



The ENGINEERING CAREER COACH PODCAST SESSION #30

How to Build Willpower and Create Positive Habits that Move You Closer to Your Engineering Goals with Leo Gura

Show notes at: engineeringcareercoach.com/leo

Episode Intro: Welcome to *The Engineering Career Coach Podcast*, where it's all about helping real engineers to overcome real challenges and get real results. And now for your host, who is on a mission to inspire as many engineers as possible, professional engineer and certified career coach, Anthony Fasano.

Welcome to The Engineering Career Coach Podcast episode 30 and I have an awesome show for you today. Today my guest is going to be Leo Gura. He is a personal development expert. He's got over two hundred videos on Youtube with millions of views and today he's going to talk about willpower. And willpower is what you can use to build new habits and new habits can drive the success that you can have in your engineering career and life. I'm so excited about having Leo on the show today.

But before I introduce him and we get into it, real quick - two things for you. First of all, as many of you know as of next week, October 13th I will no longer write *Daily Boosts* and my *Monday Morning Motivational emails*. I'm going to stop both of them and just do one weekly newsletter for my *Engineering Career Coach* subscribers. I've enjoyed doing it but now I need to focus on some other things to help engineers to really have the best careers and lives they can have. So if you want to make sure you're on that weekly list, just go to engineeringcareercoach.com, put your name and email in and you'll be on the list and also I'll send you a document I created with the top three resources that I used to become a partner in an engineering firm at the age of twenty-seven.

And now I'd just like to take a minute - you know this show takes a lot of time, effort and costs to produce and I'm happy to say that I have my first sponsor for the show. My sponsor is non-other than the Purdue University's Master of Engineering Management Program. And I'm excited to have Purdue as a sponsor because I believe in their program.

I happened to meet Melanie Schramm from Purdue, who came to Austin engineering career meet-up. She spoke about the program. I researched the program. It looks like a phenomenal program. And I get so many questions from engineers on, "Should I get a Masters in engineering? Should I get engineering management MBA? What's the difference?" And if you are looking for an option that's going to give you an edge in your engineering career and you want to get into the business side and if you want to earn a Masters degree that is specifically designed to advance your career in industry,



has on campus and online study options available, check out Purdue University's Master of Engineering Management Program. For details on the program you can call 1 877 598 4233 or simply email promasters, that's promasters@purdue.edu. Applications are being processed daily. So please check it out. Those of you out there that said to me before, "What kind of Master's degree should I get? I want to go more into business. I want to be in the management side," then this might be for you.

So now let's get into our show for today. What I'd like to do is first introduce my guest for today. And Leo Gura has a website called actualized.org and he's had an interesting background. He's struggled a bit in his life over the past few years. He was depressed. He just wasn't having that success that he wanted to have. So he's read hundreds of personal development books, over a hundred thousand dollars worth of personal development material, which is amazing, especially from someone like myself, who's also read a lot, that's a staggering number.

And what he's done is he's taken all the information from these books, seminars that he's went to and he's watched how they've affected his behavior patterns of himself and also of his clients. And he tries to see what helps him to get the best results and then he takes them and he puts them into these videos on each of these items, on his website. And that's how I found him and I watch his videos regularly now and I emailed him to get him on the show and he said he would come on. So I'm really excited about it and he's going to focus on talking about willpower today, which we're going to get into now in the interview.

And to get us kicked off and to get us into the interview I want to give you a quote that kind of touches on willpower and controlling your thoughts, from my favorite book, *The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari*, and it goes like this, ***"When you control your thoughts you control your mind. When you control your mind you control your life. And once you reach the state of being in total control of your life, you become the master of your destiny."*** Let's get to the interview.

Coaching Segment:

Anthony: Now it's time for the main segment of our show today and I'm really excited to have my guest with me today, Leo Gura of actualized.org. It's an amazing website that Leo's put together with hundreds of videos on all different kinds of personal development topics, really a range of topics - relationships, everything really. I can't even tell you all the different topics that are on site. You can check it out. But we're going to talk today about willpower something I was researching quite a bit and coming up with Leo's video on it and so I asked him to be on the show and here he is. So Leo thank you for joining me today.



Leo: Anthony, thanks a lot. I appreciate you having me on.

Anthony: So Leo, before we get started talking about willpower why don't you talk a little bit about kind of how you ended up doing what you do today, which is all of these videos you've distilled from what you've learned. Talk to me about how you got there.

Leo: Mm, yeah it's been kind of a long personal journey for me. One of the things I'm really passionate about is life purpose so having people know what they want to do in life and for me it's been a long journey to find what my life purpose is, and now it's really personal development.

I love coaching people on personal development. I do that as a life coach. I also like to study and research personal development, apply it in my own life, try out these various techniques for how you can improve your life and then kind of like take the golden nuggets that I find from all my research and then publish them online for free, in my videos.

Anthony: Now Leo, what was it that made you decide to use videos as your format?

Leo: I actually started by writing articles and just kind of doing traditional blogging but I'm not a big fan of writing. I just don't enjoy it that much. So I had a couple of guys that I was following on Youtube, who were sort of along personal development lines. They were doing dating coaching and at that time I was trying to get better at dating. So I watched a lot of their videos and that format just resonated with me a lot.

Anthony: Awesome. Your videos are very engaging and one of the things I try to do, now that I've found your site, is watch one of your videos at night because I find that absorbing positive content later in the evening is very helpful for me to kind of bring the day to an end. So I appreciate the videos. They're awesome.

Leo: Okay cool, thanks.

Anthony: Alright, so let's get into willpower now. What I do on my podcasts is I try to help engineers to develop personally and professionally and I know that a critical component of that is willpower. So why don't you start out by giving us kind of your definition of willpower?

Leo: I actually used to be a bit of an engineer. I actually did two years of engineering school but then I dropped out and went to philosophy instead.

Anthony: Wow.

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Leo: Yeah, didn't like all the, engineering was a little dry but it's cool, it's cool. Yeah anyways - willpower. What is willpower? Willpower is, there's a couple of ways to define it. I was just thinking about it recently and I was coming up with this definition, "It's the ability to take right action." And right action is this term that just means the things that you know you need to be doing, that you know that are healthy for you, that are good for you, that are going to be beneficial to your success and growth in life and just taking action on them.

Because how many times throughout the day, in the week, is there stuff that we know we should be doing but we're not actually doing it? So it's really our ability to control ourselves, control that we have over our tension, over our emotions, over our actions and over our thoughts.

Anthony: Awesome. Now when you say right action, just want to dive into that a little bit because I talk about this a lot too with a lot of the engineers that I work with and that it's important to understand what your goals are so that you understand whether or not what you're doing everyday makes sense for you. Is that kind of what you mean, like taking the right action that's going to put you closer to your goals?

Leo: Yeah, right action puts you closer to your goals. Right action, for me, you know it's days like, critical points that you have throughout the day but when you wake up in the morning immediately you face choices. Do you wake up on time or do you push the snooze button? So that's one first choice you get. If you push the snooze button once, the second choice you get is do you push it a second time?

And then of course, let's say you get up out of bed and after that you've got the next choice - should I go take a shower and brush my teeth or should I go watch some TV? And then should I get to work on time? And then after I get to work, should I start answering the emails I know I need to be answering and getting into the work or do I go browse the internet and read some funny magazines or something? And then, like your day just continues like this with these small choices and of course most of us know what the right choices are but we just don't make the right choices consistently.

And a lot of people's lives tend to be kind of this back and forth between you make one right choice then one wrong choice, then one right choice, one wrong choice until you get this mixed bag of mixed results. And then if you add that up over the course of weeks and months and years, which are just made up of individual days, then you tend to get this mixed bag of results in your entire life. So your career becomes a mixed bag. So do your relationships and your friendships and your health and everything else.

Anthony: Okay, I got it. So willpower is that ability to take that right action. So why is this so important Leo?

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Leo: I mean it's critical, like I just said, if you just picture what your life would look like if you always took right action. Just picture that for a second. Imagine if you took right action, not even for your whole life but just for a year, every little choice was the right choice, the choice that aligned with your goals, with your vision for yourself, with growing yourself in your career, in your relationships, in your health and your fitness, in all these categories. I mean what would you have? You would have like a stellar year. The things you could accomplish would be amazing.

These are just some points that regard your personal life but we can also talk about, for example, the importance of willpower in other areas of life. So they've done a lot of studies on this stuff actually and self-control is one of the greatest predictors, for example, of academic performance. So if you're in school or in college or you're studying for your Masters degree, that's huge. In fact they found that self-control is more important for academic performance than intelligence.

Anthony: Wow.

Leo: They've also found that self-control is more important for leadership charisma and they've found that self-control is more important for the success of your marriage and your relationships than empathy. So I mean there's a lot to be said about having the ability to control your own thoughts, your own emotions and another one here is controlling your own impulses. Because a lot of times the impulses that we have throughout the day can kind of lead us down the wrong path.

Anthony: Yeah, I think one area where this is very applicable, especially for engineers because as engineers we often have to take exams, different certifications - like for example your professional engineering license. And these are exams that require, I mean they're eight hours, eight hour exams or more and they require a lot of focus, a lot of decisions where you have to say, "I'm going to study instead of doing (this)." And I can see here, where willpower would be very important because for a lot of engineers the difference between getting that license is their whole career.

Leo: Yeah, so that's basically studying and dealing with the pressure and stress of taking those long-term exams, about planning out ahead of time how you're going to study but then also when you're preparing for like the day before the exam and even the morning before the exam, calming yourself down so you're in that kind of flow state so you're able to just sit down and face all the questions.

Anthony: Yeah, and just the idea of you know, it's easy for me to say at lunch time do I want to study or do I want to go on the internet and mess around for an hour or should I spend my lunch hours for the next two months studying, leading up to the exam?

Leo: Uh-huh, yeah I remember all those days from high school and college.

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Anthony: So I think the bottom line here is that willpower is critical pretty much in everything you do because if you're going to make a hundred decisions a day if not more and the ability to have that willpower to take right action, as Leo frames it, is critical as to whether or not you achieve your goals but also how quickly you achieve them. So it is a critical thing. So Leo, why don't you talk to us a little bit about how can we develop that willpower, how can we improve on it?

Leo: Uh-huh, willpower - to develop it there's kind of like a fundamental understanding you've got to have and that's this model that your willpower is almost like a muscle. So you have the prefrontal cortex, which is a structure in the brain that is responsible for your executive decision making abilities. People with a weak prefrontal cortex are not able to control their impulses very well.

So literally they've done a lot of neuroscience on this. One of the things they found is that you have negative emotions, parts in your brain, in the lower parts of your brain you have various emotional centers. So these are parts of the brain that aren't too rational. They just start tapping into all sorts of positive, negative emotions just depending on what kind of circumstances and environment you're in. What's interesting is that people who have like a very calm mind, who aren't too emotionally reactive, who are able to control themselves well it's not that they don't have negative emotions coming up for them, it's that they come up but the prefrontal cortex is strong enough to suppress those initial urges and those initial fears and emotions that can really make your life very turbulent.

So to develop willpower what you have to do is basically you have to do the stuff that you don't want to do. And nobody likes to hear this but you know it's doing those things that are difficult and that are distasteful because anybody can do a pleasant activity consistently. That's easy, right like let's say we put a big chocolate cake in front of you right now at lunchtime. Does it take much willpower to eat the whole thing?

Anthony: Probably not.

Leo: No, not really right. That's the easy thing to do. It takes willpower, now how much willpower does it take to eat half of it. Well, that's still pretty easy. Eating only a little slice? That'll take some willpower probably, for most people. Most people would want a couple slices. And to abstain from the whole thing entirely and to eat a healthy salad instead, that takes enormous willpower, especially if you're at the point in your life where you haven't built up the habit of eating healthy foods.

And if you've been eating chocolate cake for a long time and you've gotten used to this habit of eating a piece of chocolate cake every lunchtime, then it's going to be really hard for you to resist that. But now if you want to build some willpower then what you do is you just, you force yourself to resist it. Right, do the hard thing. Now in this case it's the chocolate cake but you can find ways to apply this in almost any area of your life. It's really just doing the things that are right versus the things that are wrong. You tend to build momentum either in a positive direction or negative direction.

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So if you do stuff that is right for you, that's also challenging and difficult to do, when you resist your impulses that is building up positive momentum. And that's kind of like creating this positive streak and this snowball effect tends to happen, that it becomes easier, you find it easier to make good and positive choices in your life.

On the other hand, if you keep giving in to your impulses and your lower desires, if you go for that chocolate cake and then after that you skip going to the gym because you're kind of lazy and then after that let's say you watch three hours of television and then after that you do some internet browsing and then after that you go to bed late, later than you should and then after that you wake up later than you should, so you get this bad streak going and in that case you're actually diminishing your willpower because this muscle that you have, this prefrontal cortex, it can either develop and grow or it can atrophy. So that's what's happening when you're building positive or negative momentum here.

Anthony: So there are thing you can do to actually build that, strengthen that part of your brain?

Leo: Oh yeah, definitely. I mean this has been proven by lots of neuroscience and you can just also notice it in your own life. I'm sure every one of us has had either a really stellar day or a really stellar week or like a really stellar year in our life or in our career. We were just kind of like on fire, everything was clicking, we were very productive, we were very creative, we were accomplishing so much stuff, like we were really on top of the ball and we always wish we could have more of those.

And one of the things you'll notice about yourself is when you're having those really awesome moments in your life it's because you are taking right action and you're building up that momentum and you're just like on this amazing roll.

Anthony: So give us some of these activities or exercises you can do Leo.

Leo: Yeah. So they've done research and studies on this and here are some of the top ones for increasing your willpower:

By far the biggest is meditation. Meditation is huge. It's so huge. I've been meditating now for like almost a year. Every single day for a year, like I never miss a day and I meditate for about an hour everyday. And I'm a busy guy. It's not like I just sit around and have nothing to do. I've got so much stuff to do. I've literally got like an email inbox full of emails from people that want coaching from me, that are going to be paying me like two hundred dollars an hour to coach them and I don't have time because I'm meditating, alright. So I could get two hundred dollars for that one hour of meditation.

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I could get two hundred dollars but to me it's more important to meditate and that's because the research shows that if you sit down and meditate every single day, whether it's for an hour or even something as little as five or ten minutes then what that does is just over the course of a month they can see on brain scans that your brain prefrontal cortex, it starts to develop. It grows new connections and it gets better control over your impulses. It gets you better focus, better attention and more self-awareness.

Anthony: That's pretty amazing. So obviously, for you, talking about this decision that you made - you can get two hundred dollars for an hour or you can meditate. You obviously realize that this is a critical part for you as a right action, the meditation.

Leo: Yeah, it's like it's the beginning of my day so after I wake up and I shower then I sit down and I meditate for an hour and it calms my mind down. It let's me be focused. See, the other thing is that your mind, it can either be very agitated, that means that it's operating on higher frequencies of brainwaves.

So your brain actually has frequencies that your brain thought patterns kind of vibrate at and you can measure this with an EEG machine. You can hook it up to your brain and as you're sitting there and you're thinking you're going to notice on the machine your brainwaves will like oscillate at different frequencies. There's like alpha waves, beta waves, gama waves, delta waves.

Now, the higher the frequency of oscillation of your brain, that means your thoughts are more scattered and they're more jittery and they're more impulsive. So when you're resonating at like twenty, let's say like I think it's like forty to sixty hertz that's kind of like an agitated state. Right. And if you're lower than that, if you're like at twenty to thirty hertz then you're at kind of a normal everyday consciousness. If you're below that, if you're like in the ten hertz category or the five hertz category then your brain waves become like really slow, really mellow. You're not stressed out at all and there you start to get more into kind of like sleepy states and also this is where meditation happens. And then when you're completely deep asleep and you're in that kind of very deep, relaxing sleep then your brainwaves are like really, really low. They're just a couple of hertz.

So what meditation does is it puts you into the lower hertz ranges. Now if you're stressed out in your day, you're having arguments all the time and like crazy stuff is going on at work then you're probably in like the forty hertz plus range and there you're in the alpha wave category and those are just like really impulsive, spontaneous kinds of thoughts that are all over the place. And when you have thoughts like that it's really hard to think long-term, it's hard to delay gratification, it's hard to follow through on your goals.

Anthony: Now, for those of you out there that might be thinking, "I'm not going to start meditating for an hour, I'm just starting," you can start small. You can meditate for a few minutes a day and you can,



like anything else, become better at it. Obviously we're not going to go through everything about meditation on today's podcast but I am going to put a link in the show notes for this show, which you can find at engineeringcareercoach.com/leo and I'll link to Leo's video on willpower and also his video, I believe you have a video on meditation Leo, correct?

Leo: I do, yeah.

Anthony: Okay, so I'll definitely link to that so you can look at it. But I mean Leo, just quickly on meditation, is that what you would recommend for someone starting, just to try to start and do it as long as you can do it?

Leo: I think that a really good number to shoot for is twenty minutes and that's what I was doing when I started out. So twenty minutes is a pretty long time. If you haven't meditated before it's going to be pretty challenging for you to sit through twenty minutes. I'd say at least ten minutes. So shoot for ten to twenty minutes and be happy with that. You don't need to be doing hour-long meditations. That's a really long meditation. I don't recommend starting off that way. So you can do ten or twenty minutes for a year and you'll be good.

Anthony: Excellent. What else besides meditation can we do to build our willpower Leo?

Leo: Another one that's really big is exercise. You can see why because it's kind of going against your impulses right. Most of us don't want to exercise if we don't already have a really strong exercise habit built up. We just want to be lazy. We don't really want to just go out there and even the act of getting off your couch and into your car to drive to the gym, that's already an exercise of willpower.

If your favorite show comes on and it's your exercise hour then it takes a lot of willpower to resist that show or to resist your friends or whatever comes up and still go exercise. Which is by the way another benefit of meditation, is that simply because you're observing the habit of meditation that already builds up your willpower because you're going to have stuff coming up in your day that's going to be distracting you, but when you say no to that stuff and you say, "Wait a minute, I'm not going to do this, I'm going to do the thing that I planned to do," which is to meditate, then that counts toward building your willpower.

And so with exercise at the gym, when you're pushing yourself, when you're pushing yourself on the treadmill or in the sport that you're playing or you're pushing yourself to lift more weights you can feel your willpower muscles flexing. Literally when you're on that last couple of reps, flexing your bicep or doing your bench press, that's you building your willpower muscles. And one thing you'll notice with the gym is that if you go a lot then it becomes easier to go a lot and it becomes easier to lift those higher weights and to do more reps and to run for longer periods of time because one of the things



that exercise trains you is it trains you self control over your muscles and to push yourself. So that's a really big one.

Anthony: Great, and this can be any kind of exercise, right? Like walking, anything that get's you up and moving.

Leo: Yeah, definitely.

Anthony: Great. Any other tips for building willpower?

Leo: Uh-huh, another one that I find personally very helpful is to work a full work day and to work it well. You know sometimes you can go to work and slack off, not really do the things you're supposed to be doing or the things you set for yourself to be doing so you just kind of have this like average day. And for me that tends to rob me of willpower and it tends to build negative momentum.

On the other hand if I go and like right off the bat I start doing all the important stuff first at work, not procrastinating it, just like getting it done and then moving on to new stuff, being creative, taking the time to really focus, not be doing multitasking so much but just like focus on one thing at a time and just executing on it. When I'm doing that and I come back home from work I find like I feel really good about myself, then I find that that builds that positive momentum and that willpower.

Anthony: Awesome. I have a few other questions for you besides willpower that I wanted to ask you but is there anything else on willpower, that you want to kind of leave us with on that topic?

Leo: Sure, yeah. I think the key points here is to remember that anything challenging that you do is going to build your willpower. So this idea can be customized to your own life right. What are the difficult things in your life? Here's an exercise from a little book, that's over a hundred years old, on personal development. It's actually *The Law Of Attraction* book, the original one and I want to read a little quote from it because I think it's so wise.

Here's the exercise, it says, "Perform at least one disagreeable task each day during the month. If there is any especially disagreeable task, which you would like to shirk from, that is the one that you should perform first." It says, "Anyone can do a pleasant thing cheerfully but it takes will to do the unpleasant thing cheerfully and that is how you must do the work." So not only do you do the work you don't want to do but you do it cheerfully. And then it says, "If you shirk this exercise you had better stop right here and acknowledge that you don't really want willpower and that you're content to stay where you are and remain a weakling." And finally it says, "The importance of the will is that will makes men giants."

Anthony: Mm, wow.

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Leo: So to me that's some like old school wisdom about how to build willpower and I think that there's one other point that needs to be made and that is that there is stuff that is robbing your willpower that you need to get rid of and cut out in your life.

Anthony: Yes. Let's talk about what could be destroying that ability to build that willpower. Give us the points.

Leo: Okay, so this is all like the easy stuff that you're going to hate me for but here it is - television, internet, eating, drinking, drugs, sex, so basically all the sinful, all the good stuff that we all like. All that stuff, especially if you partake in it to excess. You know if you're watching more than two hours of television a day, if you're surfing the internet constantly, if you're overeating (especially those guilty pleasure foods), if you're drinking, if you're doing any kind of recreational drugs - all of that stuff is destroying your willpower.

Anthony: So Leo, just kind of the question I wanted to ask you and I think it still does tie into this because it's about habits and I think building just off of what you just said is, is it the reason that these things are destroying your willpower is because they're creating these habits that make it easier for you to do what's not right action?

Leo: Yeah, I like to think of it as low consciousness and high consciousness. So high consciousness is when you're living up to your highest self. Low consciousness is when you're living up to your lowest self. Right. So should you stay and watch TV or go to the gym. The easy choice is of course to stay and watch TV. Should you eat the cake or not eat the cake? Of course the easy choice is to eat the cake. So it's these easy, very lazy choices that we make that satisfy our very basic desires. Those are low consciousness choices. They put you in a low consciousness state of mind and they, one of the characteristics of being in a low consciousness state of mind is that you tend to want to stay in it. Right. So it's building those kind of ruts.

If you've ever had a real rut in your life, where you've just like been gaining weight and not been doing any work and just slacking off, well that's what was happening there, you're in a low consciousness state. And television puts you into a low consciousness state. So does a lot of internet. So does eating a lot. So does drinking and drugs. So basically what you're doing here is you're just kind of like letting go and you're letting impulses run your life, you're not being very disciplined, you're not following through on stuff. And what happens is that, even though it feels good in the moment, in the long run it makes you feel very bad because we human beings, we have these base desires like the need for food and for drink and for sex and for relaxation.

So we have these base desires but actually what motivates us in life, I mean an engineer, think about an engineer. You guys as engineers you work really hard to study. You work really hard through

school to get to where you're at and the reason you became engineers is because you want to build like amazing things in the world. So these are not base desires, these are higher consciousness desires. These are desires to self-actualize, right, to contribute to the world, to do something good, to do something important and meaningful with your life.

Now these desires are much harder to follow through on than the base ones. So it takes a lot of willpower to do that stuff because you're thinking much long-term, right. you're kind of strategizing about your life as you're building your engineering career. This doesn't take one day or one week, this takes years to really flush this out. So I think that's an important distinction.

Anthony: And again, along the same lines I mean I know with willpower if you're making the right decisions on a regular basis, you're building good habits. Just the whole idea of habits, because I've done a lot of research on it and I know you've read a tremendous amount so I'm sure you could offer some input here. As far as developing habits, from your experience, how long does it take? I mean I've heard twenty-one days, thirty days, sixty-five days. Just in general about developing a habit, what is your experience with that?

Leo: I think it varies on the type of thing that you're developing. So some habits can be developed more quickly than others. Yeah, you know I've read all those numbers, twenty-one days and thirty days and sixty days. I don't think that it's, as a rule of thumb it's longer than thirty days. I definitely think twenty-one days is not sufficient to build a habit, especially for things that are really challenging.

So the things that you want to resist the most, those are the ones that are going to require more time to instill as a habit. So for example, if you've never exercised and you want to have a exercise habit, like a really good one, it's going to take you more than twenty-one days. It's probably going to take you like sixty days. If you've never meditated before you're going to need more than twenty-one days of meditation to start to feel the pay offs of the habit.

Because see, what a habit is, is taking the thing that you don't want to do, that you're very much resisting with your brain and basically drilling your brain, like a dog, you just drill it in and drill it in and drill it in. Let's say you do it for sixty days. After you do it for sixty days what happens is that your brain just kind of gives up and it accepts this new habit, this new behavior and it just gets programmed into your subconscious mind. And from now on that habit requires much less willpower to execute. So that's the real benefit of having habits is that they require less willpower to then maintain those behaviors.

And ultimately this is one of the keys to effective personal development is building habits. There's a very big difference between just pushing yourself with willpower and then getting results using habits. It's much smarter to use habits because habits are at a subconscious level. What's really nice about them is that you don't have to extend will you just do it. If anybody's ever gone to the gym for a long

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time, say you've been going for six months, you've been going to the gym for six months every single day, it's really easy for you to go the following day because you just built up a habit, you're very used to it. It's much harder if you haven't gone to the gym for two years to then start a habit.

So that's one of the tricks here is that even though we're talking about willpower and willpower is very important, you have to use your willpower very judiciously because you've only got so much of it during the day. It runs out. You can think of your willpower as a battery and at the beginning of the day it's charged up because you've got eight hours of sleep. Now it starts draining and draining as you go through your day and start doing more strenuous activities. At the end of the day you're totally drained, you have very little impulse control. That's why you probably pig out on food and you slack off on your habits towards the end of the day versus the beginning of the day. You want to use that willpower while you have it for smart things.

So at the beginning of the day when you're full of willpower, your batteries are charged go build powerful habits. That's the best use of willpower. Because what that does for you is that, that means that in the future you're going to have those habits and patterns automatically running in your subconscious and you're just going to be executing on those. And then you can use that remaining willpower that you'll have on building more positive habits. See most people what they do is they waste that willpower on useless, stupid stuff like they'll just go browse internet for a couple hours at the beginning of the day or they'll go eating the wrong things or whatever, then you're not building those positive habits and you're really wasting a lot of opportunity.

Anthony: That's really interesting. Yeah I mean one example for me was that about a year ago I started doing tai chi every morning and after a certain period of time, now when I wake up in the morning if there's even a hint of maybe my body saying, "I don't want to do this today," it's too bad because it's already a habit and my brain is already wired now to do it every morning so it's automatic.

So for those of you out there that want to maybe practice meditation, like Leo said, to build your willpower, listen you might come and do it the first day or two days in a row but after a couple days you're going to hit that, it's going to be difficult again and you're going to say, "I don't want to do this, why am I doing this?" You have to kind of push through and do it for a certain period of time until it just becomes an automatic habit. Like Leo said, you've trained your brain to say, "This is kind of my new normal. This is my new routine." So that's a really important part of this whole willpower idea, is using the willpower to develop those habits.

Leo: Yeah, that's a really good point. It's crazy how similar this is to weight training because in a gym, the times that you're actually building the most muscle is when you're doing those most difficult last couple of reps. You know those last three or two reps that you do after like your muscle has almost completely failed, that's the most beneficial to building muscle because it breaks down the tissue. And that's exactly what you were just talking about is that when you are, let's say you're five

days into your new exercise routine or five days into your new study habit, that's when it's going to get really difficult.

Because the first few days it's easy, you're just going off of the initial excitement and thrill of building a new habit but then it's like day five, day ten, day fifteen those are the ones that test your resolve. If you say no to your impulses when it's the most difficult that's when you actually conquer your impulse and that's when you build the most willpower.

Anthony: Alright Leo, before I summarize everything we talked about I have just one last question for you that interests me. I know you do a lot of reading, personal development reading, as do I, and you've obviously taken everything you've known and you've put them into these amazing videos that you have on your website.

My question for you is just with the whole idea of reading these books, what is your process when you read a book? I mean do you take notes? What are some of the things you do to take what you find to be useful for you out of that book and implement it into your life?

Leo: It's funny that you should be asking about books because I just spent a whole week, I'm going to be releasing a list of like about a hundred and forty books.

Anthony: Oh wow.

Leo: Of my top books and I did an audio review of every single book and I gave them ratings and stuff and descriptions. There's a lot of amazing stuff you can get from reading powerful books. Basically the way that I read a book - I sit down with it, I read it. I like to read a book cover to cover, I don't skip around too much just so that I can absorb all of it. I like to have a lot of books on my bookshelf so that I always have something to read if I desire.

And then I just go through, I underline the passages that resonate with me and that stand out with me. I always try to buy physical copies of books. I know now Kindle and iPad are really popular as reading formats. For me there's still nothing quite like a good, old-fashioned book in my hands and I like to sit there and underline it. And then even after I underline it what I do is I've actually, I have a big repository of all my notes, just hundreds of pages of notes from all the reading that I've done and all the thinking that I've done about all these topics. And what I do is I actually transcribe everything that I underlined into my digital diary and then I have it there. I also not only transcribe the stuff that's from the book and I put it in quotes but I also put my own thoughts in there.

So as you're reading it's important to be pausing and thinking about different passages and chapters that you read and asking yourself questions such as, "What did I learn here? How am I going to apply this in my life? How is this actually going to change my behaviours?" Or, "How should this

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change the way that I'm strategizing? How should this change my goals?" Right. So you're taking notes on all that stuff and then that's just how you go through the book.

Anthony: Awesome. Awesome.

Leo: That's the ideal way. I mean I don't, I'm not perfect at it. I don't always do it that way.

Anthony: Right.

Leo: But that's the ideal way to do it.

Anthony: Okay great. And this video that you're going to release is going to be on your website, actualized.org?

Leo: It's actually not going to be a video. It's going to be kind of like a product. It's just going to be like a huge list. It's going to be a page with a bunch of books on it and part of it is going to be a paid product, part of it is going to be a free product.

Anthony: Okay, great. Again, you'll be able to see all the videos I've been speaking about at Leo's website, actualized.org. But what I want to do right now is just kind of summarize what we talked about.

So we talked about willpower and Leo defined willpower as the ability to take right action, that action what's right for you, what's aligned with you and your goals and where you want to go in your life. It's important because it's critical to all of the decisions that we make every single day, that drive basically our lives.

And we talked a little bit about how to develop willpower and some things that Leo offered were meditation being the best way to be able to build your willpower. Exercising, working hard and having a real good day at work where you focus on one thing at a time and really doing anything that's challenging, which is going to help you to build your willpower.

He also talked about what is destroying your ability to build willpower, things like television, internet, eating, drinking, drugs, sex, especially to excess because these are things that, these are these base desires that are just comfortable to us and willpower is built by doing things that aren't necessarily comfortable to us.

So that's willpower for you and I hope that you can take some of the stuff that Leo talked about, implement it, maybe try to do some meditation and shoot for ten and twenty minutes and see if that will be helpful for you. I'm going to keep Leo with me for about two more minutes and we'll go into out



take action today segment of the show, where we'll try to give you one piece of advice that you can really use immediately kind of to implement it.

Take Action Today Segment:

Anthony: Alright Leo, so what I want to do just real quick here at the end is, what I try to do at the end of this show is to give the listeners something that they can literally do within the next twenty-four hours.

Leo: Uh-huh.

Anthony: You know to make some kind of change in their life or maybe their willpower and I guess for this show we could maybe talk about meditation or, I don't know, something real actionable. What do you think we could give them?

Leo: I want to give you a crazy exercise. I love giving exercises because it's important right. Talking about this stuff, if you just listened to what we're talking about I mean it's amazing information. All this stuff is very powerful information. The problem is that most people don't apply it. So you've got to take action on this stuff. That's what's very important.

Anthony: Okay.

Leo: Here's the crazy exercise.

Anthony: Okay, so for our take action today segment today Leo's going to give us kind of a crazy exercise that you can take and implement to start to see some results in your life. Go ahead Leo.

Leo: Alright, what you do is you get your smartphone, you put your alarm clock on it, your timer and you set ninety minutes on that timer. And then what you do is you find a quiet area in your house, maybe your room. Lock yourself in your room and then just sit there without any distractions. Make sure you put your cellphone on mute and you time yourself. And you start that timer at ninety minutes and you just sit and you do absolutely nothing for ninety minutes and you just watch your thoughts.

Don't think about it, try not to sit there and plan your life out or whatever your mind is going to do. Your mind is going to start to do crazy things. You're literally going to feel like, if you do this for ninety minutes, sixty minutes in you'll feel your body shaking. It'll be like, you'll be like a heroin addict who's been off heroin for a couple of weeks. Like you're going to be shaking, you're going to be in cold sweats. Your mind is going to be coming up with all sorts of excuses why this is a stupid exercise

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and why, "Goddamn that Leo, what is he telling me to do here? I'm wasting my time, my life." So like all these thoughts will start running through your brain. It's going to feel extremely agitating.

And the point of this exercise is that I want you to start to understand just the predicament that you're in right now, how little self control you have, how little willpower and discipline you actually have in your life and just how your brain and your emotions are running, how much they're running. You're just like a heroine addict. You're no different than a heroine addict.

This is what you need to start to get your mind around to convince yourself that meditation is a worthwhile practice for you. Until you see this firsthand you're not going to meditate because meditation is difficult, it feels like it's a waste of time. You need to really build a case in your mind for why meditation is important and I feel like this is a good way to start to convince yourself because once you do this you're not going to be able to do ninety minutes by the way. You'll probably stop at thirty minutes. Even thirty minutes will be like hell to you.

So once you do this you're going to walk away disgusted, not with you but with me and with this exercise. You're going to say that it's . But in the long run, maybe a few months later or a few years later you'll realize like, "Wait a minute, there's something going on here that is wrong, I've got to take a look at this meditation thing. I've got to take a look at this. Why can't I sit in silence for ninety minutes? It doesn't seem like it should be that difficult. Why is it so difficult?" And then you'll start to research and like wonder about it and then you'll go down this deep rabbit hole of meditation, which

can lead you to some amazing things.

Anthony: Wow, that sounds amazing. I've got to give that a shot myself and for those of you out there, if anyone decides to try it and would like comment and let us know how you made out just come to the show notes for this show, which will be at engineeringcareercoach.com/leo and leave a comment, let us know how it went for you. And also, like I said, I'll link up to some of Leo's videos there from actualized.org so you can check them out.

So with that Leo thanks again for your time man, for coming and sharing some of these thoughts with us and I know you have so much knowledge that you built up and I appreciate you sharing it with our listeners here.

Leo: My pleasure Anthony. Thanks for having me on. I love talking about this stuff. I like your podcast. I like the way that you do it, very professional, clear cut and I think you ask all the right questions.

Anthony: Thanks man.



Anthony's Closing Remarks:

Alright everyone listen, until the next show I hope that you continue to engineer your own success.

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