dedication Elsewhere

**An injury frees up time and energy that you can focus on other pursuits.** This seems immediately obvious: no gym time equals more time for other things. However, the benefit here goes far beyond simply having more hours in a day. We can prioritize aspects our life that can often take a backseat to fitness goals. Willpower is finite and we can apply the dedication, focus, and commitment for our training to other aspects.

Perhaps you have a creative or business project that can now take center stage. Perhaps you want to re-commit to deepening your personal, family, or romantic relationships. Perhaps your injury allows you to move and stretch a bit so you can

work on correcting imbalances or mobility limitations. Perhaps you can apply the same dedication to your rehab and recovery that you once applied to your training. **Your horizon now offers a different view** and you can move in any direction that you want.

The other side of this coin offers the opportunity to develop more intrinsic motivation to other aspects of your life. Dedication can hinge on momentum for many people. I often find that humans are “all-or-nothing” beings when it comes to our commitment. **When we remain committed to our training, the dedicated mindset spills out to many other areas.** When we train regularly we also eat better, stick to better sleep patterns, and feel more focused at work, etc.

Strip away our ability to train and our dedication elsewhere begins to wane. I have actually heard athletes say things like, “Well, I can’t train right now so it doesn’t matter how I eat.” We all know this to be crazy talk, but this mindset creeps in easily.

With an injury comes the opportunity for more intrinsic motivation for these other aspects free from the momentum of training commitment. **Challenge yourself to eat even better, stick to optimal sleep patterns, and focus on your work,** in spite of the slump that can follow an injury. You can not only groove these other habits in even deeper, but also change your outlook and break your dependence on your **training for commitment.**

## Invaluable Gifts

We all feel the initial shock from an injury; a shocking realization that our next few weeks or months bring a far different path than we envisioned. Learn to move through these emotions to understand that an injury, no matter how physically and psychologically painful, **can bring you far more opportunities for growth than set-backs.** While you might be further from your athletic goals, you are also at the beginning a beautiful path of human development. Every injury I’ve ever suffered brought frustration, but I now see them all as gifts, far more valuable than anything I could have accomplished in the gym.